

INSPECTION REPORT

SWALLOW DELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Welwyn Garden City

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 133488

Headteacher: Mrs S Jennings

Lead inspector: Mrs E Pickford

Dates of inspection: 6th - 8th October 2003

Inspection number: 258072

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 316

School address: Blackthorn Road
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
Postcode: AL7 3JP

Telephone number: (01707) 339 079
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Slack

Date of previous inspection: This is the first inspection of the amalgamated school

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Swallow Dell is an above average sized community school, which admits pupils between the ages of four and 11. The school opened in January 2002 following the amalgamation of Thumbswood Infants and Blackthorn Junior School, which shared the same site. The 316 pupils on roll are taught in 12 classes, one of which is mixed-age. Most pupils live close by in local authority housing and a small number in privately owned housing. An above average percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the area has a high deprivation profile. There is a fairly high level of pupil mobility. Seventy-six pupils are on the register of special educational needs. This is broadly average with pupils having a range of moderate learning difficulties. Four pupils have statements of special educational need, which is broadly average for the size of school. The school has recently set up an enrichment group for a small number of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Children's attainment is below average when they join the reception class. Nearly all pupils are of white UK heritage, although there are a small number of Black Caribbean and Asian pupils. There are eight pupils with English as an additional language, all but one, are fluent in English. During the first year of amalgamation there was some difficulty in recruiting teachers and a high turnover of staff in Years 3 to 6. Staffing has now stabilised.

The school received a School Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23128	Esme Pickford	Lead inspector	Mathematics Religious education Citizenship.
9563	Jeanette Reid	Lay inspector	
27773	Faith Mackenzie	Team inspector	History Geography Physical education.
13805	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
2229	Doreen Hansen	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Music Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides a **good** standard of education and fully involves pupils in all aspects of school life. Pupils behave well and have **good** attitudes to learning and their personal qualities are developed well. **Very good** leadership and management have enabled standards to rise since the amalgamation. Pupils achieve well as a result of the **good** quality teaching and support they receive. The new school has been successfully established in spite of the initial high turnover of staff. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The **excellent**, purposeful and decisive leadership provided by the headteacher has enabled the new school to be successfully established.
- Most of the teaching is **good** or better enabling children to learn well.
- Consistently high quality teaching and exciting learning opportunities in the reception provides a **very good** start to pupils' schooling.
- The school welcomes and supports pupils with differing needs, temperaments and those from different backgrounds **very** well.
- Pupils co-operate well with each other and develop **very good** trusting relationships with staff.
- Opportunities for visits and activities outside lessons are **very good** and enrich learning.
- The school is **highly** regarded by parents and has **very good** links with the community.
- Assessment is **satisfactory**, but not yet used well enough to set focused targets to help all pupils improve.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to research independently and develop their writing in other subjects.

This is the first inspection of the school, which was founded in January 2002.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/a	N/a	D	B
mathematics	N/a	N/a	D	C
science	N/a	N/a	E	D

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

Pupils' achievement in relation to their capabilities is good throughout the school. In the current Year 6 classes **standards are average** in English, mathematics and science. Results in the 2003 tests are average overall and show a marked improvement in science. Standards are higher in reading than in writing, where they are slightly below average. Standards achieved by Year 2 pupils are average overall. Standards in writing, which is a focus for development, are improving considerably. In reading standards are good. Standards in science are average. Pupils' attainment in all other subjects is as expected for their age, except in art and design where it is above. Standards in information and communication technology are improving as pupils progress through the school because resources are good and skills are taught well.

Children enter the reception class with standards below those expected for their age, especially in language and mathematics. In the current reception class pupils are making rapid progress. Standards are good in personal social and emotional development, communication, and physical

development and satisfactory in literacy and language, and mathematics. Judgements for standards in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development were not made. Many of these reception children are likely to achieve the early learning goals, the standards expected by the end of the year.

Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well because their work is carefully planned and they are very well supported in class. Higher attaining pupils are challenged and achieve well, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Social development is very good, pupils are tolerant and co-operate well within the school community. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. Attendance and punctuality have improved during the last year and are now satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers ensure pupils behave well and plan enjoyable work to meet their needs, which enables them to achieve well. Teaching is often excellent in the reception class and children make rapid progress. The accommodation is very good, and specialist facilities are used well to engage pupils and enrich learning. Resources are good and computers are used well. Links with the nursery and secondary schools are good, enabling pupils to move smoothly onto the next school. There are good links with parents, who come into class on a regular basis to look at work, and they provide good support for reading and contribute to the high standards achieved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has effectively established the new school and in doing so she has gained the respect and support of the whole school community. The hardworking staff have quickly become a united team and are keen to succeed. The leadership development of key staff is very well supported and is contributing significantly to improving standards. There is very good monitoring of the school's work by senior managers and any weaknesses are addressed. Governors are well informed and provide very good support for the school. They make good use of evaluation and analysis to plan for school improvement. Very good financial management enables good levels of staffing and support to be maintained.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are **extremely** appreciative of the school and its work, especially the **very good** levels of care and support given to each individual and are happy to discuss any problems they may have. They have no significant concerns. Pupils enjoy school and feel that their views are **very well** valued and acted upon.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Use assessments to set individual short-term targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science, and communicate these to parents.
- Ensure that the marking of work tells pupils where and how to improve.
- Make sure pupils have opportunities for personal research using computers and the library and to use extended writing in subjects other than English.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in Years 1 - 6, with all pupils achieving well in relation to their capabilities. Children in the reception class achieve **very well**. **Standards of attainment are average** overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are below those expected for age when children join the reception class. There is no significant difference between the attainment of pupils from different backgrounds, including the very small number with English as an additional language. Boys do not achieve as well as girls in writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising in English, mathematics and science.
- Children in the reception class make very good progress.
- Reading skills are developed well and good progress is made throughout the school.
- Standards are rising in information and communication technology.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- There is good provision for higher attaining pupils in mathematics in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils achieve above average standards in art and design at age seven and 11.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to research and extend their writing in other subjects.
- Children who spend only two terms in the reception class do not progress quite so well as others.

Commentary

1. The marked improvement in standards in the five terms since amalgamation is due to the development of a whole school approach to teaching and learning through considerable staff training in English, mathematics and science. Very good subject leadership and rigorous monitoring has identified weaknesses and addressed them effectively. The majority of teaching in these three subjects now is good or very good. Reading is taught in a structured way, which suits the learning style of these pupils and enables them to achieve well. Reading has a daily slot on the timetable and sustains pupils' interest as they move through the school. Good quality reading resources are evident in classrooms and libraries, encouraging pupils to develop an interest and a love of books. However, opportunities for independent research in the library and using computers are often missed. Parents are very supportive and encourage their children to read regularly at home and this contributes to the good standards achieved.
2. Children who spend three terms in the reception class achieve well, benefiting from the high quality teaching they receive, and they acquire new skills quickly. Many children join the reception class with basic skills below those expected of their age, especially in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. Some have limited experiences of the world around them. Most benefit socially from attending the local nursery and playgroups. In the reception year, standards are good in personal, social and emotional development, communication and physical development; in language, literacy and mathematics standards are satisfactory. Many of these children are on target to meet expectations for their age by the end of the reception year. The group of reception children observed have only attended school for five weeks prior to the inspection and it is not possible to make a judgement for standards in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. On the evidence available from the previous year standards are expected to be good for these two areas of learning by the end of reception year. The school is aware, from monitoring pupils' progress, that many of the younger children who join the school later in the year and spend two terms in

a newly created class do not achieve the expected standards for their age by the end of the year. The school is working to address this problem.

3. In the current Year 2 pupils' attainment is average in English, mathematics and science and standards are rising. Standards in reading are average but below average in writing. Lower standards in writing reflect the limited vocabulary of many of the pupils. Test results for 2003 are average overall and show good improvement from the previous year, especially in writing, which is a focus for development. Average standards have been maintained in reading and standards in mathematics and science have improved. In mathematics a quarter of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 reflecting the increased emphasis on challenging the higher attainers.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0	27.0
mathematics	25.9	26.7
science	27.0	28.3

There were 59 pupils in the year group.

4. Inspection findings show that, by the end of Year 6, attainment in English, mathematics and science, is average. Standards in reading are average but standards in writing are below average. Setting in mathematics is beneficial, with all pupils achieving well in relation to their capabilities. Many of the higher attaining pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 respond well to challenge and are working above the level expected for their age. Results for 2003 show an improvement in attainment, especially in science, with a quarter of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 and an increased percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4. This is due to a greater emphasis being given to investigative work and further staff training. Reading continues to improve with over 80 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4. Standards in writing have improved slightly but remain below average. Staff continue to concentrate on developing writing and particularly to improve boys' achievement. Evidence shows that high levels of pupil turnover and a significant number joining Years 6 and 2 late in the school year prevented the school from achieving its targets.
5. Another area of focus for the inspection was ICT, where pupils' achievement is good because they benefit from the good teaching of skills in small groups and regular access to computers, both in class and in the computer suite. Standards are rising and are as expected for age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are benefiting the most from the improvements made to the curriculum since the amalgamation and it is likely that most of these pupils will achieve standards above those expected by the end of Year 6. In history, geography and physical education standards were found to be as expected for age at seven and 11. High standards are achieved in music and swimming. Art and design has a high profile within the curriculum and standards are above those expected at age seven and 11. Standards in religious education are as expected by the locally agreed syllabus at age seven and 11.
6. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support. They are suitably challenged with individual education plans clearly indicating appropriate expectations. Overall, they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Teaching assistants are often used well to support these pupils in lessons. Teachers brief them well to ensure that these pupils are helped to achieve as well as the other pupils in the class.
7. Higher attaining pupils are identified and their progress is carefully tracked. Mathematics sets provide good challenge for the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 and they respond to this well. Some additional teaching support is now being given to some higher attaining pupils in Year 2.

In other classes, planning caters for the needs of the more able pupils. The inspection found generally that more could be expected of higher attainers in Years 3 and 4. Planning especially in mathematics does not always challenge them sufficiently.

8. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress. Teachers are aware of their needs and plan appropriate work, ensuring that there is a good focus on language development. Pupils at early stages of fluency also receive some additional support from visiting specialists.
9. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to take part in discussions and every opportunity is taken by adults to talk with pupils to develop their vocabulary. Currently, the library is under-used for pupils to carry out personal research and there are insufficient opportunities to develop writing skills in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are good and make a positive contribution to their learning. Behaviour is **good** in lessons and around the school. Children in the reception class have **very good** attitudes to school and behave very well. The **good** provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, enables the self-esteem and confidence of pupils to grow very well, and they show consideration towards others. The rates of attendance are now **satisfactory** and have improved considerably since the previous year. Most parents make good efforts to ensure their children get to school on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of pupils' self-esteem, which enables them to take part in a range of activities with confidence.
- The good relationships with staff and with each other.
- The involvement of pupils in developing the Code of Behaviour.
- The school expects pupils to behave well and is successful in supporting the small minority of pupils who present challenging behaviour.
- The number of experiences for pupils to learn about other cultures is limited.

Commentary

10. The inclusive ethos of the school provides a good environment for the development of pupils' self-discipline, tolerance and self-esteem. Children in the reception class settle quickly and become enthusiastic learners. They are happy to adjust to school routines and behave very well. Other pupils are enthusiastic about school, and appreciate and enjoy the extra-curricular activities and visits which develop their social skills and confidence. They have a very good awareness of the standards of behaviour that are expected in a variety of situations. There are no patterns of aggression or intimidation, and pupils say incidents of bullying are few. The school deals with these quickly and effectively when they are brought to its attention. A number of pupils presenting unacceptable behaviour in the early days of amalgamation were excluded but this has not been necessary since the new code of behaviour has been established.

11. The school gives a very high priority to social and personal development. The school has very good ways of monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development. Various qualities such as perseverance are checked termly. The pupils take a pride in their involvement with the school council, which has a high profile and they feel very involved in the decisions that affect them. Pupils are keen to contribute their ideas about how to improve their school, for example they modified the school's red and yellow card behaviour sanction system. The oldest pupils take a pleasure in helping the infants at lunchtime.
12. Assemblies are special occasions for spiritual growth and reflection. Pupils are also encouraged to appreciate and value qualities like beauty and order in lessons, such as the patterns birds make in the sky when they fly and the magnificent autumn colours seen in the trees close by. They develop a strong sense of right and wrong and the importance of truth and honesty. Pupils are given good opportunities to learn about their own culture through the visits they make to castles and museums and gain some insight into a number of world faiths. There are less opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society. Racial tolerance is well promoted and monitored.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	289	5	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	4	1
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The curriculum is broad with **good** provision for the arts and sport. **Good** quality teaching and **good** levels of care and support mean that all pupils are able to achieve well. There is a **good** partnership with parents and the school works closely with the local community.

Teaching and learning

Good teaching throughout the school enables pupils to learn well. The high quality teaching in the reception class enables children to make very good progress. Elsewhere pupils' progress is good and carefully monitored as they move through the school. Assessment in the reception class is very

good and used very well in planning to move children’s learning forward and set targets. In Years 1 to 6 teachers assess work satisfactorily against learning objectives but do not use the information well enough to set short-term targets for improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall in Years 1-6 with examples of very good teaching seen in all year groups.
- Much of the teaching in the reception class is outstanding and enables pupils to make very good progress.
- Work is carefully planned to help all pupils to achieve their best.
- Teachers insist on good behaviour and co-operation with other pupils.
- Teachers engage and encourage pupils well.
- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities for speaking and listening, and they develop vocabulary well during discussions.
- Reading is taught particularly well throughout the school, enabling pupils to develop good skills and enjoy books.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted very well.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve.
- Pupils’ targets in English, mathematics and science are not sufficiently well focused.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 59 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (5%)	9 (15.5%)	35 (59%)	11 (19%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. Since the amalgamation, the school’s priority has been to improve teaching and learning, focusing mainly on English, mathematics and science. Eighty per cent of the teaching seen was good or better and is a measure of the hard work and commitment of staff to improve. A whole school approach has been developed through training and monitoring, which is having a beneficial effect on teaching and learning in most subjects. Good use has been made of the knowledge and good practice that existed prior to amalgamation to support and develop the less experienced staff who joined the school. The local authority has been very supportive and contributed significantly to what has been achieved in a short time.
14. Teachers plan thoroughly for lessons, ensuring that they are well organised, varied and matched to pupils’ needs. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching. The expertise and enthusiasm that exists within the staff in art and design, music and information and communication technology is reflected in the good quality of pupils’ learning in these subjects. Teachers encouraging all pupils to take part in class discussion and direct questions to those who do not volunteer answers. Pupils are encouraged to use the correct vocabulary being taught when answering. All answers are valued and pupils are praised for their efforts. At the end of lessons pupils regularly report back to the class and say what they found easy or what was difficult and how this was overcome. Pupils develop their vocabulary and confidence well as a result.
15. Teaching in the reception class is often inspirational and enables children with a wide range of attainment to make very good progress. The teacher and the teaching assistant work extremely well together and have an excellent understanding of the way children of this age

learn. Assessment is very good and its regular use to plan imaginative activities to move learning forward contributes to the very good achievement made by all. During short introductory whole class sessions children are absorbed and listen well to the teacher and each other. Every opportunity is taken to develop vocabulary and involve everyone whilst maintaining a good pace to the activity. Children are praised and made to feel important which develops their confidence and helps them to settle in quickly and enjoy school. They are motivated to learn because they achieve in a range of fun and exciting tasks. There are good opportunities to make choices, experiment in art and investigate outdoors to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Good challenge is regularly provided for the higher attainers and very good support given to those children with special educational needs. Relationships are special between adults and children and a sense of belonging is quickly established.

16. Throughout the school, reading is taught in a very structured and effective way and contributes to the good standards achieved. Pupils are taught the basic skills very well along with a variety of strategies to help them tackle unfamiliar words. The earliest books chosen regularly repeat vocabulary to consolidate learning. Corridor displays encourage pupils to read and sometimes to respond to questions in writing. Pupils are surrounded by reading material, as subject vocabulary along with words relating to the current topics are displayed in all classrooms. Teachers enthusiastically promote reading in a way that develops an enjoyment of books as they move through the school. At present pupils do not have many opportunities to use their skills for individual research.
17. Teachers insist on good behaviour in lessons and use a good range of common approaches to achieve this. Pupils who find it difficult to concentrate are well supported and do not disrupt the learning of others. Good opportunities are given to work in a variety of groupings within lessons and pupils co-operate well with each other. Teachers encourage and engage pupils well. They make good use of questioning skills to encourage and maintain pupil involvement and assess their learning. Most lessons are made interesting using a variety of activities and resources. Very good use is made of visits to enrich pupils' background knowledge. In mathematics lessons, examples are often worked on whiteboards, as well as in books, and games often played to reinforce what has been taught. Homework is used well to extend learning. Pupils are given a range of tasks which are linked to their classwork and consolidate their skills and knowledge. Parents are becoming more involved in supporting this aspect of the school's work.
18. Teaching assistants are well trained and particularly successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs and ICT. They make useful written assessments of pupils as they work and these are passed on to the teacher. Better use could be made of their time in some classes to monitor pupils' responses during discussions. All pupils, including some with significant learning difficulties and physical disabilities, are fully valued and included in all parts of lessons. Separate plans are made for some of these pupils so that they are supported and challenged very successfully.
19. Assessment systems are established which enable the progress of individuals to be monitored regularly. This information is used well to inform planning to support those who are falling behind and challenge higher attaining pupils. In the reception class, detailed assessments made at the start of term are used very effectively to identify the starting points for individuals and move their learning forward at a good rate. For the majority of pupils in Years 1-6, assessment is not used well enough to set targets. The targets set for each pupil in English, mathematics and science are not yet having an impact on standards because they are in the early stages of development. Not all of targets are sufficiently well focused and clearly expressed to ensure that pupils know exactly where and how to improve their work. Some good examples of marking are evident but this is not consistent across the school. There are insufficient comments to help pupils improve their work, too few opportunities to correct mistakes in mathematics and little indication of the level of support that is given. All staff make evaluative notes on their lesson plans and use this when planning future lessons. Pupils with

special educational needs have a clear understanding of how they can improve because they are set clearly focused individual targets, which are regularly assessed and reviewed.

20. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and feel that they make learning fun. Inspection findings support that view.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum provision is **good**. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. The wide variety and range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities are very good and further enhance the learning. The accommodation is **very good** and resources are **good** in Years 1-6 and very good in the reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- There are very good opportunities for enrichment.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in sporting activities.
- The accommodation has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
- ICT is very well used in all subjects.
- Opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are insufficiently developed.

Commentary

21. The school has a broad curriculum and allocates appropriate amounts of time to each subject. It has placed an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, it is now well placed to become more creative in its planning. More cross-curricular links are being developed and the school is aware of the need to place more emphasis on developing pupils' independent learning skills.
22. The school provides very good equality of opportunity for its pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. The recently formed 'Explorers' group is having a very positive impact on the learning of a small group of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teachers and teaching assistants provide extra help for both high and low attaining pupils.
23. The school provides very good opportunities for enrichment, both in and out of school hours. There is a very good range of clubs, which cater for the interests of most pupils. These include sports, computers, music and juggling. Pupils can get extra help with their work through the homework and 'catch-up' clubs. Pupils in the choir have the chance to perform at the Royal Albert Hall. Visits to museums, galleries and places of historic interest are an integral part of the school calendar. Pupils' social development benefits from the chance to take part in residential visits to Burwell House and the Isle of Wight. In addition to the normal curriculum, the school runs a number of themed weeks during the year. These allow pupils to focus on areas such as creative arts, science and technology and healthy lifestyles in depth.
24. Pupils have the chance to take part in a very good range of sporting events with almost all leading to competitions with other local schools. Swimming is a strength of the school.
25. The school has very good accommodation. It is spacious and very well maintained. Displays are used very well to create a stimulating learning environment. The school benefits from an ICT suite, two libraries, a food preparation room and two halls. The outside environment is particularly attractive and pupils have lots of space to play. Pupils benefit from well-qualified teachers and teaching assistants whose expertise is used well. Resources are good overall and particularly good for physical education and for multicultural activities.

26. The school teaches ICT well and pupils make good progress. They have the chance to learn basic skills in the well-equipped computer suite. Teachers work particularly hard to ensure that pupils get the chance to use ICT in all their subjects. As a result, they have a very broad experience of the subject. Particularly good work was seen in art and design, where pupils had used ICT to create a stunning range of visual effects. In addition, pupils are beginning to create multi-media presentations in order to share their class visits with other pupils in the school.
27. Although literacy and numeracy lessons are carefully planned and taught well, the school has not yet identified sufficient opportunities for pupils to utilise and refine the skills they have acquired.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **good** support, advice and guidance for pupils. Health and safety, and child protection procedures are **good**. The school seeks and acts on pupils' views extensively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs are given good support.
- Pupils trust adults and seek their advice.
- Matters of health and safety are brought to pupils' attention in lessons.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop sensible and measured views.

Commentary

28. The school regularly monitors and tracks pupils' progress. Any pupils who are falling behind are given support to help them overcome their difficulties. Parents at the meeting said that each child is well cared for and supported whatever the problem. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive. They say that they can take their concerns to a teacher and that they will be listened to. The school nurse is generally available every other week for pupils to drop-in and talk to, although at the time of the inspection the system was temporarily suspended due to illness. Older pupils can use 'Bubble Time' to discuss problems with their teacher on an individual basis.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for. The school has a system of creating quality individual education plans which outline how pupils' individual special needs are to be met. The school tries to involve pupils and parents in the plans and they have manageable steps that can be evaluated easily. This has a positive impact on achievement, as also does the additional class recently set up for a small group of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in order to provide the best possible learning opportunities for their needs at this time. The school seeks expert advice from outside the school and uses this well to support pupils who have significant difficulties.
30. Health and safety checks are regularly made on the school building, equipment and grounds. In physical education lessons pupils are taught to move equipment safely and the safe use of tools is stressed in art and design. Children are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle. Child protection procedures are known to all staff and there are regular updates at the start of each term. Staff are extremely vigilant and liaise well with a number of agencies on such matters. The school regularly takes pupils views into account through class discussion and questionnaires. The school council is a powerful voice and influences school policy.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is of **good** quality and parents are very supportive of the school. The school's links with other schools and the community are **very good**. The community now holds the school in high regard.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard to involve parents in their child's education.
- The views of parents are sought on a wide range of topics.
- Parents are becoming increasingly involved in their children's learning at home.
- The school has very useful links with the community, which enriches pupils' learning.
- The school does not provide parents with regular information about targets in mathematics, English and science that would help them to support their child's learning.

Commentary

31. Parents responding to the questionnaire, those attending the meeting, and letters sent to the school, all demonstrate that they are extremely appreciative of the school and its work. They think it has very many strengths, and that children like school and make good progress. They have no significant concerns.
32. The determination of the headteacher to inform and involve parents in the education of their child is clear by the frequent communications with home and the accessibility of herself and the teachers. As well as the termly parents/teacher interviews, each class operates an Open House straight after school once a week where parents can see their child's work and discuss progress. Parents regularly support their children with reading and this contributes to the good standards achieved. However, the school does not provide regular information about specific targets in mathematics, English and science, to enable parents to help their child to improve further. The school has held meetings with parents about the Numeracy Strategy and the new red/yellow card behaviour sanction system. All formal meetings are well attended. The school consults with parents over a range of issues in a variety of ways, such as questionnaires. The annual reports to parents are good overall, apart from the inconsistent quality of the targets mentioned above.
33. The school has very productive links with the local community. Many visits take place, including a residential trip to the Isle of Wight and the choir singing at the Royal Albert Hall. The school nurse has a drop-in facility for pupils once a fortnight. Local business supports school fund raising events and the Breakfast Club. A wide variety of visitors come to talk to pupils and enrich their learning. Local clergy regularly visit the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very well** led and managed. The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership for the work of the school, with management also being **very good**. She is supported by a committed and hard-working governing body, which ensures that governance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management by the headteacher is strong and decisive.
- The headteacher and governing body have established a very clear vision for the work of the school, which is shared by all members of the school community.
- Determination of headteacher, senior staff and the governing body to improve the quality of education in all subjects.
- All members of staff have very good access to training opportunities and the school's performance management strategies have had a very positive impact on developing teaching.

- Very good support is given to help co-ordinators develop their leadership role and contribute to school improvement.
- The governing body has a very clear understanding of its roles and provides effective support for the school's development.
- Rigorous self-evaluation is embedded in school practice with thorough and effective monitoring by the headteacher, deputies and the governing body.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and special educational needs is excellent.
- The office manager ensures that the school operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

34. The headteacher provides excellent purposeful leadership for the work of the school. She is highly respected by members of staff, pupils, parents and governors, who recognise the many improvements that have taken place in the short period of time since the founding of the school. The headteacher has successfully maintained the strong community-serving ethos in the school whilst thoroughly addressing the areas of weakness found at the time of amalgamation.
35. There is a very clear, shared educational vision, with the headteacher committed to achieving high standards in all areas of the school's work. This is reflected in the school development plan, which clearly identifies where the school needs to improve further. Improvements that have been made over the last year have been based on thorough and rigorous monitoring. The headteacher regularly monitors teaching and learning by observing lessons; test data is carefully analysed; and an assessment tracking system provides very useful information on the progress of different groups of pupils, such as those with English as an additional language or special educational needs.
36. The headteacher has worked hard to develop the role of the recently-formed senior management team, teachers and teaching assistants. Performance management strategies and professional development are used effectively to acknowledge strengths and improve weaknesses. Subject leaders have been empowered to take responsibility for their curriculum area. In subjects such as English, mathematics and science, this includes opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. The leadership and management of the foundation stage and special educational needs is particularly strong and effective in co-ordinating staff within the school and linking well with other schools and specialist agencies to ensure the best possible provision is made for pupils. Subject leaders have all now been given regular release time which is used effectively to draw up and monitor action plans, to review resources and complete schemes of work or policies. These staff also attend locally-arranged subject leader conferences and meetings. Developments have had a good impact on learning, and overall, the quality of leadership and management by subject leaders is good.
37. The headteacher has a very strong commitment to providing an all-inclusive school which meets the needs of pupils, whatever their background or need. She has been successful in this aim and, under her leadership, members of staff have embraced a range of special educational needs, as well as reviewing school organisation, so that differing needs within the school are met well. The introduction of a support class in Years 1 and 2 is an excellent example of the school considering how it can best meet the needs of some younger pupils.
38. Governors provide a high level of support for the school, with specific skills used very well in areas such as managing finances, personnel and special educational needs. The key strength in the governing body since the school's inception has been the way it has been led, and the strategic planning with the headteacher for both the short and long-term. The overall aim of the governing body is for the school to continue to improve. The issue of staff retention and recruitment has been carefully considered and the governing body has taken steps to

encourage staff to stay at the school. The combination of stability, together with recently appointed teachers' expertise, is a significant contributory factor in the school's improvement.

39. Governors are regularly involved in monitoring the work of the school. Governors take responsibility for different curriculum areas and special educational needs and visit the school to monitor provision. On these occasions, they talk to subject leaders and visit classes, which helps them to develop a very good understanding of how the school is working. Written reports are shared with other governors to give them clear information to help when they contribute to school development planning.
40. Financial planning and the day-to-day management of the delegated budget is very good. The office manager is very thorough and methodical, providing subject leaders with guidance in managing their subject budgets. Financial planning is based on a good understanding of the school's priorities, with budgetary decisions made consistently on the basis of 'how will this help the school to improve?' and 'is this best value?'

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	957,566
Total expenditure	962,136
Expenditure per pupil	2,725

Balances (£)	
Budget adjustment from previous year	165,591
Balance carried forward to the next year	161,020

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall provision in the reception class is **very good**.

The 22 children in the reception year at the time of the inspection had only been in school for five weeks. Most of these children had previously attended the local nursery or playgroups. The very good links which have been established with the nursery and the introductory visits enable the children to feel secure and settle quickly. A second class for younger reception children will be opened in January and a new teacher appointed. During the inspection, examples of work from last year's reception classes were sampled so that a better view of the whole year group could be gained.

The experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator provides very strong leadership and management both within the staff and establishing links with nurseries and play groups so that the transition into school is as smooth as possible. A wide range of learning opportunities are provided in all six areas of the foundation curriculum. Very good use of assessment ensures that work is carefully matched to the children's different stages of development and moves their learning forward very quickly. Much of the teaching is excellent and the teaching assistant and other adult helpers give very good support to small groups and ensure that a variety of needs are met. Very good use is made of the spacious accommodation and the secure outdoor area to encourage children to explore and investigate for themselves.

In the current reception class, children achieve very well in all areas of learning in relation to their starting points when they join the school. This is due to the high quality teaching and very good support they are given. Standards are good in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Most children speak confidently but many have limited vocabulary and standards in language and literacy and mathematics are satisfactory and many of these children on target to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. It is not possible to make a judgement for standards in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development so early in the year. On the evidence available from the previous year, standards are expected to be good in these two areas of learning by the end of reception year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good with some excellent practice.
- There is an appropriate balance between teacher-directed lessons and opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves.

Commentary

41. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of social skills. Overall these are broadly in line with those that might be expected for children of their age. Most pupils have maturing personal and social skills and have attended full-time or part-time nursery school or playgroup provision in the locality. Children are sociable and confident, and have good interaction with other children and a few are more confident and are ready to voice their ideas and opinions. This is often done with feeling, or awareness of, others around them, and the ethos of the reception class supports this. Most pupils stay throughout the day and this aids their

development of independence and self-reliance. The provision for the social and emotional development of these young children at lunchtime is good.

42. Reception class staff provide very good role models. They work well together as a team to provide a calm, well-ordered and secure learning environment. This helps children to settle into the reception class and life of the school quickly, and helps build their confidence and ability to adapt to others around them. The teacher and teaching assistant provide a variety of interesting lessons and follow-on activities to engage children's concentration and imagination. They are very successfully gaining children's confidence to respond to them and other children. The reception teacher and her assistant intervene well with groups of children at play, talking to them and posing thoughtful questions designed to make children think and consider. When they introduce new ideas, this often sparks off more talking between the children themselves.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality of the teaching and classroom support.
- Provision of interesting opportunities for the children to develop their communication skills and speaking and listening skills are well developed by the teacher and teaching assistant.
- Letter formation is taught consistently in preparation for entry to Year 1.
- Children are encouraged to write from the first day in the reception class.
- Initial letter sounds are taught methodically and letter recognition games played.
- Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories.
- Children make a very good start with reading skills.

Commentary

43. Children start school with confident speaking skills and attainment in listening is as expected for this age group, but many have a narrow vocabulary. Very good use is made of the outdoor area for role-play where they develop their imagination and speaking skills as they visit a petrol station and have a conversation with the attendant. In reading and writing standards are below those expected for age overall. They make good progress in the reception class and most of this group should meet the required levels of the early learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. Many children show a love of books and handle them with care.
44. Many children arrive at school able to communicate in some way using pencil and paper. However, a number of children confuse capital and lower case letters and this is corrected as it happens. Children do copy sentences created by the teacher and teaching assistant for accuracy but their independent writing skills are also encouraged and the resulting 'writing' praised.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and skilfully engages children's curiosity about numbers.
- Most start with an interest in numbers, shapes and sizes.
- Children are well prepared for mathematics when they transfer to Year 1.

Commentary

45. Most children enter school with mathematical skills that are below those expected. After a few weeks of school, standards overall are rising rapidly. Most children can count objects accurately up to ten and some can count beyond, and most accurately identify basic shapes such as triangles. Average children count confidently to ten and carry out simple 'add one on' sums. More capable children count up to 15, 'add on one, then add one more' accurately, and can write numbers nought to ten.
46. Very good teaching ensures children continue to make good progress in this area of learning. Teachers plan interesting activities that encourage children to achieve well and develop their mathematical skills by using appealing child-centred themes, such as 'Miss (or Mr!) Muffett. Children reinforce their recognition of numbers and size relationships with modelling play dough. The adults use questions well to encourage, extend and reinforce learning.
47. Most children know and identify basic shapes, and knowledge of mathematical terms is increasing. Children know that a square has four sides and a triangle three. Singing number action rhymes reinforces number work. More capable children in reception know the day and the month of their birthday.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding are planned for using both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Children are enthusiastic and enjoy the activities provided for them.
- The school grounds provide an excellent teaching and learning resource.

Commentary

48. Children enter the reception class with varying levels of general knowledge. Most have limited knowledge of the world around them. The attractive learning environment, and the good support and care of the teacher and teaching assistant, help them to build successfully on this. The children share their ideas about autumn and going on a bus or train. They develop their ideas and vocabulary of a season, transport and travel. This helps them increase their knowledge of the natural world. They also enjoy learning about trees, conkers and acorns, which links to their work with paint colours and appreciation of texture. Children are also developing a sound knowledge of basic computer skills and can independently operate the 'play' switch on the tape player and put on their own headphone set. Teachers provide stimulating activities and topics for investigation by the children.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities to develop movement skills indoors and outdoors.
- The use of the new outdoor area and the school's plans for improving this further.

Commentary

49. Children enter reception with physical skills as expected for their age. Most hold pencils and crayons with confidence and appropriate grip. The children are encouraged to develop their physical skills because teachers plan a good range of activities. Children are able to select and place shapes and jigsaw pieces in the correct space and they develop their hand strength and control by squeezing, rolling, pressing and shaping play dough.
50. The equipment outside provides opportunities for children to develop their confidence and ability to climb, swing, clamber and slide. There are appropriate opportunities for children to develop their ability to develop their co-ordination and control. Children develop running, skipping, balancing, turning and hopping skills well. Achievement in this area of learning is good.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities to experience and experiment with a good range of high quality resources and materials.
- Teaching and teaching support is very good.
- All creative work is highly valued within the school.

Commentary

51. Children demonstrate developing skills in the quality of their artwork and paint attractive pictures using a wide range of colours. Photographic evidence shows good opportunities for children to develop their design and creativity skills using bricks and boxes to build fairy tale castles.
52. Children greatly enjoy singing and most already know the words of several songs and many nursery rhymes. Teaching is very good and children learn a range of songs rapidly. Children achieve well and quickly learn simple movement actions to accompany the singing. The teacher and the teaching assistant seize every opportunity to reinforce learning with simple songs and actions.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are improving.
- The development of reading is good, and pupils have a love of books and enjoy reading them to adults.
- The pupils have very positive attitudes to all their work in English and put a great deal of effort into their learning.
- Good strategies for teaching English are now in place throughout the school.
- Leadership in the subject is very good.
- Insufficient opportunities are planned into other areas of the curriculum for pupils to use the skills they have acquired in reading, writing, and speaking and listening.

Commentary

53. Improving standards in English has been a sharp focus since the amalgamation of the two schools. Standards in reading are average at the end of Years 2 and 6 but, in writing, standards are below national averages. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards in writing are now only marginally below the average and are likely to improve further. This indicates that the hard work put in by the staff is paying dividends and will continue to do so in the future.
54. Pupils achieve well throughout the school; pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the level of support that they receive in classes. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in lessons and they are also well supported. In all the lessons observed, the teachers worked hard to ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability or temperament, were fully included in all the activities.
55. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement in reading is good and their attitude to this aspect of their English work is excellent. They progress well, due to the carefully structured approach to the teaching of reading and the high profile reading is given on the daily timetable. Achievement in speaking and listening, and in writing, is good but is often held back by pupils' limited vocabulary, particularly words to describe the things they are talking or writing about. Although standards in the past have been below the national average at the end of Year 6, the inspection indicates that the current Year 6 pupils are only marginally below national expectation. In Year 5, evidence shows that they are well on course to reach national standards by the time they are in Year 6.
56. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of very good teaching in Years 2, 5 and 6. In Year 2 the literacy folders show examples of very good teaching strategies that help to promote early writing skills. Clear explanations of what the pupils need to do help them to write simple, correctly spelled sentences. In Year 5, the teacher makes excellent use of the story 'Goodnight Mr Tom' to help pupils to broaden their descriptive vocabulary and then use characters from the story as a basis for their own writing. A very well planned lesson in Year 6 uses the challenging poem 'The Jabberwocky', good questioning skills build the confidence of the pupils and encourage a good response from pupils, who are keen to answer. The whole class session is followed by group work, which is very well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils, from the most able to those with special needs. Classroom assistants are very well used during group work and provide a high level of support for the pupils. The school has already started to help pupils develop their speaking and listening through drama and role-play.
57. Pupils have very good attitudes to every aspect of the subject. Teachers set high expectations and often challenge the pupils to explain why they have given a particular answer. Because of the excellent relationships teachers have with the pupils, they enjoy these challenges and respond with confidence. In lessons, the responses they give are mature and sensible; they work well in group activities, co-operating well with each other and concentrating for long periods of time.
58. Leadership in the subject is very good. Although the two subject leaders have only been in place for a year, enormous progress has been made in bringing about a whole school approach to the teaching of English. The literacy hour has been thoroughly reviewed and aspects such as handwriting, guided reading and spelling have been allocated time at other points during the week. Staff training has focused on the main areas for development, such as writing. Assessment procedures are now firmly in place. In the near future, one of the co-ordinators will take personal responsibility for a total review and re-equipping of the Years 3 to 6 library. The subject leaders have a clear commitment to raising standards and, at the same time, making English lively, enjoyable and challenging for the pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. The National Literacy strategy has been implemented and adapted well to support effective learning. Teachers are not yet using the skills they are developing in English in other areas of

the curriculum. For example in history, geography, religious education, and design and technology, opportunities to use writing and to extend reading skills by using books to seek information are missed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are rising and are now average at the age of seven and 11.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6 help to ensure that the needs of all pupils are effectively met.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Very good use is made of apparatus, games and computers to improve pupils' understanding and mental agility.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support.
- Pupils' mathematical vocabulary is carefully developed and they are given good encouragement to use it.
- Marking does not always encourage pupils to learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils' targets for improvement are too general.

Commentary

60. Mathematics has been a focus for whole school development since the amalgamation of the two schools. The staff have reflected on and analysed what has been achieved on a yearly basis. As a result teaching has been adjusted and greater emphasis given to areas where pupils are experiencing difficulties, for example, place value and problem solving. In Years 1 and 2, pupils with special educational needs, higher attainers and those in the enrichment group benefit from small group support from teachers and classroom assistants on a regular basis. In Years 3 and 4, tasks within lessons are well matched to pupils' differing abilities and classroom assistants give effective additional group support. The setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6 benefit all pupils and contribute significantly to the rising standards. The school fell slightly short of the targets set for 2003 due to a high level of pupil mobility, but is likely to achieve the targets set for 2004.
61. The good teaching results in all pupils achieving well. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is often very good and pupils make very good progress in their ability sets. The good teaching, pace and high expectations contribute well to pupils' improving ability to quickly recall mental challenges, using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils are given good encouragement to explain their different methods of calculation, although many find this difficult to put into words and also to apply these methods to everyday situations. Good planning and classroom display identifies the key vocabulary for emphasis and takes account of the needs of the small group of pupils with English as an additional language. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and teach all aspects of mathematics progressively, making very good use of practical activities and computers. Pupils work hard, enjoy their lessons and co-operate well in group activities. Written work in Years 3-6 is well presented. However, marking does not always indicate the level of support that has been given, nor does it help pupils to learn from their mistakes. Pupils' progress is effectively tracked. Assessment is used to group pupils but is not yet being used well enough to set individual termly targets. Currently, too many targets are given to each pupil at a time. Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to the improving standards of attainment.
62. The pairing of subject co-ordinators has been an efficient and effective way of establishing a whole school approach to learning, whilst sharing and developing the existing expertise from

the infant and junior schools. Both co-ordinators are keen to improve standards. Monitoring and analysis are thorough and used well to identify strengths and weaknesses and areas for further development. Very good links are established with the governing body through the numeracy governor, who works in classes on a weekly basis. Parents are kept informed through mathematics events and appreciate the ideas they are given to help their children at home. New opportunities for parents to come in after school to help their children with homework are proving successful.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. **Satisfactory** use is made of mathematics across the curriculum but these are given greater emphasis in some year groups than others. In science pupils create graphs to show eye colour and animal groups. Computers are used to display data about rubbish for a presentation. Pupils weigh ingredients for cooking and measure liquids. Accurate measurements are sometimes used in design and technology. Computer games are often used to improve pupils' rate of mental recall but computers are not yet fully used to extend the higher attainers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement in Year 6.
- Pupils have good factual knowledge, especially of living things in the school environment and of materials and their properties.
- Good management of the subject.
- Opportunities for pupils to work independently and develop their own investigations are currently being developed well with a focus on investigative science.
- Work is not presented well enough.
- Links with information and communication technology and the library for independent research are underdeveloped.

Commentary

64. Standards attained by pupils are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. An increasing percentage of pupils in Year 6 are achieving above the expected levels for their age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily, as seen in a lesson about sound, where the discovery by pupils that they could hear and feel sound vibrations through a 'telephone' made of string and plastic cups caused great excitement! Most pupils achieve well in Year 6, where the pace of learning increases due to very good teaching and very secure subject knowledge. At the end of Year 6 boys attain levels just below those of girls, and pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some very good work seen in the previous year's Year 6 sample. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are planned well. Teachers enable all pupils to be fully included in the learning, often through the organisation of the ways in which pupils are grouped, or by adapting the ways that work is recorded by different groups of pupils. A Year 5 class watched with interest as their teacher used an Internet link to introduce a lesson about the spatial relationship between sun, moon and planets. Pupils have a generally good factual knowledge of topics they have studied and a good understanding of a fair test. However, in some classes, the frequent use of worksheets limits pupils' experience of different ways of presenting their work, and presentation across the school, with the exception of Years 5 and 6,

is not as good as it could be. Marking does not help pupils to understand their errors especially in the spelling of scientific words.

66. Opportunities for pupils to develop their own investigations, suggest ways to approach a problem or set up a fair test, have been developed recently and are good. Often, literacy skills are applied well in recording. There are too few opportunities for pupils in Years 3-6 to undertake independent research within the lesson. The use and application of information and communication technology, and of mathematics, are areas currently being developed.
67. Science is managed well. Teaching and learning are monitored rigorously and supported positively. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator displays a conscientious and increasingly knowledgeable approach to the subject, and has the ability and commitment to work with colleagues to build on the current standards achieved in science. Staff value the supportive teamwork approach to improving teaching and learning which has been introduced since his appointment. The school has extensive grounds, which provide an excellent resource for the study of natural science in the environment and has added to pupils' knowledge of living things. The provision of a pond and water plants was helpfully supported by parents, and is used by classes throughout the year as an important learning resource.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for the teaching of information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a very broad range of interesting activities.
- Pupils use the well-equipped ICT suite on a regular basis.
- A specialist teaching assistant provides very good support for staff and pupils.
- ICT is used in almost all lessons.
- Pupils enjoy using ICT in their work.
- The ICT club has a positive impact on the learning of younger pupils.
- Older pupils have insufficient opportunities to use computers independently.

Commentary

68. During the inspection, computers were being used in almost all the lessons observed. Younger pupils used interesting programs to support their learning in literacy and numeracy lessons. The scrutiny of work on display and in pupils' folders indicates that ICT is used in most subjects. Pupils in Year 3 have enjoyed putting together a multi-media presentation about their visit to a local church. Year 6 pupils have used ICT to predict how much waste the school will create over the year and to write a questionnaire, which they have subsequently analysed. Pupils make good use of ICT to carry out research in a wide range of subjects. They all know how to use ICT to improve the quality of presentation of their work.
69. Pupils aged seven and 11 achieve standards similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally. This represents good progress as their attainment on entry to the school is relatively low. There are also clear indications that the new ICT suite is leading to improved standards. Year 3 pupils are now able to produce multi-media presentations, whereas previously, this had only been tackled by the oldest pupils. Hence, attainment is likely to be above the national expectation by the time the Year 3 and 4 pupils reach Year 6.
70. All pupils spend the equivalent of an hour a week in the ICT suite. Some are taught very competently by their class teachers, while others benefit from the skills of the specialist ICT teaching assistant. She works closely with teachers, teaching what is planned for her very competently. Due to her ability to teach the subject, pupils benefit from being taught in half

classes. This means they do not have to share computers and because the groups are small, they get any help they need more quickly. Consequently, they make good progress.

71. The school provides a weekly ICT club for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. This is well attended and means that pupils have the chance to develop their ICT skills early. This is important as many do not have access to a computer at home. It enables them to be competent in their use of computers, so they are keen to use them in class.
72. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are confident in their use of ICT. Consequently, they provide competent demonstrations and clear explanations of new skills. They see opportunities to use ICT in most subjects and this makes the pupils' learning more interesting. The recently-introduced assessment scheme is now being used by all teachers. It enables them to record the skills acquired by each and plan future work so that it builds upon what has gone before.
73. Leadership and management are good. Standards and resources have both been improved as a result. Pupils now have access to a well-equipped ICT suite on a regular basis. The monitoring of teachers' planning ensures that computers are used in most lessons and across all subjects. Plans for the future development of the subject are sensible and learning will be improved when the school is able to purchase the interactive whiteboard it would like. The co-ordinator and ICT teaching assistant work well together and between them have a very clear view of pupils' experiences across the school. The co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses, particularly the need to ensure that the oldest pupils have access to computers whenever they need them, rather than just for the activities planned by the teacher.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum.

74. Pupils are given very good opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum. During the inspection, almost all lessons included the use of ICT. Pupils' work clearly showed that good use had been made of ICT to support learning in a very wide range of subjects and activities. Teachers consciously plan to use ICT across the curriculum and their planning is monitored by the co-ordinator to ensure that it does. In addition, he tries to ensure that opportunities for its use are not missed.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, effective use is made of field trips and the environment generally to enhance pupils' learning.
- There are some good links with literacy.
- There is appropriate emphasis upon map work, although there is evidence of some lack of progression in the development of mapping interpretation skills, notably those to do with scale. This indicates that pupils' mathematical skills are not always linked to the teaching of this subject.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils' work indicates that they study some topics in good depth.
- At the end of Year 2, there is not a great deal of recorded work due to pupils' limited writing skills.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for older pupils to conduct independent self-selected research work.

Commentary

75. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about their local environment through organised excursions and early mapping work, and are starting to interpret other maps. In the study of a 'Locality' topic in Year 1, pupils show that they understand some of the different types of work that people are engaged upon locally, and are starting to chart their own leisure-time activity preferences. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations, and pupils have good knowledge and understanding of waste and its management. Pupils' interest for the subject is stimulated by their involvement in survey work. For example Year 6 pupils took part in a survey about re-cycling materials in their own homes. Pupils can use evidence gathered from different sources, but the use of ICT is underdeveloped for these purposes. Map work undertaken by older pupils shows that they are able to interpret map keys and identify places on maps, but have less understanding of the scales of different maps.
76. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 with pupils extending their knowledge at an appropriate rate. Pupils, however, produce a limited amount of recorded work, linked to the stage of development of their writing skills. By the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve well. For example, in Year 6, pupils have undertaken a range of written work linked to the 'Waste' project and other worked linked to a coastal study. This study was enhanced by a residential visit to the Isle of Wight, which stimulated pupils' learning. There is limited evidence, however, of any self-selected, independent research undertaken by pupils. All pupils are well involved in learning this subject and most achieve well. Less able pupils are well supported when recording their work to help them to achieve as well as they can.
77. The quality of teaching in this subject is good. There is a good curriculum framework and planning structure in place to guide the teaching programme, and topics are assessed in line with national guidance. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher related the 'Locality' theme well to pupils' own experience, and the planning indicated potential for good progression in learning. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher provided good mapping resources for pupils to interpret, although they were not considering the scale of these maps. However, the teachers make considerable efforts to enliven the teaching by using a wide variety of teaching methods, including the good use of the locality and school grounds, in addition to visits out of school. The school plans to develop the resources as new topics are introduced.
78. The co-ordination for geography is good. The co-ordinator has only been in post for one term, but she is raising the profile of the subject, and reviewing the topics taught. She has identified a range of ways to improve the geography curriculum, including reviewing the resource provision and she has begun to monitor the teaching.

History

Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, effective use is made of artefacts, visits and visitors to enhance pupils' learning.
- There are some good links with literacy.
- There is appropriate emphasis upon time lines to enable pupils to begin to understand chronology.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils' work indicates that they study topics in good depth.
- At the end of Year 2, there is very little recorded work.
- There are opportunities for older pupils to carry out independent research work.
- Links with other subjects, such as drama, art and ICT, are underdeveloped.

Commentary

79. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6, with pupils making good comparisons between modern day and life in the past. In the study of a 'Seaside' Topic in Year 2, pupils' responses indicate that they understand the differences in modes of transport and clothing now and earlier this century. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is as expected for age, and pupils have good knowledge and understanding of Victorian lifestyles. Pupils' enthusiasm and curiosity for the subject is fostered by several visits and visitors coming to school, together with the use of artefacts. For example, pupils remember several interesting facts about children's lives, following a visit to a Victorian schoolroom. They also understand that evidence can be gathered from different sources. However, their understanding of the chronology of different historical eras is rather uncertain, and the school is taking steps to remedy this by using timelines.
80. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 with pupils extending their knowledge at an appropriate rate. Pupils at this stage, however, produce a limited amount of recorded work, linked to the stage of development of their writing skills. By the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve well. For example, in Year 6 pupils have undertaken a range of written work about the Victorians, including information about children's schooling, and the lifestyles of rich and poor Victorians. All pupils are well involved in learning this subject and most achieve well.
81. The quality of teaching in this subject is good. There is a good curriculum framework and planning structure in place to guide the teaching programme, and all topics are assessed. In a Year 2 lesson pupils were learning about seaside holidays at the turn of the century, and due to the teacher's effective questioning and good use of pictorial resources pupils learned well. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher provided a range of experiences and strategies to stimulate pupils' interest in Victorian children's working conditions, and engendered enthusiasm for the subject. At this stage of the year all pupils were undertaking directed research from teacher-selected resources, and pupils were not undertaking their own independent research activities. Self-selected research would offer further opportunities for pupils to engage in independent learning. However, the teachers make considerable efforts to enliven the teaching and enhance pupils' cultural understanding by using a wide variety of teaching methods, including role-play. The school plans to introduce more art and drama into the subject.
82. The co-ordination for history is good. The co-ordinator has not been in place long, but she has undertaken several relevant initiatives to review and develop the subject provision. She has identified a range of priorities to improve the history curriculum, and is taking steps to enhance this in a variety of ways, while developing the monitoring of the teaching and learning of this subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the age of seven and 11.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Good opportunities are given for pupils to discuss their ideas and express their feelings.
- Effective use is made of religious artefacts and visits to bring the subject alive.
- There are good links with art and design, and design and technology.
- Very little work is recorded in Years 1 and 2.
- Opportunities for extended writing are missed.

Commentary

83. At the time of the amalgamation, the school developed a new scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus to ensure that sufficient time was given to the subject, and that topics were taught in sufficient depth. Discussion with older pupils shows that their knowledge and understanding is carefully developed and they progress well as they move through the school. In Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity as well as Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. They understand how people express their faith through art. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 3 pupils develop an understanding of why patterns are important to Muslims and create their own Islamic patterns and calligraphy. A variety of approaches are used to record work in Years 3-6, including worksheets. Work is well presented and illustrated. Writing is generally limited to a few sentences and currently some opportunities for extended writing and research are missed.
84. In Years 1 and 2, very little of the work that is covered is recorded, although sampling of last year's planning and assessment shows the curriculum is fully covered. Currently, pupils' books do not reflect the quality of teaching and the rich experiences pupils are given. Pupils visit the local church and take part in school Harvest, Diwali, Christmas and Easter celebrations, and good links are made with other curriculum areas. In a very good lesson, Year 2 pupils showed that they had retained considerable detail from the video they had seen about a Jewish family preparing for Shabbat. They were able to use the special words to describe the artefacts used, such as the Kiddish cup and Shabbat candlesticks. The teacher had borrowed the equipment from a Jewish friend and set it out on a table as pupils gave her the information. The pupils showed appreciation and commented on the beauty of the special artefacts they had been loaned. A good variety of group activities followed, including plaiting Challah loaves, making bread covers, recording and illustrating class rules on a Torah and more able pupils writing about the preparations for Shabbat. Parents rightly say that they are impressed by their children's knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject.
85. Teaching is good overall and a wide variety of methods are used to capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Work is carefully planned and assessments are made at the end of each unit of work. During lessons, teacher's questions encourage pupils to think things out for themselves and share their opinions. Some lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. Most teachers are able to explain difficult ideas in a simple and relevant way. Teachers take care to plan interesting activities. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were sorting foods into Kosher and non-Kosher groups and this promoted a good deal of discussion and co-operation amongst the groups. By the end of the lesson, pupils were developing a good understanding of how beliefs and food rules affect the Jewish way of life.
86. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory at present because the present co-ordinator has only been in post for a few weeks. Already she has a good idea of areas for improvement, which include developing stronger links with a variety of faith groups and visiting some other places of worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These aspects of the curriculum were not an area of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. These subjects have a high profile within the school and contribute significantly to the very good ethos and pupils' personal development.

Art and design

Few art and design lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on the quality of work on display around the school and in class portfolios, discussions with the co-ordinator and an examination of the scheme of work and subject development plan. The school clearly values art and design, and ensures pupils spend an appropriate amount of time studying it. As a result, pupils' standards of attainment at the ages of seven and 11 are above those generally seen in pupils of the same age nationally. Teachers and pupils enjoy this subject. Pupils are very keen to show their work and talk about it. The quality of displays around the school is high and contributes to the

stimulating learning environment. Pupils have the chance to acquire a very wide range of skills. They work with lots of different media, including paints, pastels, fabrics, clay modroc, paper, charcoal and natural materials. They work independently and in groups, on a large and small scale.

Pupils are introduced to the work of a good range of artists, although they have limited opportunities to study non-western art. Teachers plan interesting opportunities to use ICT to support their work. In the lessons observed, teachers provided competent demonstrations and had prepared good quality resources, which helped pupils learn. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution, providing those who were less confident with the support they needed to achieve success. Teachers also encouraged pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work at the end of the lesson. Pupils do this well, making relevant comments sensitively. This clearly made a positive contribution to their social development. Pupils benefited this year from a creative arts week. In addition, some had the chance to visit the National Gallery and to focus on one of its famous paintings. The subject has a very good range of resources. It is well led and managed and is beginning to assess pupils' work, using the recently introduced 'skills based' assessment scheme. The school is keen to gain Arts Mark status and is now working towards achieving it.

Design and technology

Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Consequently, judgements are based on the wealth of evidence of pupils' practical work, through photographs of work done earlier in the year, by looking at schemes of work and talking to the subject co-ordinator. Pupils of all ages clearly enjoy this subject and take a pride in the quality of finish of their practical work. Pupils achieve standards at the age of seven and 11, which are similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally. However, their practical skills are generally better than average, while their ability to design and evaluate is more limited. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to further develop the pupils drawing and evaluation skills. Teachers plan interesting activities, many of which link well with on-going work in other subjects, for example, the Anderson shelters made by Year 5 pupils which are part of their history topic, and the torches made in Year 3 as part of the electrical circuits work done in science. Teachers demonstrate new skills and techniques competently. Combined with high expectations, this results in good quality end products. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has improved the resources and the scheme of work. Assessment, which is skills-based, has recently been introduced and is beginning to impact on what teachers plan. Resources are generally good, but pupils in Years 1 and 2 lack access to the tools needed to work with wood.

Music

Singing has a prominent focus within the school and this contributes to the high standards achieved and the quality of the provision. Pupils benefit from very good specialist teaching, a good range of resources and a spacious building with rehearsal space. Good provision is enhanced by the opportunities pupils have to learn to play recorder or sing in one of the two school choirs. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their performance skills in assembly and concerts within the school and community.

Only one lesson was seen during the inspection so it is not possible to form judgements on the overall standards of achievement or quality of teaching in music. The specialist teacher makes the choir practices fun, and pupils quickly learn how to respond to different lyrics and create musical patterns. The talented co-ordinator is establishing a firm base from which to advise and support her colleagues across the school and she identifies high expectations for further improving music from her work with the school staff. She is an excellent role model.

In the work sample provided, it was possible to identify responses to music being applied to the learning in other subjects, for example, in literacy and art and design.

Physical education

Overall the quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range of activities undertaken by the school to promote exercise and healthy living.
- The good sporting links with other schools, and variety of extra-curricular events.
- The good behaviour management, and promotion of positive attitudes to the subject.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

87. Standards are as expected for age at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve well. Four lessons were observed, and all pupils were keen to participate in these. They work hard and respond well to the teachers' prompts. In a Year 3 dance lesson, pupils were physically challenged well, and enthusiastic. In a Year 4 games lesson, pupils were developing skills for basketball, and learning about tactics in games. Levels of skills varied, but these were improving. In a Year 6 rugby games lesson, the teacher's good attention to discipline, and skills' development ensured that pupils achieved well. They caught and threw with reasonable accuracy, with more able pupils throwing greater distances. In the gymnastics lesson for Years 1 and 2 standards were seen to be above those expected for age.
88. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was generally good. The teaching is based on clear planning and assessment is undertaken in line with national guidance. Teachers explain tasks clearly and there is good pace and timing in lessons. Behaviour is managed effectively. Except for Years 1 and 2 lessons where demonstrations are used well, very few pupils' were asked to demonstrate key skills. However, teachers and pupils say that this is part of normal practice. Learning is made fun and pupils are given good opportunities to work individually, or in groups, and co-operate well. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting extra-curricular activities. These activities contribute well to a good overall curriculum. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in regular swimming lessons and achieve the expected standards by the end of Year 6.
89. The co-ordination for this subject is good. The co-ordinator has identified a range of priorities to improve the physical education curriculum, and has introduced a variety of activities in school to promote exercise and healthy living. She has also encouraged the involvement of the community to develop the curriculum. She has reviewed resources and she has begun to monitor the teaching to ensure progression in pupils' learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Overall the quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social, health education and citizenship have a high profile in the school and are co-ordinated by one of the deputy headteachers.
- Pupils respond in a mature way to the good opportunities provided to discuss issues, and take part in decision-making.
- All members of the school community take part in making class and school rules, providing ownership and sharing responsibility for keeping them.
- School displays promote issues such as discrimination and care of the environment.
- Staff provide good role models for being responsible citizens.
- No monitoring of teaching has yet taken place.

Commentary

90. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship, including sex and relationships and drug education. The school has a clear policy and the detailed schemes of work, developed in consultation with parents, reflect the caring ethos of the school. Some aspects are taught alongside science and religious education.
91. A limited sample of lessons were observed and it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. However, there was some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Year 1 pupils are gaining an understanding of how rules keep us safe. Year 4 pupils consider the responsibilities involved in choosing and caring for a pet. In Year 3, pupils discuss 'lying' during circle time. In all these lessons, pupils were comfortable to express their opinions and share feelings. Issues raised by pupils are handled sensitively by staff. Topics for the next school council meeting are discussed so that class representatives can gather opinions to take to the next meeting. Pupils feel that they are very well involved in decision making
92. All members of staff are good role models treating all pupils with care and respect.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection (N/a) *	8
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). * this judgement does not apply to this school (8)*

