

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GREAT BINFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chineham, Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 132212

Headteacher: Mr Simon Cushing

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims  
28899

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 248944

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Infant and junior
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Great Binfields Primary School Binfields Farm Lane Chineham BASINGSTOKE Hampshire
Postcode:	RG24 8AJ
Telephone number:	01256 460532
Fax number:	01256 334157
Email address:	headteacher@greatbinfields.hants.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Caroline Wadsworth
Date of previous inspection:	None

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
28899	Mr G R Sims	Registered inspector	English Geography History Information and communication technology English as an additional language Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12289	Ms D Pacquette	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
07336	Mrs L D Howard	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
03942	Mr K Sanderson	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle Division of Parkman  
The Brow  
35 Trewartha Park  
WESTON-SUPER-MARE  
North Somerset  
BS23 2RT

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in an area of new development on the outskirts of Basingstoke. It is a new school, which was established in September 2001. In the last 18 months, it has grown from an initial intake of 35 pupils to its current size of 105 boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 11. It is currently much smaller than most primary schools, but is projected to reach maximum capacity of an average-sized primary school in September 2005. The school has a resource unit for visually impaired pupils, but this is not yet in full operation. Although the school is designated to serve a defined catchment area with a significant amount of new housing, pupils are currently drawn from a wide area. Although very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, the socio-economic backgrounds, from which they come, are average overall. The fact that all pupils, other than those joining the Reception, have transferred part-way through their primary schooling and have had significantly different educational experiences is a major factor with which teachers have had to contend in devising and providing an appropriate curriculum for all pupils. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Six pupils, an above average proportion, do not have English as their mother tongue, and two are at an early stage of learning English. At the start of this school year, almost a third of the pupils, a very high proportion, were identified as having special educational needs. This proportion has now reduced to a quarter, which is still well above average. Sixteen pupils receive help from outside specialists for a range of needs, including dyslexia, emotional and behavioural, communication and physical difficulties and visual impairment. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs. Children are admitted into the Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. The attainment of children when they start school in the Reception varies greatly, but is average overall. The school's buildings and facilities are brand new, having been constructed in accordance with 'Agenda 21', a programme designed to create environmentally friendly buildings.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Great Binfields Primary School is a good school, with some very good features. Under the good leadership of the headteacher, the school has established itself very successfully as one in which pupils feel very happy and enjoy learning. The very enthusiastic and committed staff, have worked hard to establish good routines and procedures and to provide pupils with interesting learning experiences. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average, but this reflects the diverse nature of the school's initial intake and masks the good progress made by pupils throughout the school as a result of good-quality teaching. Many parents are delighted at the transformation the school has made to their children's attitudes to school, a result of the very positive input staff are having on pupils' personal development. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- In starting this new school, the staff have been very successful in integrating pupils from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, in fulfilling the school's original aims, and in quickly establishing a very friendly, caring ethos.
- The staff work very hard to engender positive attitudes to school and make very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Pupils show great enthusiasm for school and many previously disaffected youngsters are now enthusiastic learners.
- The school has established a very good partnership with parents, who are delighted with the education the school is providing for their children.
- The quality of the teaching throughout the school is good, and pupils make good progress in their learning.
- The headteacher provides good leadership for the hard-working and enthusiastic staff, who show great commitment and determination to make a success of this new school.

#### **What could be improved**

- The development of pupils' writing skills across the curriculum.
- The way the curriculum is organised and pupils' progress is assessed.
- The development of the role of subject coordinator.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Great Binfields Primary School opened in September 2001 and 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			similar schools	Key	
	all schools				2002	
	2000	2001	2002	Very high		A*
English	–	–	A	A		Well above average
Mathematics	–	–	A	A	Above average	B
Science	–	–	A*	A*	Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

**National test results:** In the first year of the school's operation, only seven pupils took the national tests at the end of Year 6, and a similar number at the end of Year 2. The results at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average and the average for pupils from similar schools. At the end of Year 2, results were below average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. When compared to similar schools, they were well below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. However, the results of such a small number of pupils are statistically insignificant and do not give an accurate picture of standards throughout the school or of the progress pupils are currently making.

**Inspection findings:** Although it varies widely, the overall level of attainment of the children starting school in the Reception is generally fairly typical for four-year-olds. Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, settling quickly into school routines and establishing very good standards of behaviour and very positive attitudes. They make good progress in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills, and overall standards are likely to be above average by the time they start Year 1.

The level of attainment of pupils who have transferred to the school after the Reception, particularly the older pupils, has varied considerably on entry. A considerable number of pupils have experienced problems in their previous schools, many have had poor attitudes to school and many have special educational needs. The inspection findings show very clearly that, throughout the school, pupils of all abilities are making good progress from very different starting points. Their diverse backgrounds, however, are reflected in the overall standards achieved by pupils. By the end of Year 2, standards are fairly average in all subjects. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average overall, although in mathematics and science they are close to the level expected for 11-year-olds. Standards in writing are below average. Pupils achieve appropriate standards in information and communication technology, but standards in history are below, and in geography well below, national expectations.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are very enthusiastic about their new school. Many parents are delighted at the transformation in their children's attitudes to school since they transferred to Great Binfields. Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and enjoy all that the school has to offer them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Although some pupils still find it difficult to maintain appropriate behaviour, the behaviour of the great majority is very good, both within the classroom and around the school. The behaviour of the youngest pupils, on whom the school has had the greatest influence, is particularly good. Pupils are polite and friendly.
Personal development and	Good. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility when the opportunity is offered.

relationships	They are generally cooperative and helpful. The pupils' relationships with each other and with the staff are very good. Sometimes, the pupils receive too much help from adults to become fully independent learners.
Attendance	Very good. The level of attendance is well above the national average and reflects pupils' willingness to come to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

Throughout the school, the quality of the teaching is consistently good. The staff have been very successful in generating positive attitudes amongst the pupils which, when combined with the good teaching, enable the pupils to learn well. Lessons are planned carefully and well, and with very careful consideration of pupils' individual needs. As a result, pupils of all abilities are catered for well. There is sufficient challenge for the more able pupils, particularly in some of the group activities and investigative work, and there is plenty of support for pupils with special educational needs and pupils whose mother tongue is not English. The support provided by the teaching assistants is very good although, at times, the amount of adult support can result in pupils becoming too dependent on adult help. English, mathematics and science are taught well. The practical methods used in teaching mathematics and science motivate the pupils and help them to acquire good understanding and to develop good numeracy skills. Although the skills required for pupils to become proficient writers are taught well, they are not consolidated sufficiently in subsequent lessons or through written work in subjects other than English, with the result that pupils' writing is the weakest aspect of their work. In contrast, considerable emphasis is given to reading and the development of speaking and listening skills, and pupils make good progress in these aspects of English. In responding to pupils' comments, and when marking their work, the teachers take great care to accentuate the positive and to boost pupils' self-esteem. However, they are not always rigorous enough in pointing out where pupils have made mistakes or how they could improve their work, or in ensuring pupils go back over completed pieces of work to learn from their mistakes. There are good examples, throughout the school, of how teachers have integrated the use of new technology into their lessons. However, given the very good level and availability of resources, teachers could make greater use of new technology as a tool for learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum offered is interesting and relevant and is enriched through a good variety of extra-curricular activities, visits, additional activities and good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. However, the thematic, rather than subject-based, planning does not yet cover all aspects of the National Curriculum adequately, particularly in geography and history, and is not yet meeting statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school has made considerable efforts to meet the needs of the large number of pupils who have entered the school with special educational needs. Their needs are analysed carefully and reviewed frequently. Teaching assistants play a crucial role in providing very good support for these pupils and for those who have statements of special educational need.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The few pupils whose mother tongue is not English are all very well integrated members of the school community, who play a full part in lessons. Teachers and assistants provide additional help for these pupils as required, and parents are pleased with the progress their children are making.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' moral and social development, through the informal daily interaction with staff and more formal timetabled sessions, is very good. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but could be more wide-ranging. The school is not meeting the statutory

	requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school has very good procedures for ensuring all pupils become well-integrated members of the school community. Staff know the pupils very well. They track pupils' progress carefully in English and mathematics, but need to develop better assessment procedures for other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school has established a very good rapport with parents. Parents are kept well informed about what is happening in school, although the school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents omit certain items of information which the school is legally required to convey.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Although some of the school's procedures have yet to be firmly established and greater thought needs to be given to the school's curricular planning, the leadership of the headteacher and the two senior staff has been instrumental in establishing a very positive atmosphere to this new school. The headteacher has created a closely-knit team of committed teachers who work very hard to fulfil the school's principal aims.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have played a very important and effective role in the early stages of establishing this new school. They have provided good support for the headteacher and have shown significant commitment in fulfilling their responsibilities. Some work is still needed to ensure that the school fulfils all of its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has established appropriate priorities in the initial stages of its development and has a good understanding of what still needs to be done. Most of the staff's energies have gone into establishing new procedures, and now is an appropriate time for them to evaluate what has been achieved. Some staff require training to develop a clear understanding of the role of subject leader. The school needs to develop procedures for all coordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes satisfactory use of its accommodation and resources, although more use could be made of the school's good facilities for computing. The school's administration is efficient and finances are managed effectively. The school has appropriate procedures to ensure it provides best value in its performance and spending.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Very good. The school has a very good number of teaching and assistant staff for the number of pupils. The quality of the school's accommodation is very good, although the school's playing field is still unfit for use, and this restricts opportunities in physical education. The school is well resourced.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall quality of the education provided.</li> <li>• The way the staff have helped their children to settle into a new school.</li> <li>• The welcoming, friendly ethos and the support provided for children with particular needs.</li> <li>• The quality of the teaching and the progress their children are making.</li> <li>• The school's attitudes and values</li> <li>• The standards of behaviour.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of notification given of school events.</li> <li>• The security of the school site.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

[The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 19 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 80 parents (76%) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom also added their own written comments]

The inspection team endorses all of the positive views expressed by parents.

Very few parents raised any concerns about the school. The inspection team felt there was little justification for these concerns. The school keeps parents well informed about what is happening through regular newsletters, but has taken note of the fact that a few parents would like to have more advanced notification of future events. The school is fortunate in having a wooded area in close proximity to the school; most parents appreciate this natural facility, although a few are concerned that it might pose security problems. The school's grounds are adequately fenced and the school's buildings are protected by secure entry systems. The school provides a broader range of extra-curricular activities than in many schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Only seven pupils took the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup> in 2002 in the first year of the school's operation, and a similar number at the end of Key Stage 2. With such a small number of pupils, all of whom had only been in the school for one year, these results do not give a reliable or representative picture of standards throughout the school, nor, indeed, of the school's potential or future results. The results for these few pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. When compared to similar schools<sup>2</sup>, they were well below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, the results were well above the national average and the average for similar schools in English, mathematics and science. On the basis of observations during the inspection and the school's own assessment data, results look set to improve this year in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1, but they will be nowhere near as high as the 2002 results at Key Stage 2.
2. It is too early in the school's history, and there have been too few pupils taking the tests, for the school to make any meaningful analyses of their national test results or to determine whether there is any difference in the attainment of boys and girls or different groups of pupils. Because of the rapidly changing nature of the school's population, particularly at Key Stage 2, the setting of overall school targets is an academic, rather than a meaningful exercise. Last year, for example, the school almost doubled in size between September and July, and some of the pupils who will be taking the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 this year have only been in the school for a short period of time. Instead of setting whole-school targets, the school is keeping a careful track of individual pupils' progress and has set appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics for each individual pupil.
3. Children enter the Reception class with a wide range of attainment. A few show indications of particular needs, whilst a few others are already well on the way to reading simple texts and have an understanding of the rudiments of writing. The overall level of attainment of the children who joined the Reception this year is generally fairly typical for four-year-olds. The children make good progress overall during their year in the Reception. They make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, settling quickly into school routines and establishing very good standards of behaviour and very positive attitudes to school. By the time they start Year 1, they are on course to meet the expected standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical and creative development. The great majority are likely to achieve, and many are likely to exceed, the expected standards in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy

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<sup>1</sup> The words 'Key Stage' refer to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes. Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term Infants. Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also frequently synonymous with the term Juniors. At the age of 11, pupils start Key Stage 3, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

<sup>2</sup> The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 6) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

and the number aspects of mathematics. Overall, therefore, standards are above average. The children receive a good preparation for the start of their more formal education in Key Stage 1.

4. The starting point for pupils throughout the rest of the school varies enormously. Pupils in Year 1, who joined the school as Reception children last year, are, comparatively, more advanced than other year groups. In other classes, however, pupils' prior educational experiences have a significant impact on the standards achieved within that year. A considerable number of pupils have transferred to Great Binfields because they experienced problems in their previous schools, and because they wanted to have a fresh start in a new school. Many of the pupils who joined the school in Key Stage 2 were very disaffected with school, many had poor attitudes to work and a significantly large proportion had special educational needs. These widely differing backgrounds explain why standards vary throughout the school and why they are below average in some year groups. Overall, and taking all subjects into consideration, the inspection findings show that pupils achieve average standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and below average standards by the end of Key Stage 2.
5. Within this complex situation, the attention given by staff to the needs of each individual pupil is of crucial importance. At the pre-inspection meeting, a number of parents spoke, with enormous gratitude, about the way the school had helped their children as individuals, and examples were given of how previously struggling children had been helped to make remarkable progress and, at the same time, more able pupils had been provided with a good degree of challenge. These comments were borne out by the findings of the inspection. These show very clearly that, throughout the school and despite the level of attainment, pupils of all abilities are making good progress from their very different starting points. Some pupils, particularly those who have found a new lease of life and become interested in learning, make very good progress. A large amount of help is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Challenging tasks are set for the more able pupils. The few pupils whose mother tongue is not English are well-integrated members of the school community, and are provided with additional help when necessary. The small proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others. A child with visual impairment is provided with the necessary facilities for her to participate in the class activities alongside other pupils. All of these factors are important in ensuring that all pupils, throughout the school, make good progress.
6. From the observations made during the inspection, pupils are achieving average standards in English at the end of Key Stage 1, and below average standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, pupils of all abilities make good progress in English. Particularly good progress has been made by the few pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Standards, relative to pupils' ages, are higher at the beginning of each key stage than at the end, reflecting the fact that the school's input has been proportionately greater for the younger pupils than for the older ones. Pupils throughout the school achieve higher standards in reading, speaking and listening than they do in writing. This reflects the emphasis given to reading activities each day, the many opportunities given to pupils to engage in discussion in all lessons, and the standards of courtesy and respect promoted by all teachers which encourage good listening habits. In reading, most pupils achieve at least the expected level<sup>3</sup> for their age at the end of both key stages, and a number of pupils progress beyond the expected level. Although most pupils are working at the level expected for seven-year-olds in writing at the end of Key Stage 1, few pupils exceed this level. A number of pupils experience considerable difficulties with writing in Key Stage 2, and the overall quality of pupils' written

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<sup>3</sup> The standard of pupils' work is assessed against National Curriculum Levels. The national expectation for each subject is that pupils should be working comfortably at Level 2 by the end of Year 2, and at Level 4 by the end of Year 6.

work is below, and in some cases well below, the expected level at the end of the key stage. Writing techniques are taught well during English lessons, but these skills are not consolidated as effectively as they could be by providing pupils with sufficient opportunity to write for subjects other than English.

7. Standards in mathematics and science are, generally, better than those achieved in English. This reflects the fact that pupils engage more readily with the practical nature of both subjects. For example, pupils enjoy sessions of mental mathematics at the start of each lesson and the practical investigations in science. Standards achieved in both subjects are typical of those achieved in the average school at the end of both key stages, and pupils of all abilities and in all classes make good progress. In mathematics, pupils develop a good understanding of number, and are beginning to discover different ways of solving problems and to explain which method they prefer to use and why.
8. Pupils achieve appropriate standards at the end of both key stages in information and communication technology, although the skills displayed by the youngest pupils are noticeably more advanced for their age than those of the older pupils. This reflects the fact that the younger pupils have had more opportunities to use computers than many of the older pupils have had prior to joining the school. Although there are good examples in each class of the use of new technology to complement work undertaken in other subjects, the school could make greater use of the very good level of resources which are readily available given the small number of pupils in the school. Progress in this subject is satisfactory, but could be much better if the teachers provided more opportunities for pupils to use computers.
9. In both key stages, pupils make good progress and achieve satisfactory standards in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Very few lessons were seen, and insufficient evidence was available, to form secure judgements about standards or progress in music and religious education.
10. Standards in history and geography are affected by the school's thematic approach to planning the curriculum and the amount of time which is dedicated to teaching these subjects within the school's chosen topics. None of the school's chosen themes have sufficient scope, at present, for a major input into teaching geographical skills, with the result that standards are below the expected level in geography at the end of Key Stage 1 and well below at the end of Key Stage 2. Although some of the half-termly topics have a historical theme, not enough time is devoted to pursuing these themes in depth. The range of skills and the depth of pupils' understanding in history is below average at the end of both key stages. The overall progress is unsatisfactory in history and poor in geography.
11. Despite the weaknesses in history and geography, which have to do with curricular planning rather than the quality of the teaching, the teachers have managed to instil good working habits and to ensure that all pupils in all classes are making noticeable progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school has built a secure foundation for pupils' future progress and from which to raise standards at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The good standards achieved by pupils in the Reception class give an indication of what the school is able to achieve for pupils who spend all of their primary education at Great Binfields.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good overall. All the pupils enjoy coming to the newly-built school, which is an attractive and well-presented building. Because of the very good attention given to pupils' personal development, children settle into school life very quickly in the Reception and develop very positive attitudes to school and the daily variety of activities provided for them. In the rest of the school, the pupils are interested in learning and

participate well in the many activities of the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose mother tongue is not English also have positive attitudes to learning and are well-integrated members of the school. From the comments of parents, staff and pupils, it is clear that the school has effected a remarkable change in the attitudes towards school and learning of some pupils, who had become disaffected with education in their previous schools.

13. The pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Some pupils cannot sustain concentration for very long periods during lessons, but these pupils' needs are identified well, and the school has clear and positive strategies for meeting their needs. Teachers work closely with learning support assistants and students on placement to ensure that these pupils are well supported and that they participate fully in lessons. In contrast, most pupils have a very good understanding of the school's expectations, show good self-discipline and behave very well in lessons. The behaviour of the children in the Reception class is particularly good and, indeed, quite remarkable for such young children. Parents support the view that the school is working hard to promote good behaviour. There have been no exclusions since the school opened. Pupils say that incidents of bullying or harassment are very rare, and they have every confidence that staff would deal with any incident quickly and effectively. Pupils show care and respect for school property and their environment.
14. The pupils are polite, friendly and courteous to each other, to the staff and to visitors, whom they greet warmly. Examples were observed during the inspection of pupils holding doors open and offering directions when asked. They speak freely about life in school and willingly share their experiences. The pupils are honest, trustworthy and show respect for others' feelings and beliefs. Overall, positive attitudes and behaviour are encouraged by the school's system established to reward pupils' efforts as well as through the sanctions imposed for unacceptable behaviour.
15. The personal and social development of pupils is good. Children in the Reception learn very quickly how to make responsible choices about their work and display considerable independence. They are quite happy, for example, to take the register back to the school office or collect prints from the school's computer room, which is situated at the opposite end of the school from their classroom. In the rest of the school, pupils enjoy taking responsibility when given the opportunity. For example, they take responsibility for day-to-day matters, such as paying for their school dinners, operating the school library system, and getting out resources and putting them away. When asked to work in pairs or groups, most pupils do so successfully. Most pupils cooperate well with each other and with the adults present, and they share resources responsibly. These examples indicate that some pupils have made remarkable progress in their personal development since joining the school. Pupils enjoy taking on helpful tasks. For example, each day a group of pupils was observed caring for the school environment by collecting litter, much of which had blown in from outside the school. However, the school has yet to develop a full range of opportunities to develop this sense of responsibility. For example, the school has yet to establish a pupils' council, although plans are underway for this to happen. More progress could also be made in helping pupils to become independent learners. The very good level of staffing and the presence of other adults helpers has been very beneficial in the early stages of establishing the school, but now has the danger that pupils automatically turn to an available adult for help, rather than trying to solve problems on their own.
16. The relationships formed between pupils are very good overall. Similarly, the relationships between pupils and adults, from Reception through to Year 6, are warm and respectful. Pupils demonstrate high levels of tolerance to others. This is seen in the positive way pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language interact with the wider community of the school. Pupils are often observed helping and supporting each other and

playing well together in the playground, engaging in a number of games and other social activities.

17. Pupils' attendance is very good. It is well above the national average and is making a positive contribution to the quality of learning in the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and there are very few unauthorised absences and latecomers. Most pupils arrive at school on time and are punctual to lessons. The headteacher and educational welfare officer monitor attendance closely, and a comprehensive system has been implemented to ensure the very high level of attendance is maintained.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18. The consistently good, and often very good, teaching is a major strength of the school. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their mother tongue, make good progress in their learning and achieve well. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection.
19. The teaching in the Reception class is good. Lessons observed during the inspection were consistently good and many of them were very good. The adults provide a range of appropriate activities that help the children learn the skills they need. They teach the basic skills needed for literacy and numeracy very well. The adults have a good range of teaching methods: they work with large and small groups and individuals on planned tasks, they interact with children working on self-chosen tasks, and they move children on in their learning through skilful questioning. They manage the children very well, and all adults have high expectations of the children's behaviour and learning. In a very good music lesson, for example, the children waited their turn to play their instrument with bated breath, eyes glued on the teacher who pointed to the graphic score. When the whole rhyme had been played accurately, the tension visibly relaxed and the children beamed with success as they received rightly deserved praise. Their learning was of high quality.
20. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the consistently good, and often very good, teaching enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Some very good teaching was seen in each class and in many subjects, especially in English, mathematics and science. The teaching assistants provide good support and work very closely with their class teachers. All adults work effectively with their specific groups, not least because of the positive attitudes and good behaviour of all of the pupils, who listen carefully to each other. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good. Pupils use and consolidate their numeracy skills well in other areas of the curriculum, such as science, but not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to consolidate or develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
21. In the good and better lessons, teachers' planning is effective and they use a good range of methods and activities, which engage and hold the pupils' interest. Pupils respond well to the high-quality behaviour management skills of the teachers, who make their high expectations of behaviour and of what pupils can achieve clear. Lessons provided for groups of pupils with special educational needs when withdrawn from the rest of the class are managed well, pupils are provided with an appropriate level of work and make good progress as a result.
22. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, enabling pupils to make full use of the lesson time and to make good progress. Teachers check what pupils are learning through the good use of open-ended questions and in the review session at the end of the lesson. In the satisfactory lessons, pace is slower and pupils do not always learn as much as they could.
23. The teachers have tried very hard to build pupils' self-esteem and to encourage them to want to learn. However, in some lessons, teachers give praise too liberally when it is not really deserved. In other lessons, pupils who do not focus well throughout the lesson are not reminded of what they should be doing. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers take

the trouble to write encouraging comments and, occasionally, to give a general indication as to how pupils can improve their work. However, teachers are often not critical enough in their marking by pointing out where pupils have made mistakes or by indicating clearly what aspects could be improved. These factors prevent some pupils from trying as hard as they could to achieve well and, consequently, to attain higher.

24. The good and better lessons are underpinned by teachers' knowledge and understanding, which are good throughout the school. Good use is made of resources in all classes, but especially in Years 5 and 6. Good use is made of digital cameras in all classes and of the interactive whiteboard in ICT lessons, although greater use could be made of computers as a tool for learning in other subjects. The use of homework is satisfactory throughout the school and builds on what the pupils have learnt in lessons.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

25. In the relatively short time since it opened, the school has worked very hard to produce policies and planning documents for the curriculum, and this work is still developing.
26. The quality and range of learning opportunities are at present satisfactory, and there are several reasons for this. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced effectively, the numeracy strategy particularly so. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those who are learning English as an additional language, is good. There is also good provision for extra-curricular activities and for pupils' personal, social and health education. The curriculum offered is relevant. However, the breadth and balance of the curriculum are at present unsatisfactory. The school is committed to an integrated approach to planning the curriculum, breaking away from the constraints of single-subject teaching. Already, there are signs that this is developing well, as, for instance, literacy work linking in well with work in science and design and technology on 'healthy eating' and 'advertising products'. This creative planning of the curriculum works particularly well in mathematics. Pupils are challenged by, and interested in, lots of wide-ranging, investigative and practical work. However, this work is underpinned by the strong framework and detailed planning in the National Numeracy Strategy. This level of detailed planning is not yet present in some of the school's thematic outlines. This particularly affects the school's provision for geography and history. Themes in Key Stage 2 are biased towards science and history, but there are no geography-based themes and there is little depth to the work undertaken in history. There are, therefore, gaps in the coverage of the curriculum, which is not yet fully meeting statutory requirements. A further factor which affects the depth of teaching in some subjects is the amount of time allocated to certain lessons. The school timetable is organised in such a way that some lessons, especially literacy and numeracy, go on longer than necessary, and this uses up time that could be devoted to teaching in other subjects. Also, it is not clear whether subjects such as religious education and music are receiving enough time. Because the school's curricular plans are still developing, the current lack of detailed plans in some areas of the curriculum and in some of the thematic outlines, denies the school its reference point against which checks can be made to see that pupils are receiving their curricular entitlement.
27. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and for helping them to understand matters of citizenship. Timetabled sessions are planned for specific teaching of personal, social and health education, and classes enjoy 'circle time'<sup>4</sup> where pupils have

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<sup>4</sup> During 'Circle Time' pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur

opportunities to reflect on, and discuss issues with adults. The school is currently developing a coherent scheme to bring the various strands of this work together. Sex education is addressed through curricular themes, and the school nurse supports the school in this.

28. Provision for special educational needs is good. The school complies fully with the code of practice. There is a resource centre for pupils with visual impairment at the school. At present, there is no appointed teacher in charge, and the school has only one visually impaired pupil but, in the interim, the school is supported well by the local authority's service for visual impairment. Although, in these early stages of the school's development, there is no coordinator for special educational needs, the school's systems are currently managed well by the headteacher. Individual education plans are good, and appropriately sharp targets are identified. Teachers, with support, draw up these targets, and the knowledge they already have of pupils' individual needs, and its use in framing targets, have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to their work, and their relationships with adults are very good.
29. Provision for pupils whose mother tongue is not English is also good. The staff include these pupils well in all normal activities and keep a careful eye as to when and where these pupils might require additional help, which is provided readily by teachers, teaching assistants and other adult helpers. The pupils spoken to during the inspection clearly greatly enjoy being at school and, through their immersion in school life, are making rapid progress in learning English.
30. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Some parents feel that the range of activities is not adequate. The inspection findings do not support this view, as there is a varied range of activities for pupils in both key stages, including French, keyboard, guitar, tennis, football and roller hockey. There is also a varied programme of visits out of school and visitors to the school. This includes opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to spend a residential week at a centre on the south coast. Visitors are encouraged to come to school to share their enthusiasms and skills. These include sculptors working in wood and metal, an artist in residence, African drummers, shadow puppeteers and actors.
31. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. The school has developed strong links with the local church, health club, veterinary surgery and local supermarket. The parish priest of Christ Church is closely involved in the work of the school and takes assemblies regularly. In addition, pupils participate in Christmas, Easter and Harvest events at the church. The school's association with local businesses is good. For example, pupils saw hot cross buns being made at a local supermarket. Visitors from different organisations within the community are an important feature of the school. The school liaison officer visits the school regularly and has spoken to pupils on safety issues, bullying and drugs abuse. The local police also put on a pantomime for pupils in the summer.
32. The constructiveness of the school's relationships with partner institutions to promote pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. The school is developing links with a neighbouring technical college. Arrangements have been made for the headteacher of the technical college to visit the school and also for pupils in Year 6 to spend a day at the college in order to ease the transition to the next phase of education for pupils at the age of 11. The school has close and effective links with training providers who are facilitating training programmes for staff during the term. Student teachers, as well as nursery nurses, successfully complete practical training in the school.

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at all times and, therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

33. The overall provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils gain some insight into the beliefs and values of Christianity and other world religions through religious education lessons, assemblies and circle time. However, the school is currently not complying with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship, and this is unsatisfactory. Pupils meet together each day, either for an assembly as a whole school, or within their class for circle time. Whilst these occasions contribute significantly to pupils' moral and social development, the underlying characteristics for them to be considered acts of collective worship are missing, and they provide little input into pupils' spiritual development. However, the school is a very caring institution, and is good at promoting other aspects which contribute to pupils' spiritual development. The staff have, for example, been very successful in developing an ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected. Within lessons, teachers value pupils' questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns. Much is done to raise pupils' self-esteem and, thereby, contribute to their spiritual development.
34. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The teachers actively promote principles which enable pupils to distinguish right and wrong. This is an aspect with which many parents are very pleased. Clear rules are displayed around the school and in the classes, and pupils contribute to establishing these rules. Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss issues of right and wrong, and moral development is also promoted during assemblies, in lessons and circle time. Most classes have two circle time sessions each week when topics, such as listening, fairness, friendships and feelings, are discussed. Circle time activities help pupils to learn to relate well to each other, and to follow rules and conventions. In personal, social and health education lessons, very good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss wider moral issues and to establish codes of behaviour. Through these discussions, pupils learn how to be safe in a range of situations. They develop very good understanding of citizenship, through discussion about rules, responsibilities and the community.
35. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop socially and to increase their understanding of living in a community. In lessons, frequent opportunities for pupils to work in groups help them to learn how to share information, work collaboratively and support each other. Some pupils had limited communication skills and were very disaffected with school when they started at Great Binfields. However, the school has helped them to develop their social skills very quickly during their time in the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their mother tongue, are encouraged to take responsibility and to help each other. For example, they prepare the hall for assemblies, and pupils in Year 6 support children in the Reception. Through discussion at school dinner sessions, pupils are actively involved in the school's development and are made to feel that their opinions count. This is a good opportunity for social development. In addition, the very good registration sessions make a significant input into pupils' social development. Teachers insist on polite responses to greetings. The teachers in turn get pupils to greet each other whilst maintaining good eye contact.
36. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, although few opportunities are provided for pupils to become more aware of the diverse multi-cultural beliefs and customs within Britain. The school has adopted the local authority's policy for racial equality, but this has yet to have much of a practical impact on the school's practices, even though it is evident that all pupils are very well-integrated members of the school community, regardless of their social or cultural backgrounds. Some opportunities, particularly through school visits, are provided for pupils to appreciate their national heritage and culture. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for art and drama, although there are few examples of the influence of great artists around the school. Pupils listen to music when they enter and leave assemblies, but the range of music provided could be planned much more systematically so that pupils get to

hear a more comprehensive range of music from different eras and different cultures. More could be made of the cultural diversity and range of languages spoken in the school in order to broaden pupils' cultural horizons.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

37. The school has good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. One member of staff has overall responsibility for child protection and all members of the staff team are aware of lines of accountability. Procedures are already well established, and clear guidelines are available to all staff and volunteers. Members of the staff team know their pupils very well, and they are genuinely interested in their welfare. There are very good measures in place to ensure that pupils are well cared for and appropriately supervised throughout the school day. The headteacher and other staff provide good pastoral care for pupils which helps them to settle into school life. The provision for medical care and first aid is very good. The school works closely with the school nurse and many other health and welfare professionals to ensure pupils' needs are fully met. Daily routine checks of the school premises are carried out by the school's caretaker, and any health and safety hazards are quickly identified. In addition, the school also ensures pupils' safety by measures such as risk assessments, visitors signing in and out, and security-controlled entry doors. A few parents raised concerns about the school's security because of the proximity of the woodland area, although other parents welcomed the fact that the school has access to a natural environment, which provides a very good resource for teaching. The inspection team considers the school has taken appropriate measures to ensure the security of the pupils through having secure entry systems and by providing adequate supervision when pupils are in the playground. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for pupils to access the Internet safely.
38. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school uses both manual and computerised systems to record and monitor attendance, and the school secretary and staff are active in promoting and encouraging full attendance. For example, parents are contacted over the telephone, and the school's computer generates letters to chase up unauthorised absences and latecomers. Class teachers also insist that pupils who are late apologise for being late. In addition, the educational welfare officer is informed of persistent unauthorised absences and latecomers. Overall, the school has successfully promoted a high level of very good attendance.
39. The school has very good procedures to monitor and promote acceptable behaviour and to eliminate oppressive behaviour, such as bullying and harassment. The procedures have a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Pupils have participated in establishing the school's rules, which has helped them to have ownership and a better understanding of them, than is often the case when rules are imposed. The school also uses positive reinforcement to reward good behaviour, such as stickers, praise and awards for pupil of the week, which are effective for most pupils. The school has a clear and effective system for managing unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils receive sanctions, such as detention, losing golden time or their names being written on the class board. Staff also promote self-discipline and ensure that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school through one-to-one discussions, comprehensive individual plans and by working in partnership with parents.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. All pupils are encouraged to be fully involved in the classroom and in activities in the playground. Pupils' educational and personal development is also developed through personal and social education lessons, booster classes, games, music, circle time, assemblies and the school's behaviour policy.
41. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose mother tongue is not English have their needs clearly identified. They receive good support from well-trained teaching assistants

and specialist support staff, and through materials and tasks which have been carefully adapted by their teachers. The school is developing a team of support staff with appropriate specialist skills, making them better able to ascertain appropriate ways to respond to these pupils' needs. The school is committed to an 'inclusive' approach, supporting pupils working at appropriate tasks in the classrooms or in shared areas outside the classroom. Pupils are occasionally withdrawn from normal class lessons for activities, such as occupational therapy or to help them develop personal and social skills. These sessions meet pupils' needs well and help them to become well-integrated members of school society.

42. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainments in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are good overall. Using statutory assessments and national test materials, the school acquires a range of assessment information and is using this to develop further programmes of work. In English, additional provision is made to improve spelling skills and develop 'emergent writing' strategies for the younger pupils, whilst in mathematics, tackling difficulties associated with 'word problems' has been a focus. The school has an effective system for tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics and uses this as a 'trigger for action' if pupils are seen to be making less than satisfactory progress. Teachers devise targets, either group or individual, and make good efforts to involve pupils in decisions about their own learning, through discussion of what they need to do to improve. However, there are no formal assessment systems in place for the foundation subjects<sup>5</sup> and religious education. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to have a clear view of pupils' attainment and progress in these subjects. This lack of an effective assessment system means the school has not yet established a reliable means of judging the effects of curricular planning on pupils' achievements in foundation subjects.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

43. Parents' views of the school are very good and positive overall. This is confirmed through the analysis of the parents' questionnaire. Most parents are very pleased with the progress their children are making. They feel welcome in the school and listened to. They are easily able to access staff to discuss issues relating to their children. Parents are happy with the daily activities of the school and the 'open-door' policy that is in operation. Most parents feel that the school is led and managed well and that the school contributes positively to their children's lives. Overall, the school encourages positive working partnerships and, as a result, has very good and effective links with parents.
44. A small minority of parents raised some concerns through their answers to the parents' questionnaire. They feel that the school does not provide the appropriate amount of work for their children to do at home, that they are not kept well enough informed about their children's progress and that there is not a broad enough range of extra-curricular activities. At the parents' meeting, a small number of parents raised concerns about the amount of notification given of school events and about the security of the school site. The inspection team feels there is little justification for any of these concerns. Pupils are given homework regularly and of a nature that supports their work at school. The school provides a better range of extra-curricular activities than in many schools. Staff relate well to parents and communicate any concerns about pupils' progress on an informal basis from day to day. The school generally gives adequate warning of school events, but has taken note that some would like a longer period of notification. The school has taken adequate precautions to ensure the security of the school.

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<sup>5</sup> The foundation subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education.

45. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. A significant number of parents participate as volunteers in the school through reading, art, environmental projects and extra-curricular activities. The school has a parents' group that is successful in organising fund-raising and social events. The parents' group raised large sums of money which were used to buy equipment and games for the school.
46. Information provided for parents is satisfactory. They receive regular newsletters, information on the curriculum for their children's class and reports about their children's progress. Newsletters are well designed and comprehensive and offer useful information for parents. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress with their teachers. Meetings are organised to keep them fully informed of the topics being covered in their children's class. The school also displays information for parents at strategic points in the school where parents can easily gain access to it. Reports to parents about their children's progress are satisfactory. They give detailed information about pupils' achievements, but do not give any information about targets for improvement. The school's prospectus offers parents useful information, and the governors' annual report is attractively presented. However, neither document fully meets statutory requirements as they omit required information, such as a statement of the school's ethos and values, information about school security, the school's academic targets or the function of the resource unit for visually impaired pupils.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

47. The overall quality of the leadership and management provided by the headteacher and the school's two senior staff, who were responsible for establishing the school in its first year, is good. They have been instrumental in creating a very positive atmosphere in this new school in a very short space of time, making the school one to which the pupils greatly enjoy coming and with which the parents are very pleased.
48. The headteacher has a very clear vision of how he would like the school to develop. He has not only communicated this successfully to all of the staff and the school's many helpers, but has created a closely-knit team which works together very well in seeking to implement this vision. The school has an appropriate set of aims, and the staff have been very successful in fulfilling them. The adventure and excitement of opening a new school with such good facilities have engendered a very strong common sense of purpose, and the headteacher has been successful in ensuring the enthusiasm for further development continues by consulting staff fully and enabling them to participate in decision-making.
49. The school is managed well. Clear and effective systems and procedures have been developed to ensure its smooth running. Staff have a clear understanding of day-to-day procedures, and daily routines are organised efficiently. The size of the school and the shared sense of purpose provide plenty of opportunity for staff to discuss new procedures and professional issues. The school's management structure is effective for the current stage of the school's development, and there is a recognition that this will have to change to meet the school's needs as it grows in size.
50. One aspect which needs to be clarified is the role of the subject coordinator. In the first year of its existence, the headteacher and his two senior staff planned a thematic approach to teaching the curriculum. Although subject coordination responsibilities have been delegated to small teams of staff now that the school has increased in size, the coordinators have, as yet, had little input into ensuring that the school's chosen topics cater sufficiently well for each subject. Staff are not entirely clear about what they are expected to do in their role of subject coordinator. As a result, some subjects, particularly geography and history, are not being taught in sufficient depth through the school's thematic approach. The recent appointment of two new staff for the coming year provides the school with the opportunity to redistribute responsibilities in a manageable way, to clarify what is expected of the role of subject

coordinator and to ensure that the school's chosen topics make adequate provision for full coverage of the National Curriculum. The school's development plan makes provision for training staff in the role of subject coordinator at a later date, but the school may wish to bring this forward as a priority.

51. Although the arrangements for overseeing the school's provision for special educational needs are temporary until the school has developed its full complement of staff, this aspect of the school's work is managed well by the headteacher. The governing body has set out an appropriate policy, and governors with particular responsibility for special educational needs are in regular contact and are able to judge at first-hand the range and effectiveness of the provision for these pupils. The staff work together well to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs receive as much support as they are able to provide within the available resources. Teaching assistants, and those with specific responsibility for pupils with statements of special educational needs, fulfil their roles very well. Coordination of outside support from a number of different agencies is effective. The school also has a small number of pupils whose mother tongue is not English. The staff are sensitive to the needs of these pupils, for whom extra help is provided as and when required. At the parents' meeting, two parents from foreign countries spoke of how delighted they were at how well the school had supported their children.
52. Overall, the governing body fulfils its responsibilities well, despite the fact that some statutory responsibilities are not yet being met as well as they should be. The governing body has played a very significant and successful role in establishing the school, from the initial stages before the construction of the school building and the appointment of the headteacher through to overseeing the rapid expansion of numbers and establishing a full complement of staff and the maximum number of classes for the coming year well ahead of schedule. The governors have provided good support for the headteacher and have shown significant commitment in fulfilling their responsibilities. Meetings of committees and the full governing body are frequent and are well attended. Governors are very committed to the school, and have shared the vision, the excitement and the success of the new school. Through their involvement with the school in many ways, either through visiting, helping within the school or their involvement as parents, they have a very good understanding of the school.
53. The school has achieved a great deal in eighteen months. With the headteacher and staff, the governors have established a full set of legally required policies, as well as recommended policies for aspects such as equal opportunities and the induction of newly-qualified teachers. Appropriate steps have been taken to formulate a policy to promote racial equality, although pupils are already very good at respecting others, regardless of race or background. Some policies will require further consideration. For example, the policy on best value does not cover all aspects regarding the concepts of 'comparison', 'challenge', 'consultation' and 'competition'. The school's guidelines for assembly and collective worship do not make any distinction between 'assembly' and 'collective worship', and the school's current practice is not fulfilling the school's responsibility for providing a daily act of collective worship. Some minor omissions within the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents need to be rectified. Most importantly, the school needs to ensure that its own curricular plans fulfil all of the requirements of the National Curriculum. These, however, are teething problems, and should not detract from the considerable success of establishing a school so successfully in such a short space of time. Governors and staff already show a willingness to tackle these areas.
54. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating its own performance in its first eighteen months, although somewhat informal at present, are good. The school is keen to be seen as a self-evaluating school, which reviews its schemes of work, its policies and planning and seeks to make improvements where necessary. Much of the staff's efforts have gone into establishing procedures and practice for the first time, but a good awareness of how to

monitor and evaluate its own work and to set out development plans for the future is already emerging. The school's priorities in the initial stages of its development have been entirely appropriate. Considerable effort has been given to establishing a good ethos and to making learning enjoyable, relevant and motivating. The headteacher and his senior staff have a good understanding of what needs to be developed. There is an awareness, for example, of the need to improve the quality of the pupils' writing and to provide training in subject leadership for some of the school's very keen and proficient, but relatively inexperienced staff. Both internal and external monitoring of the quality of teaching has taken place and staff have been given constructive feedback for improvement. Appropriate procedures are in place for appraisal and performance management. The school's development plan is reviewed regularly and adjusted as necessary. As the school draws near to the end of its second year of existence, now is an appropriate time to develop more formalised procedures for monitoring and evaluating curricular planning, the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work, and for making clear what role subject coordinators are expected to play in this process. The shared commitment to improvement and the school's capacity to succeed are very good.

55. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources. It has made very good use of specific grants and other funding to establish the school. Income and expenditure figures reflect monies spent on setting up the new school and are not a true indicator of where the school might lie in comparison with other schools' income. There is a substantial carry forward on the budget which is earmarked, appropriately, to support a full complement of staff in the coming academic year.
56. The school's educational priorities are supported well through its financial planning. The headteacher and governors have a good overview of finances and monitor spending regularly. The school makes flexible use of hours designated for pupils with special educational needs, thus ensuring help for a wider range of pupils. Satisfactory use is made of new technology to support pupils' learning, although, given the quality and easy availability of resources, greater use could be made of computers to support pupils' learning.
57. Although the school's policy statement with regard to best value needs further clarification, good procedures are in place to ensure that the principles of best value are applied. The school's administrator is efficient and has a good overview of finance. She works closely with the headteacher and oversees the day-to-day expenditure very well. Governors receive regular reports and monitor expenditure regularly against spending targets that are detailed and prioritised in the school development plan. The school knows how its results compare with other schools, although is also aware of the difficulties of making valid comparisons on the basis of the very small number of pupils who have so far taken national tests. The school has not yet developed formal procedures for consulting parents and pupils, although the very open relationship with both parents and pupils provides very good informal channels of consultation. All decisions regarding the future development of the school are discussed regularly with the staff, who have played a full part in establishing good procedures and such a positive ethos within this new school.
58. For the number of pupils currently attending the school, there is a very good number of teaching staff, whose qualifications and experiences are well matched to the demands and range of the National Curriculum. Responsibilities are well matched to the interests and expertise of the teachers. All staff, including the newly qualified teacher, have agreed job descriptions. They are very well supported and encouraged to contribute positively to the development of the school and pupils' learning. The school also has very experienced and committed support staff, who are informed, skilled and effective. They work closely with the teachers and provide very good assistance, particularly when supporting literacy and numeracy and when working with pupils with statements of special educational needs.

59. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good. They reflect both the identified needs of the school and the personal needs of the staff. Documentation and discussion confirm that teaching and learning support assistants regularly attend a wide range of relevant courses. The school has good procedures for the induction of staff new to the school under the supervision of identified mentors. The school has good and effective provision for the training of new teachers.
60. The school's accommodation is very good. It is newly built and very attractive in presentation. It has a quiet courtyard with sculptures, which pupils are able to feel and touch. Both the internal and external buildings are very well maintained and in very good condition. The school has ample accommodation for the number of pupils on roll, and this allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Classrooms and corridors are well planned and uncluttered. They are bright and attractive, and enlivened with displays and celebration of pupils' work. For example, displays illustrate current topics of study and information on a healthy eating project. The school has good specialist accommodation for information and communication technology and music and an attractive library area. The school has good playground facilities, with access to large well-equipped playing and fenced woodland areas. However, the surface of the school's playing field is still, eighteen months after the school opened, unfit for pupils to play on, and this has restricted the range of activities and opportunities available to pupils in physical education.
61. Learning resources in most subjects are good. They are exceptionally good for special educational needs and information and communication technology. Resources for children in the Foundation Stage for most areas of the curriculum are good. However, the classroom is rather small to ensure that all areas of the curriculum can be resourced and accessed easily, especially when there are 30 children in the class. The safe, enclosed outdoor space is also small: it is adequate for a group of children to use for play, but not big enough for equipment to develop their gross physical skills.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

62. To improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:
- i. Improve the quality of pupils' writing\* by:
    - ensuring that work introduced during English lessons is consolidated effectively at other times during the day and in subsequent lessons;
    - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills through work produced for subjects other than English;
    - being more rigorous when marking pupils' work in pointing out where pupils could improve and ensuring that pupils learn from their mistakes.
- [Paragraphs 1, 6, 20, 54, 76, 79, 80, 81, 91, 103, 107, 110, 111, 125]
- ii. Improve the way the curriculum is organised and pupils' progress is assessed by:
    - ensuring that the topic themes cover all aspects of the National Curriculum in sufficient depth, particularly in history and geography;
    - ensuring that all lessons are of an appropriate length and that adequate time is allocated to teaching foundation subjects;

[Paragraphs 10, 11, 26, 50, 53, 104-108]

- developing manageable assessment procedures to keep track of pupils' progress in the foundation subjects.

[Paragraphs 42, 98, 103, 108, 116, 122, 125]

iii. Develop the role of subject coordinators\* by:

- clarifying the school's expectations with regard to subject coordinators;
- providing appropriate training in the role of subject coordinator;
- providing opportunities for subject coordinators to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning within their subject areas.

[Paragraphs 28, 50, 54, 98, 108, 113]

\* These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.

63. Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- ensuring that the school meets statutory requirements by providing a daily act of collective worship [paragraphs 33, 53];
- ensuring that the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements [paragraphs 46, 53];
- making greater use of the school's good facilities for information and communication technology [paragraphs 8, 24, 56, 79, 85, 91, 98, 103, 109, 112, 113, 116, 125];
- improving pupils' exposure to multi-cultural diversity [paragraph 36].

## **THE RESOURCES CENTRE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PUPILS**

64. The school accommodates a resources centre for visually impaired pupils, but the centre was not operational at the time of the inspection. The plans are for the school to employ a teacher to oversee the resources centre and to have specific responsibility for visually impaired pupils. The intention is that this should be a resource which is shared with other schools within the local authority, and that the appointed teacher should visit other schools who have visually impaired pupils on their roll. It is also envisaged that Great Binfields should offer places to up to ten visually impaired pupils, who would receive direct support from the teacher in charge of the resources centre.
65. The two rooms allocated for the resources centre are fully equipped, and the resources are overseen by members of the local authority's advisory team. The school currently has one visually impaired pupil, who receives support from a teaching assistant who, in turn, receives guidance from a visiting specialist. The pupil is a very well-integrated and happy member of the school community and plays a full part in school life. Her needs are catered for very well by the school's staff.
66. It is expected that a member of staff will be appointed to oversee the resources centre as from the start of the new school year.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

38
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Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

[In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]

29
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### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	13	22	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	34	58	8	0	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 two percentage points.

### 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)	–	105
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	–	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	–	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	–	24

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	63
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.4

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	5	2	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	–	–	–
	Girls	–	–	–
	Total	–	–	–
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	–	–	–
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	–	–	–
	Girls	–	–	–
	Total	–	–	–
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	–	–	–
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

The school's results are not reported in this format when there are 10 or fewer pupils in the year group, in order to avoid identification of individual pupils.

### 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	6	1	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	–	–	–
	Girls	–	–	–
	Total	–	–	–
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	–	–	–
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	–	–	–
	Girls	–	–	–
	Total	–	–	–
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	–	–	–
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

The school's results are not reported in this format when there are 10 or fewer pupils in the year group, in order to avoid identification of individual pupils.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
78	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	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***

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.4
Average class size	21

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	151.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	–
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	–

Total number of education support staff	–
Total aggregate hours worked per week	–

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	215,097
Total expenditure	191,976
Expenditure per pupil	2,782
Balance brought forward from previous year	-3,304
Balance carried forward to next year	19,816

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Number of pupils per FTE adult	-
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.4

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	105
Number of questionnaires returned	80
Percentage of questionnaires returned	76

Percentage of responses in each category<sup>6</sup>

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	78	19	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school	68	30	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good	56	40	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	48	40	8	5	0
The teaching is good	78	18	3	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	58	30	8	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	73	24	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	71	25	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents	54	35	6	4	1
The school is well led and managed	74	23	3	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	68	25	1	4	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	55	30	11	3	1

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<sup>6</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

## **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**

67. Children enter the Reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. There is a carefully planned staggered entry: those with birthdays in the autumn and spring term all stay at school for the whole day by half-term of the autumn term, while those with summer birthdays stay all day from January. Most children enter the school with some pre-school experience. The children's attainment varies widely but, overall, is typical of the average four-year-old.
68. The children in the Reception class have very good attitudes to learning. They achieve well and make good progress overall. They quickly acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. The children make lots of effort to learn. They are very interested in all the activities, learn to concentrate for increasing lengths of time and become independent. Many children work unsupervised at specified tasks, called challenges, while the teacher works with one group. One child persevered with making a spider from play-dough. She wanted to show the teacher, but every time she stood up one of the legs fell off. This happened six times, but she persevered and finally was successful in proudly showing her eight-legged spider to the teacher. Children find and return resources they need and use them carefully; they put the tops back on the glue sticks before putting them back in the carton.
69. The teaching for the children in the Reception class is good overall. At times it is very good. The adults provide a range of appropriate activities that help the children learn the skills they need. They teach the basic skills needed for literacy and numeracy very well. Medium-term planning, to enable children to meet the expected standards, is good, and weekly planning is also good. The adults have a good range of teaching methods: they work with large and small groups and individuals on planned tasks, they interact with children working on self-chosen tasks, and they move children on in their learning through skilful questioning. They manage the children very well. All adults have high expectations of the children's behaviour and learning. This is a strength of the Foundation Stage. It ensures that all children, including those with special educational needs and those whose mother tongue is not English, make good progress.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

70. By the time children leave the Reception class, the overall standards for their personal, social and emotional development are above average. Children entering school rapidly feel safe and secure in their new environment as a result of the caring and supportive atmosphere created by the adults. Because of the good teaching and the teacher's very high expectations, children make very good progress in their personal development, and soon gain confidence to relate to adults and to cooperate with one another. Children learn to take turns and share through playing together in the sand and with small-world toys. They develop empathy with others, sometimes through opportunities presented in circle time. During the inspection, for example, the teacher read a story about a mouse that went on a boat with Jesus. The children listened very well and became completely involved in the story and commented as the story evolved: 'I'm scared.' 'I bet they're going to be all right.' 'The storm's going to stop.' The children felt confident to express their feelings in front of others who did not scoff at them. At the end of the story, one child showed very good understanding that not all people would be able to stop the storm by saying, 'Jesus is a very special man – that's why the storm stopped.' They wait patiently for their turn on the computer or on the outdoor equipment. Children listen carefully to adults and try to comply with instructions. They hang their coats

carefully on the hangers and put their lunchboxes in the right cubby-holes. They can dress and undress themselves with help and reminders, though this still takes them a long time. They go to the toilet independently and remember to wash their hands afterwards.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

71. By the time children leave the Reception class, overall standards in communication, language and literacy are above average. The teaching of this area of learning is good, and frequently very good. Most of the children are likely to achieve the expected standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing by the time they enter Year 1, and many will have exceeded some of them. Children develop their skills in listening and speaking through a range of role-play activities, such as the 'Safari Park', and in outdoor play. They listen to stories with understanding and enjoyment. They are able to recount their personal experiences when discussing what they do at home. They are beginning to reason and to think about how others react. They interact with adults and other children, using appropriate language. When writing a rhyme, two children used the words 'squeezed' and 'slithered' when describing how their animal would go up a spout. All pupils enjoy looking at print, pictures and books. They are aware that print goes from left to right and recognise familiar words round the classroom. All but those with special educational needs have made a good start to reading. Most children know all the sounds of speech and many high frequency words. About a third of the class are fluent readers of repetitive texts and are keen to practise their skills. They use both contextual and picture clues to decode new words. Another third show advanced reading skills for their age, using phonic skills to decode unfamiliar words. Children use their knowledge of phonics in their writing and make good progress. A child who wrote, 'I d mpl en te leo' ('I am playing in the leaves') in October, was able to write, 'Cindlla cam to and wen to the bol' ('Cinderella came too, and went to the ball') in February. Many children can spell the high frequency words such as 'the', 'up' and 'and' correctly. Children learn to write well in a cursive hand, though some numbers and letters are written backwards.

### **Mathematical development**

72. As a result of the good teaching, the overall standards achieved in their mathematical development are above average. The great majority of the children are likely to achieve the expected standards for number by the time they enter Year 1, and some will exceed them. Most children were able to give a number bond to five when asked. An able child said, 'Six minus one equals five.' The teacher made the children check by counting each time to reinforce the concept. All are able to divide 10 into two sets and write the sum. More able children combine three numbers and check using multi-link cubes. They know what numbers they need to use but are not always sure of the order in numbers such as 23. They check with each other and are helpful. 'Does 12 have a one and a two?' 'Yes, and the one goes first.' Most children recognize the written numbers to 20 and the most able can count and recognize numbers beyond this.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

73. By the time children leave the Reception class, their knowledge and understanding of the world are in line with what is expected for their age. Children enter school with a good knowledge of their families and homes, immediate neighbourhood and places they have visited. The teacher provides a good range of opportunities for the children to extend their knowledge and understanding. The children show an interest in their environment and in the visitors to their classroom. They explore the properties of water and sand, carefully filling and emptying containers. They know that plants have leaves, roots and stems and can draw and label the parts correctly. They learn about animals that live in hot countries and about small creatures such as spiders. In one lesson, they learnt that spiders were not 'insects' but 'arachnids' and what that meant. They enjoy using the computer and move the mouse with

skill, using click and drag, to draw colourful pictures using the program 'Painter'. The ability of most children to use such programs is advanced for their age.

### **Physical development**

74. By the time children leave the Reception class, their physical development is in line with what is expected. Their gross and fine motor skills are developing satisfactorily and so is their coordination. They enjoy taking part in a range of physical activities. They take part in role-play activities indoors and outdoors. They have access to this provision at some time during each day, though the space is too small to enable children to have really challenging experiences. They also use the hall for more formal lessons. These provide them with opportunities to use small apparatus such as balls and ropes. They make good use of space and cooperate well with each other. They are developing good eye and hand coordination. One boy was able to throw a ball into the air, clap several times, let the ball bounce and then catch it. Almost all children have good manipulative skills, handling small objects with skill and care. They use scissors, pencils and brushes well.

### **Creative development**

75. By the time children leave the Reception class, their creative development is in line with what is expected. Children enjoy drawing and painting and demonstrate care in such activities. They like to experiment with colour and texture, for example, to paint Jack and the beanstalk. Some children show increasing skills when painting recognisable pictures. They can use glue, straw, wool, glitter and other collage materials with confidence. There are opportunities to participate in good quality role-play activities to extend their skills of expression. Children have very good opportunities to develop their musical abilities. They know the names of the un-tuned percussion instruments they use, know what sounds they make and can make good attempts to select the most appropriate to accompany words of a rhyme. They follow a written graphic score with accuracy and are proud of their performance. Some children show good rhythmic ability and many are developing a good sense of dynamics. They are given many opportunities to develop these skills and have a good repertoire of simple songs and rhymes when they leave the Reception class.

### **ENGLISH**

76. Despite weaknesses in the quality of the pupils' writing, which are particularly evident in Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities are making good progress in English throughout the school. The inspection findings show that overall standards in English are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. This is not a reflection of the teaching, which is consistently of good quality in all classes, but of the differing experiences pupils have had before joining Great Binfields. The school's own assessments, discussions with the pupils and scrutiny of their work show that all pupils are making good gains in their learning, but that standards are generally highest for those pupils who have been at the school for the greatest length of time. For example, the standard of work, produced by pupils who joined the school at the start of the Reception year and who are now in Year 1, is, comparatively, higher than that achieved by pupils who joined the school in Year 2.
77. Throughout the school, pupils achieve appropriate standards in speaking and listening as a result of the many opportunities provided for them to discuss issues in circle time, personal and social education and many other lessons. There is very good emphasis throughout the school on ensuring that pupils listen carefully to what others are saying. From the comments of many parents and the staff, it is clear that many pupils have gained significantly in self-esteem since joining the school, and this increased confidence has had a significant impact on their speaking skills. Whilst some pupils in Years 1 and 2 are still quite reticent in speaking in front of others, and some pupils in Year 3 still mumble their answers, confidence increases

noticeably in Year 4, and almost all pupils in Years 5 and 6 are prepared to air their views and are willing to listen to what others have to say.

78. Reading is the strongest of the skills in Key Stage 1, as it is for many pupils in Key Stage 2, and pupils achieve appropriate standards at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils achieve the expected standard for seven-year-olds in reading and a number of pupils are already exceeding them. Most pupils read texts, which are carefully chosen to match their level of attainment, accurately and with good understanding. The most able pupils are beginning to cope well with new and unfamiliar words, and pupils of average ability know how they are expected to sound words out. Lower-attaining pupils have not yet acquired this skill. Some of the older pupils in Key Stage 2 are trying hard to overcome their earlier aversion to reading, and even the weakest readers are not far short of the expected standard. A few pupils, who clearly enjoy reading for pleasure, have a reading age above their chronological age. They read fluently, confidently and with expression, self-correcting when necessary and demonstrating good understanding of what they read. The school places considerable emphasis on developing pupils' reading skills. In addition to the reading which takes place during the literacy hour, time is set aside after lunch each day for pupils to read. The teachers use a good variety of activities to encourage good reading habits. The teacher may, for example, work with a small group of pupils to guide, challenge and extend their reading skills, whilst teaching assistants or other adult helpers listen to individual pupils reading. Other useful strategies, such as reading to a partner, or older pupils helping younger pupils to read, help to develop pupils' skills. For the younger pupils, teachers use a carefully graded scheme of readers, and books are taken home regularly for children to read to their parents. This partnership between home and school is particularly important in helping pupils to develop their skills and acquire good reading habits. Most older pupils are given a free choice as to what they read but, whilst this works well for some pupils, the system does not ensure that all pupils have a balanced reading diet and provides insufficient guidance on texts which would challenge their reading skills and widen their repertoire.
79. Writing is the weakest of pupils' skills in English, but their ability to write is developing well at Key Stage 1 and teachers are endeavouring to broaden the range of writing styles at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are achieving the minimum expected level in writing, but few pupils exceed it. A good feature is the way teachers encourage the pupils to develop confidence in writing, without having to worry unduly about their spelling. Many pupils are beginning to write more fluently as a result, but there is not enough input from teachers to help pupils in the transition from this stage of emergent writing to one in which their spelling and sentence construction are more consistently correct. A number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 struggle greatly with their writing, a legacy of their previous negative experiences, which the teachers are working hard to reverse. The more able pupils, however, show competence in writing in different styles, for example, writing instructions, a book review, setting out arguments for and against a topic, or producing imaginative writing. They think carefully about the words they use and are developing their range of vocabulary well. Throughout the school, teachers teach the basic skills of writing well during the literacy hour. A very good feature of the curriculum is the way that teachers try to interlink their teaching in other subjects with their literacy teaching. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were planning a non-chronological report on micro-organisms in connection with their work in science, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 were planning writing for advertisements in connection with their work in design and technology. Overall, however, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to consolidate or develop well-taught writing skills through written work produced for other subjects. Another factor which hinders pupils' progress in developing their writing skills is the way teachers mark pupils' written work. The teachers are assiduous in marking pupils' work and take great care to make encouraging comments to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence. However, this is frequently at the expense of showing pupils where they have made mistakes or pointing out to them where they could improve. Although there is good oral input in class, pupils frequently carry on making the same mistakes because they

have not been pointed out to them. Some good examples were observed of pupils using computers to produce written work, but much greater use could be made of the school's good facilities to teach pupils how to use a word processor effectively to help them with the drafting and redrafting of their work.

80. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school. All of the lessons observed during the inspection were good, except two which were very good. Teachers plan their lessons well, taking due consideration of the needs of pupils with special educational needs, providing sufficient scope for the more able pupils, and making special provision for the few pupils whose mother tongue is not English. In some lessons, teachers spend a long time focusing on a particular topic or spelling pattern, whereas pupils might benefit from spending less time initially, but having more opportunities to consolidate their learning in subsequent lessons. The teachers use resources well. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used a puppet to capture pupils' interest and the pupils worked well in pairs, writing down answers quickly on individual whiteboards which enabled the teacher to see immediately whether pupils had understood or not. Teaching assistants and other adults fulfil particularly important roles in helping pupils with special educational needs to make progress, although, at times, the number of adults helping within the class impedes pupils from developing real independence, as there is always someone at hand whom they can ask, rather than trying to figure things out for themselves. High expectations are evident in the way some teachers encourage pupils to take a pride in the work they produce for display. In one class, the most significant pieces of pupils' writing during the term have been collected and mounted into an attractive scrapbook. The pieces of writing are wide ranging, including a character review, biography, poetry, a scene from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, writing about Victorian artefacts, and some imaginative writing. This helps pupils to value their work. The same high expectations are not evident in all classes in the work produced in pupils' exercise books where, sometimes, work produced later in the year is presented more shoddily than work at the start of the year. The teachers manage pupils very well indeed. They give plenty of positive reinforcement and value pupils' contributions to the lessons. As a result, pupils are keen to participate and a good working atmosphere prevails in most lessons. At times, adults are over-indulgent in their praise, commending efforts which are not particularly praiseworthy. Homework is given regularly. In the early part of the year, there was little variety in what pupils were given, but the range of homework activities has improved this term and complements pupils' work in class.
81. Although there are still areas for development within English, the subject has been led and managed well in the initial stages of the school's development. The school provides a sufficiently broad curriculum, with an appropriate balance of tasks. The school gives high priority to the teaching of English, and the improvement of standards in writing is currently one of the main priorities in the school improvement plan. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in English, and the school keeps careful track of pupils' progress. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through helping pupils to consider and listen carefully to the views of others, and teaching them to read with understanding.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. Inspection evidence indicates that, overall, standards are average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Because the school is so new, there is no past performance to give an indication of patterns and trends of achievement. In 2002, only 7 pupils took national tests at the age of 7 and 11, and this sample is too small from which to draw any valid conclusions. However, when one compares the average performance of pupils currently in Year 6 with their average performance, when they were pupils in Year 2 in other schools, then their progress is good.

83. The National Numeracy Strategy has been established well. The strategy is understood and adapted well by teachers. Appropriate use of practical resources interests and motivates pupils, and the teaching is frequently lively and good. Especially good is the consistent way in which teachers manage pupils. Pupils feel secure, knowing they will be listened to, and this gives them the confidence to tackle the range of tasks teachers plan. The school is developing a mathematics curriculum that is broadly based and well balanced and which encourages an investigative approach, where pupils have opportunities to develop their own strategies for manipulating numbers. Good use of assessment information enables teachers and teaching assistants to offer both well-targeted support to pupils with special educational needs and tasks with relevant challenge for higher-attaining pupils. The subject leader is experienced and knowledgeable, and has the enthusiasm and subject expertise to make a significant contribution to the development of the subject.
84. By the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils are confident with numbers up to 100. They name three-digit numbers, can round numbers to the nearest 10 and correctly order and sequence numbers. They recognise and name two- and three-dimensional shapes, and many identify properties of these shapes. In one lesson, pupils in Year 2 quickly extended their understanding of the properties of two-dimensional shapes by showing how to identify lines of reflective symmetry. Other strengths in pupils' attainments are their ability to identify coins and combine them to make money totals, identifying halves and quarters and in telling the time. Pupils gather information using tally charts, and represent their findings using a variety of graphs and charts. Teachers also challenge pupils to explain what the information tells them, and it is this element of challenge in the teaching of mathematics which is beginning to speed up pupils' learning. There are clear signs that the school's emphasis on practical activity and investigation is beginning to have a positive impact on younger pupils' learning.
85. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils quickly work out calculations in their heads and use their understanding of the value of numbers to help them. Pupils measure reasonably accurately and, in one lesson, showed clear appreciation of the need to improve these skills in such areas as using a protractor to measure angles. They use their mathematical skills to solve problems expressed in words, and regular practice is making them more confident. They work with a variety of types of fractions and those pupils who learn the quickest are able to interchange unit, decimal and percentage fractions accurately. Pupils experience a variety of work in handling data and are expected to make efforts to interpret what the data indicates. Pupils use computers successfully to enter data to produce graphs, but the school is only at an early stage of encouraging pupils to reinforce their mathematical understanding through using information and communication technology.
86. Overall, the quality of the teaching is good; some very good practice was also observed during the inspection. A feature is the way teachers encourage pupils to solve problems in their own way as well as to describe and explain their thinking processes to each other. They present lessons in a variety of ways which capture pupils' interest, and they question pupils well to check their understanding and to develop their thinking. In a lesson with the oldest pupils, looking at visualising the net of a closed cube, the teacher challenged the pupils to see how many different nets they could find. As a way of checking what they had learned, she questioned them about four possible nets of a different shape and invited them to identify the correct one, giving their reasons. Pupils were very keen to explain and demonstrate their ideas using the overhead projector, and responses showed a good level of understanding. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants, who support individuals or groups. As a result, pupils who have difficulty learning, or concentrating and behaving sensibly for any length of time, are encouraged to persevere with tasks and are included fully in the lessons. The contributions from support staff are very good. There is a strong sense of very effective teamwork, enabling pupils to learn well.

87. Assessment is used appropriately. The school uses the results of the national tests for Years 2 and 6 and the optional tests for Years 3, 4 and 5 to track pupils' progress from year to year. Information from assessments is beginning to be used well to develop planned programmes in areas such as division and decoding word problems. The school is strengthening effectively the links in mathematics between what is taught, what is known and what needs to be taught next. Pupils use and consolidate their numeracy skills well in other areas of the curriculum, such as science. Books are marked regularly, and the school is increasingly striving to involve pupils in discussions about their work. Comments from teachers, such as 'Excellent work and well presented – could you have been more systematic in your selection of doubles?' are supportive and yet seek to move learning on although, as yet, this practice is not firmly embedded throughout.
88. Teachers are supported well, with opportunities for further training and good provision of learning resources which enable them to fulfil the school's aim of developing a strong, practical, investigative element in mathematics work. There are clear signs already that the school's emphasis on good teaching and learning opportunities is developing pupils' interest and shaping their very good attitudes towards the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

89. Inspection evidence shows that, overall, standards are average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards in some aspects of experimental and investigative science are higher than expected. Pupils are interested in science and keen to do practical tasks.
90. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are developing an understanding of the scientific process very well through practical work. They know that adult animals and baby animals are different and why. They have experimented with their senses and know that the further away a sound is, the quieter it sounds. They know that materials have different properties and that some can change shape and some cannot. They enjoyed making an electric circuit and know what prevents it from working.
91. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know more about their own bodies and can label skeletons, using the correct vocabulary when discussing the organs, bones and joints. They understand about forces, gravity and air resistance and are able to appreciate gravitational pull. During the inspection, the pupils were investigating the effect of micro-organisms on food and other substances. Pupils had decided what to mix with water in order to see the effects of yeast upon the mixture. The following day they were intrigued to see the different results. They record their findings well using good subject-specific vocabulary and use a range of recording methods such as drawings, diagrams, tables and text. This presents pupils with some opportunities to practise their writing skills, but the amount of written work is not extensive. There is also some good use of information and communication technology, but the use of new technology is not as widespread as it could be.
92. The quality of the teaching is good overall. Some very good teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6, where interesting and appropriate investigations are developed very well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the basic skills very well. Teachers are well organised and resourced, enabling pupils to interact and participate well. Questioning is of a high standard, open-ended, using the correct scientific vocabulary. Lessons are planned and taught well. Timing is well judged, allowing pupils time to try things for themselves. Teachers give frequent prompts and show examples to extend ideas and encourage slow learners. The pupils are enthusiastic, work with a high degree of interest and concentration and show pride in what they have achieved. They work on task in groups, supporting each other to devise an experiment and to record findings.
93. The initial oversight of the subject has been sound. The school is using the national published guidelines to plan the curriculum in a thematic way but realises that they have to ensure that

all programmes of study are visited systematically. There are plans to use the potential of the school grounds and woodland area to promote science, and this should significantly enhance the learning opportunities available for pupils. Other resources are satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

94. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their mother tongue, make good progress.
95. In Key Stage 1, pupils use a variety of media effectively. They show satisfactory skills when using water-colours and drawing with pastels, and use pencil crayons to draw accurate pictures of fruit. During the inspection, they used collage, pastels and paint well to complete lively pictures of parrots. They mix colours carefully to achieve the colour they want. Pupils also develop other skills, such as using clay, for example, to make models of pigs from the story of 'The Three Little Pigs', and taking photographs, such as those of their favourite places in the school grounds. During the inspection, they used the photograph as the focus for making an extended drawing of the same area. Their observations were good and they made careful drawings that were easily recognisable.
96. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed a variety of techniques using oil pastels. Sketchbooks, for example, show how pupils have experimented with techniques of rubbing, smudging and blending, and practising placing the colours in a range of combinations to see which work best together. They are developing satisfactory techniques in using a variety of pencil types. In one lesson, for example, an extension of this work was seen in which pupils used pastels to create the colours for fruits. They worked hard and, despite some early setbacks, most of the pupils executed a satisfactory drawing by the end of the lesson and were pleased with the results. Pupils know how to make prints using poly-print. All pupils can print using one colour and some have repeated their prints as a rotating pattern. Others have printed with two colours and one or two added details with crayons. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use pastels to draw lively pictures. All pupils enjoy using clay. When the oldest pupils went to a residential study centre, they made clay models of the animals they had seen. Many of these were very realistic, especially those of badgers.
97. The overall quality of the teaching is good. During the inspection, a good lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2, and a very good lesson in Years 5 and 6. The concluding sessions focused pupils' minds on the outcomes of their work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were all able to say what their picture meant to them and what they were trying to convey. A discussion with a group of pupils about the work produced in the lesson suggests that the introduction to it was of good quality. They understood how to apply oil pastels to create different effects. They were enthusiastic about the work they had produced and were keen to finish their pictures.
98. Art has not yet been a priority within the school's development plan, but the initial supervision of the subject has been satisfactory. The coordinators have appropriate plans to develop the subject as they hope to ensure the systematic development of the key skills through a common scheme of work. Resources are satisfactory. The school has used the works of European artists to support teaching, but less use has been made of artists of African, Asian, American or Aboriginal heritage. This omission means the subject does not support the pupils' all-round cultural development as well as it could. There are no procedures for assessment at present, an aspect which needs to be developed. Some appropriate use is made of information and communication technology to develop pupils' artistic skills, but more use could be made of new technology in a variety of ways.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. Most pupils attain standards that are broadly typical of those found nationally at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. As pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their mother tongue move through the school, they reach the same standards and make the same good progress in developing their knowledge and skills as their peers.
100. Work in design and technology in Key Stage 1 is sometimes linked to the stories they hear in their literacy lessons. Pupils develop a satisfactory range of skills through these activities. For example, pupils used paper and card to make a get-well card for Red Riding Hood to take to her grandma. They cut and rolled card to make flowers to decorate the card. They cut strips of paper and wove them together to make a basket to take cakes to grandma. They used glue and staples to fasten the baskets.
101. Pupils in Key Stage 2 undertake more substantial projects and develop a good understanding of the process of designing, making and evaluating a product. During the inspection, pupils were partway through a project on crispy pancakes. Pupils devised their own fillings for the pancakes, then made and cooked them. They tasted and evaluated their own and those of other pupils. Pupils then proceeded to design packaging for the pancakes, evaluating their designs and making changes until they were satisfied. In one lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were beginning to design a board game to be given as a free gift with a box of crispy pancakes. They discussed the components needed for a game such as counters, rules, dice and a board. They shared their ideas and decided what sort of game they would make. The whole project has been well planned to give pupils a good understanding of each stage of the process from initial concept to final product. Pupils enjoy the school's approach and the practical involvement.
102. During the inspection, no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, and one good lesson was observed in Key Stage 2. Based on the quality of pupils' finished work, the overall quality of the teaching appears to be good. In the lesson observed for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher's clear explanations enabled pupils to understand the task quickly. Her very good organisation of resources ensured that pupils were able to start their task without wasting time. Planning was good, pupils were very well managed and challenged. Relationships between adults and pupils were good and, on the whole, pupils worked well with each other.
103. Although the subject does not yet have a finalised policy or guidelines and has not yet been a focus area within the school development plan, satisfactory guidance has been provided by the two subject leaders, which has enabled some good work to take place. The staff are enthusiastic about the opportunities that design and technology offer to pupils. Resources for the subject are good. They are stored safely and are accessible to staff. There are no procedures for assessment at present, an aspect which needs to be developed. Appropriate opportunities are incorporated into projects for pupils to develop their numeracy skills, but greater emphasis could be given to developing their literacy skills through the written accounts and evaluations of their projects. Some very appropriate uses of information and communication technology are planned into the projects, but opportunities are also missed to use new technology to support their work in the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

104. The school does not teach geography and history as discrete subjects, but endeavours to teach the curriculum through a series of topics which embrace work from a range of different subjects. As a result of this approach, no history lessons were observed during the inspection and only one geography lesson was seen in Key Stage 1. Judgements on these two subjects are based, therefore, on the evidence provided by a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers. Whilst this approach to curricular planning provides relevance and interest for the pupils and ensures that work in one subject links well with work

in another, it poses problems in terms of coverage of the National Curriculum. Some of the topics, such as those on Egyptians and Victorians, provide a ready outlet for teaching history, but none of the topics have a geographical focus. At present, the school's topic plans are not comprehensive enough, and insufficient time is devoted to teaching the topics, to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum for these two subjects, particularly geography, are covered or that basic geographical and historical skills are developed systematically. As a result, standards are below those expected for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in both subjects, and well below those expected in geography at the end of Key Stage 2.

105. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop some understanding of chronology and differences between life now and life in the past through work undertaken on the topic of toys. Through the topic of houses and homes, they are beginning to appreciate the purpose of maps and plans and how to interpret them. But there is little breadth or depth to the work undertaken in either subject, and little evidence to show that pupils are learning to select from their knowledge of history and communicate it in a variety of ways, or that they have had the opportunity to gain an adequate understanding of environmental change or to undertake a detailed study of two localities.
106. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a better knowledge and understanding of history than of geography. This year, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have studied Egyptians and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have learnt about the Victorians. Their written work shows an awareness of different aspects of life during these periods in history, and some interesting writing exploring different points of view has been produced in connection with work on the Victorians. But neither topic has been developed in any great depth and the work undertaken has been insufficient to develop the range of skills and understanding envisaged in the National Curriculum for history. The evidence of work in geography is very sparse indeed, and pupils have not undertaken studies of two different localities or pursued the themes of water, settlements and environmental change in any depth.
107. The one lesson observed during the inspection was satisfactory, with some good features. The provision, for example, for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to undertake a tour of the school to take photographs of different areas with a digital camera was not only enjoyed by the pupils, but provided a good resource for discussion in future lessons. Evidence from the small amount of pupils' work seen shows that aspects of history and geography are taught satisfactorily when they arise as part of the school's topic planning. However, because so little of these two subjects is taught, the overall quality of teaching and learning in these two subjects is unsatisfactory overall. A good feature of both subjects is the way in which teachers endeavour to use appropriate material in their literacy lessons to relate to the topics being studied. Overall, however, very little written work is produced, and the school does not take full advantage of the potential impact these two subjects can have on developing pupils' literacy skills. Although pupils in one class had presented their work on the Egyptians attractively in a multi-fold booklet, and individual pieces of work are generally presented well, teachers do not draw together all of the pupils' work to produce an end product which illustrates what pupils have learnt over the course of the topic. Pupils have had some opportunities to use the Internet for research, but little use is made of new technology to help them organise and present their work
108. The school is aware of the imbalance within its thematic approach to planning the curriculum and of the need to look more closely at how both subjects can be integrated more effectively to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and that pupils' skills are developed systematically. It is also aware of the need to develop the coordinators' role so that they can develop manageable assessment procedures and gain a clearer overview of what is happening throughout the school. The school is in the early stages of planning its curriculum and has deliberately chosen not to follow the easy route of adopting ready-made subject plans. The interest generated in some of the school's topic work, such as the work in design

and technology to design, make and package their own brand of crispy pancakes, and some stimulating displays, show that the school is able to motivate the pupils to learn. It is not yet working in history and geography, but the school has already planned a number of days of in-service training in order to tackle the problem and improve the provision for these two subjects.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. The quality of the school's provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is in line with the standards expected of seven- and eleven-year-olds, and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Only one information and communication technology lesson was timetabled during the three days of the inspection. Evidence from pupils' work suggests that the quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Pupils develop their skills in meaningful contexts, which relate well to work being undertaken in other subjects, but staff could make greater use of pupils' information technology skills to support their learning in other subjects.
110. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are working at the expected level in all aspects of the curriculum, though few have progressed beyond this. Pupils understand how new technology can enable them to exchange and share information. For example, pupils learn how to use the computer to produce labels and short pieces of writing. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to write at length using a computer and, although they are learning how to correct what they have typed, they have yet to develop any real understanding of how helpful computers can be when reviewing and modifying their work. Pupils know that computers can be used to find things out, but do not have regular opportunities to use CD-ROMs or the Internet. All pupils have learnt essential skills, such as logging onto the school's network, locating programs, starting a new piece of work and printing it out.
111. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are working at the expected level in most aspects of the subject, and a small number of pupils are working beyond this level. The pupils are most competent in exchanging and sharing information. They use the basic functions of a word processor confidently and know how to set out text in different ways. Pupils have, for example, produced attractive pieces of work for display, but there is little evidence of extensive use of a word processor to help pupils develop their writing skills. They use a data-handling program to produce charts from the data they have input, but are not particularly confident in making independent choices about how best to display or use their information. A few more able pupils, however, use the program very confidently and quickly and show a keenness to explore features which have not been explained. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to find out information, for example, by using the Internet, although no examples of such independent research were observed during the inspection. The pupils' understanding of how computers can be used to monitor events is the area in which pupils have least experience. The covers which pupils have produced for some of their work folders and some of their posters on display indicate very clearly that pupils enjoy using computers and value the opportunity which computers provide to enhance the quality of their work. Throughout the school, pupils' lack of familiarity with the keyboard slows them down when using the computers.
112. Through their own skills and the use they make of new technology for display purposes and to produce teaching materials, the teachers display sound competence. Pupils' work on display shows that the basic elements of the curriculum for information and communication technology and key skills are taught effectively. A good feature of teachers' planning is that staff link the teaching of skills to the production of work which helps to improve pupils' understanding in other subjects. In the one lesson observed, the teacher introduced the lesson well and set pupils an appropriate task, to display data in connection with work in design and technology. However, it was clear from the difficulties that some pupils faced that

much more practice is required to enable them to make independent decisions and to learn to try to work problems out for themselves. Teachers make very good use of the digital camera, and there are interesting displays of photographs of work in progress in most classrooms, which not only are a source of interest and motivation for the pupils, but also act as good reminders of the work they have covered in previous lessons.

113. The oversight of information and communication technology has been satisfactory in the early stages of the school's development. The school's leaders have shown good vision in equipping the school so well and setting up an infrastructure, which enables the teaching of a whole class or of groups of pupils within the classroom. It has not been as successful in ensuring that full use is made of the school's resources. The four classes have access throughout the day to a well-equipped computer suite, complete with digital projector and interactive whiteboard. In addition, computers are available in each of the classrooms, as are a number of laptop computers, which can be connected to the school's main server via a wireless area network. The school has an appropriate policy for use of the Internet, and sufficient attention is given to health and safety aspects of using computers. Information and communication technology is the next subject for major consideration on the school's rolling development programme, which should allow the coordinator to monitor the school's use of new technology as well as the quality of teaching. Within the action plan, the school's priorities are, quite appropriately, to develop appropriate procedures to monitor the coverage of the curriculum, to ensure that key skills are developed progressively as pupils move through the school and to assess how well pupils are achieving.

## **MUSIC**

114. During the inspection, it was only possible to see one lesson in Key Stage 2. This is insufficient evidence upon which to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning and about standards of attainment.
115. The subject is at an early stage of development, not yet having been a focus in the school's developing curriculum and maintenance plan. Staff have developed initial planning frameworks, based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's guidelines, and several staff have recently attended courses to raise confidence and expertise. In the lesson observed during the inspection, the teaching was good. The learning objective was to create a 'jingle' to advertise a product. Pupils worked with enthusiasm in their groups and a couple of groups showed clearly that they had internalised the sound of the jingle and were able to create lyrics to fit the tune. The session was managed well by the class teacher and all enjoyed the activities. Pupils' attitudes were very positive.
116. The subject leaders have, enthusiastically, provided sound leadership and management of the subject and have already established appropriate priorities for in-service training and the sharing of expertise. Priorities for development include devising manageable procedures for assessment, as well as making use of information and communication technology. Resources are satisfactory, although the school acknowledges the need to develop these in terms of a wider range of instruments and music, both recorded and in books. Pupils currently have the opportunity to receive tuition in guitar and keyboard, and the recent Christmas performance was felt to be significant, both in terms of raising the subject's profile, and in generating enthusiasm.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

117. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainments are broadly in line with those expected in gymnastics and dance, the only aspects of physical education observed during the inspection.

118. In their gymnastics lessons, pupils appreciate the importance of warm-up activities. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make good use of the hall space, working with an awareness of others around them. They demonstrate sound control when moving and, at a given signal, can stop and hold a balance. They are developing an awareness of how to build a continuous sequence of movements. In a dance lesson, pupils developed this experience of sequence building, working to the rhythm of a tambourine to show curling, stretching and collapsing movements. One or two demonstrated rhythmic responses and signs of poise.
119. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils work well in pairs and small groups to develop dance routines. They change the speed of pulling, pushing and twisting movements and work at different levels of difficulty. Teachers evaluate pupils' performance carefully and use pupils effectively to demonstrate different movements and ideas.
120. The teaching is good throughout. Pupils are encouraged to cooperate, and the teaching assistants' skills are used well to support pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to be fully included in lessons. Pupils' concentration is very good, and they respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Teachers organise and manage lessons very well and have positive relationships with the pupils.
121. The school has developed a swimming programme for pupils in Years 5 and 6, starting in the summer term, at a local sports complex. There is no current information on pupils' swimming skills. Programmes for athletics, outdoor pursuits and games have been inhibited because the adjoining school field has still not been declared fit to use. This is regrettable because, otherwise, the school's facilities for physical education are good. There is a spacious hall and well-marked tarmac areas, and resources for both indoor and outdoor work are good.
122. Subject leadership has been satisfactory, although the school has yet to develop any assessment procedures for the subject. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including football, tennis and roller hockey, and has just competed in its first inter-school 6-a-side football competition.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

123. It was not possible to observe any religious education lessons during the course of the inspection, and there was too little written evidence across the school to make any reliable judgements about standards, teaching and learning. Discussions with the subject leader indicate that a significant amount of work in religious education is covered through discussion, role-play and drama. There was clear photographic evidence of this. Also, scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates that the school provides a suitable range of activities and topics for pupils to experience. This planning follows suggestions from the local authority's Agreed Syllabus and from national guidelines. Religious education has not yet been a focus in the school's curriculum and maintenance plan.
124. From scrutiny of the available written work, and from conversations with pupils in Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of aspects of the Christian faith by the end of Key Stage 2. They talk confidently about Christian festivals and know stories related to the birth and ministry of Jesus. They understand that, within religious traditions, there are places and artefacts that are special, such as places of worship, and sources of authority, such as the Bible. Pupils show some understanding of how other major religions have a sacred text such as the Koran or Torah.
125. Pupils make termly visits to a local church, and the vicar and parish members visit the school. The subject leader has provided satisfactory leadership. She has good subject knowledge and recognises the need to continue to develop a detailed scheme of work, that will contribute to progression in pupils' learning, and will provide a stronger basis for assessing pupils' learning and progress. At present, there is little use of information and communication

technology within religious education, and the subject does not make any significant contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills.