

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY MAGDALEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Mortlake, London

LEA area: London Borough of Richmond

Unique reference number: 102909

Headteacher: Mr J F Murphy

Reporting inspector: Ms R Frith  
2490

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 186256

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Worple Street  
Mortlake  
London

Postcode: SW14 8HE

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Brown

Date of previous inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2490	Ms R Frith	Registered inspector	English Design and technology Music The Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? School's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1165	Mr P Dannheisser	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography Physical Education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
13122	Mrs S Matthews	Team inspector	History Equal opportunities	
25429	Mrs A Currie	Team Inspector	Science Information and Communication technology	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school for boys and girls of all abilities aged 4 to 11 years. There are 197 pupils on roll, including 15 children aged under five. The school is situated in the north east of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. It serves families from a variety of backgrounds and most pupils live in the immediate parish and locality either in privately owned or social housing. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is below the national average although the school believes that not all families are claiming their entitlement. On entry to school, pupils have average standards of attainment and most have had some form of pre-school experience in a nursery or playgroup. A few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and six pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. There is an average percentage of pupils with special educational needs which includes two pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Most of the pupils with special educational needs who require regular additional support have specific or moderate learning difficulties.

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

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School is a very good school with many significant strengths. It achieves high standards and serves the community well. The quality of teaching is good and the pupils are encouraged to work hard. The leadership and management of the school are very good and manifest themselves in a strong commitment to raising standards while also offering a broad and interesting curriculum. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Results in national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of their last year in school are well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- The school is a caring community with a strong ethos based on the values of respect and co-operation. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is very good and results in pupils' very good behaviour and excellent relationships and personal development. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.
- Teaching is good and results in pupils making good progress.
- The school promotes and achieves very high rates of attendance. Staff display very good levels of care and this, in turn, results in pupils having very good attitudes to school. Pupils arrive on time and are keen to take part in school activities.
- Management and leadership of the school are very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and governors are strongly committed to the raising of standards and to continual improvement.
- Parents have very positive views about the school and are pleased with the education it provides. The school's links with parents and the parish are excellent.

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

- Continue to raise levels of attainment in writing at Key Stage 1.
- Improve the balance of the curriculum and the assessment procedures for subjects other than English, mathematics and science, as identified in the school development plan.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The last inspection in November 1995 found St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School to have many strengths but improvements were needed particularly in mathematics, information and communication technology and in some aspects of management. Since the last inspection the school has been through a period of instability in relation to staffing and leadership from which it has rapidly recovered. This is

reflected in the recent improvement in results and the strong, reinvigorated support of the community. The school has successfully addressed the issues identified in the last inspection report and improvement has been very good. By the time pupils leave school, standards in English, mathematics and science are above those reported in the last inspection and the school has achieved high standards in National Curriculum test results. Provision for mathematics and information and communication technology has improved and this, in turn, has raised standards of attainment. Overall, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and this is being maintained through a systematic programme of monitoring of teaching which highlights teachers' strengths and areas for development. Staff have developed the assessment of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science and use the information gained from this to improve their planning and monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school. The roles and responsibilities of senior management and administrative staff have been reviewed and this has ensured an appropriate delegation of tasks. Improvements have been made in the school building and playground which now provide a stimulating learning environment. The school is in a good position to improve even further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	C	A	A	very high A*
mathematics	C	B	A	A	well above average A
science	D	E	A	A*	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

These results show that in 2000 the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science was well above the national average. When compared to schools with pupils of a similar background, the levels indicate well above average standards in English and mathematics and very high standards in science. These results in science place the school within the top five per cent of schools with pupils of a similar background. Over the last five years the school's trend of improvement overall in English, mathematics and science has been below the national trend but this masks a significant improvement since 1999 in all three subjects. In 2000, the school achieved 12 per cent above its target for English and 14 per cent above its target for mathematics. Evidence from this inspection confirms that pupils in Year 6 are expected to maintain these high standards and reach the targets set. They are reaching average levels of attainment in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education and above average standards in history and music. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, the large majority of children reach the nationally expected standards in all areas of learning, and a significant minority attain above this. Results of the 2000 standard assessment tests and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds indicate that in comparison with all schools and also with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching average levels of attainment in writing, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and geography and above average standards in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics, science, history, music and physical education. Overall, pupils achieve well and their results indicate an improving trend.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are interested in what they do. They are proud of their achievements and keen to talk about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils develop in confidence as they progress through the school and become increasingly more responsible. The excellent relationships within the school help to create a safe and stimulating learning environment.
Attendance	Very good. The attendance rate for the last academic year was very high in comparison with other schools. Lessons start promptly and no time is wasted.

The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and excellent relationships and personal development provide a good basis for their learning and make a positive contribution to the levels of attainment that they achieve.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is excellent in 2 per cent of lessons, very good in 25 per cent, good in 54 per cent and satisfactory in 19 per cent. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection and reflects the high value senior management place on attracting good teachers whom they then support well through a good programme of professional development. The quality of teaching is particularly pleasing, as two teachers were in only the second term of their teaching at the time of the inspection and several other teachers were new to the school, including one supply teacher. The school meets the needs of all pupils well. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is particularly effective in developing their personal and social skills and their attitudes to learning. These strengths are built upon successfully in the rest of the school where teachers focus on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy within a broad curriculum. Teachers have adopted the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and the teaching of English and mathematics is generally good although staff have recognised the need for improvement in Key Stage 1 in relation to pupils' writing. Overall, pupils' learning is good. Teachers help pupils to understand the relevance of what they are doing by sharing with them the learning objectives for each lesson and by encouraging them to review their achievements at the end of the lesson. The school targets valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language and this results in their making good progress towards the targets set. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged. Teachers manage pupils very well and have high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, no time is wasted and pupils try hard to do their best. Teachers are encouraging and this results in pupils becoming confident, keen to answer questions and put forward their own points of view. The comments made to pupils help to raise their self-esteem and give them a clear idea about how they can improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are good and for seven to eleven year olds the basic curriculum is further enriched and extended by a wide variety of activities and learning experiences. The school is now in a position to review the balance of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and progress well towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The management and organisation of provision are good and staff work well as a team to meet the needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils are well supported and fully involved in all learning activities. They make similar progress to that of their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development through the promotion of spiritual awareness and knowledge of social and moral responsibilities is very good. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff have good knowledge and understanding of their pupils and make very good provision for their welfare, health and safety. The care given to pupils is well reflected in the way pupils, in turn, respect and care for others.

The headteacher, staff and governors are keen to ensure that pupils experience a rich and varied curriculum as well as successfully meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum and other national initiatives. This is achieved by good planning and the provision of a good range of activities that includes visits to local places of interest and regular extra-curricular activities. The school's partnership with parents is excellent and, in turn, the excellent contribution that parents make to the work of the school and their children's learning are significant factors in the standards that pupils achieve.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and central to this is the aim to raise standards. He is effective in appointing good quality staff and motivating a team with a shared sense of values and priorities. The deputy headteacher and other key members of staff ably support him.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are fully involved in the school development planning process. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school effectively analyses its strengths and weaknesses in order to decide what needs to be done next.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school manages and uses its resources well and priorities for development are appropriately financed. Correct tendering procedures are followed and staff and governors seek to obtain the best value for their spending.

The success of the school stems from the energetic and inspiring leadership and management of the headteacher and the effective work of key staff and governors. All share a clear vision for the

development of the school with a specific focus on teaching and learning. There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers to ensure that class sizes are not too large. Support staff are well trained and the good support they provide is a contributory factor in the pupils' learning. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory and used well to support learning throughout the school.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a very positive ethos.</li> <li>• Children like going to school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible and their behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and teachers expect the children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Staff work closely with parents, and parents feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.</li> <li>• Pupils with special educational needs receive good support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors endorse the positive views held by parents and the regard they have for the school. A small number of parents stated that the setting of homework was inconsistent in two classes and was also insufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. From the evidence gathered during the inspection, inspectors judge the provision of homework to be good overall. The homework builds successfully on the work undertaken in school and supports the standards which pupils achieve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the reception class with a range of abilities and experiences but most have average attainment across the areas of learning. They make good progress due to the good quality and breadth of the curriculum and good teaching. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, the large majority of children reach the nationally expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical, personal, social and emotional development, and a significant minority attain above this.
2. Results of the 2000 standard assessment tests and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds indicate that in comparison with all schools and also with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. At the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in the 2000 standard assessment tests, when compared with all schools, was well above average in English, mathematics and science. When these results are compared with those of similar schools, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was well above average and the high standards in science place St. Mary Magdalen's in the top five per cent of schools.
3. Over the last five years the school's trend of improvement in English, mathematics and science at Key stage 2 was below the national trend but this masks the significant improvement since 1999 in all three subjects. The school's tracking system, which indicates the gains that pupils make in their learning, highlights that pupils at least meet the targets set by the school and often go beyond this. For example, last year the school achieved 12 per cent above its target for English and 14 per cent above its target for mathematics. Improvements in leadership and management in the school, as a result of appointing a permanent headteacher, together with the bringing together of a committed and hard working staff are key factors in bringing about these recent improvements.
4. Evidence from this inspection confirms that the standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 2 are above average in speaking, listening and reading and average in writing. The school has focused on improving standards, particularly in writing, and this is beginning to have effect. There have been improvements in the content of pupils' writing and their use of punctuation and grammar, but more needs to be done to improve pupils' handwriting and presentation of work. Assessment is used well to indicate the next stage in the pupils' learning and clear targets are set. Also, support is well targeted to those who need additional help with their learning. Pupils in the current Year 6 are maintaining the well above average standards achieved last year although the number of pupils with special educational needs within this smaller class may affect the overall statistics. The introduction of the Literacy Strategy has had a positive impact in the school by helping to focus teaching in English, particularly reading and writing. This is enhancing the standards achieved overall and has resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection. Overall, standards in literacy are average in Key Stage 1 and well above average in Key stage 2.
5. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards that are, respectively, above and well above those expected for their ages in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. The standards are similar to the results of the National Curriculum

tests in 2000, which also showed that standards were well above those of similar schools nationally. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well and approximately a third of seven and eleven year olds reach levels higher than those expected for their age. The successful introduction of the Numeracy Strategy is enhancing the progress which pupils make and the standards that they achieve. Pupils get regular practice in developing and consolidating their number skills and the daily mental mathematics sessions aids their thinking. Another significant factor in the raising of standards is the excellent work of the subject co-ordinator and local advisers in building the support, training and guidance systems that were previously missing. Major improvements have been made since the last inspection.

6. Standards for science in the current Year 2 are at least in line with those expected for pupils of that age and at the current rate of improvement are expected to be above average by the end of Key Stage 1. In Year 6, most pupils are already reaching the standards expected nationally and this year's results are expected to be similar to those obtained last year which were well above average. This indicates a significant improvement from the last inspection and more specifically since 1999. This improvement in standards is a result of the school's focus on developing the subject and raising its status in school. The co-ordinator has managed the subject very well and, for example, a science week which was held last year, raised parents' awareness and increased pupils' interest. Across the school a higher than normal amount of curriculum time is devoted to the subject, giving good opportunities for teachers to introduce new learning and to develop skills. Resources to teach the subject have also improved and this has improved the quality of teaching and the standards which pupils achieve.
7. Pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching average levels of attainment in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and geography and above average standards in history, music and physical education. Pupils in Year 6 are currently reaching average levels of attainment in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education and above average standards in history and music. Overall, pupils achieve well and their results indicate an improving trend.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets identified on their individual education plans. They receive a good level of support either in-class or in small groups and, by the time they leave the school, they reach standards in line with their abilities. The few pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress and have full access to a broad curriculum. No significant difference was noted in the progress of boys and girls during the inspection. More able pupils are well challenged and make good progress in line with their abilities.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to school, behaviour and attendance are very good. All but one of the parents that completed the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that behaviour at the school is good and the same number said that their children like school. This degree of unanimity is unusual. Children joining the reception class clearly benefit from the school's good induction arrangements and quickly adjust to the school's routines and procedures. They are well behaved, have good attitudes to learning and form good relationships with each other and with adults. All of the many pupils spoken with by the inspection team said they enjoy coming to school and feel very well looked after. They love the clubs and they say that teachers, assistants and mealtime staff are kind

and helpful and that they care well for them. Attendance figures are high and punctuality is very good.

10. Pupils quickly learn how to relate well to each other within the school environment. In the playground, pupils show considerable ability to co-operate in games. Pupils are very friendly, considerate, open, and helpful to visitors. They are polite and courteous to each other and to their teachers and helpers. Most pupils show enthusiasm and the ability to co-operate and collaborate, especially when set appropriate work with high expectations. They work well in small groups. They listen well to lesson introductions and show pleasure in their success. For example, seven-year-olds programmed a small, computerised vehicle to follow a pre-determined path on the hall's floor. They were sensible, careful, totally involved and working well together. Pupils with special educational needs are keen and are well supported – usually within the classroom. They frequently benefit from specialist help ensuring that attitudes to work are positive. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.
11. The pupils' very good attitudes to learning are demonstrated in many ways. For example, a session for seven-year-olds in the library was a productive and enjoyable experience for all who took part. There was a buzz of excitement as pupils explored the books set out for them and a calm involvement during the story time. The oldest pupils in the school were also able to show the highest levels of concentration, enthusiasm and positive attitudes to their class work. In a French lesson where there was a high level of expectation and pace mixed with a liberal sprinkling of enjoyment and fun, all the pupils were totally involved and learning fast. A class of ten-year-olds was completely engrossed in the details of the life and fate of one of Henry VIII's wives. Pupils usually show a genuine eagerness to take an active part in most lessons, and to show their work to visitors.
12. In classes and around the school, behaviour is very good. Behaviour was observed to be particularly good during lunch times, even when pupils' patience was tested when the weather prevented them from playing outdoors. Pupils quietly wait their turn to collect their meal and they move well and with consideration when they go from their classrooms to other parts of the building, helped by pupils holding doors open. They value property and respect the delicate objects displayed around the school. Very good behaviour is fostered by ensuring that the duration of the tasks set are in tune with the children's attention span. This keeps them fully engaged and motivated. Pupils move from task to task quickly and quietly. When teachers praise them for good behaviour pupils respond well, and are confident and reliable. They are positive without being needlessly regimented. Pupils respect one another and there is a marked absence of oppressive behaviour, including bullying racism and sexism. There have been no recent exclusions. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions and feel that they are fair. They recognise that this helps them develop a good understanding of the impact of what they do. In assemblies, pupils of all ages are very attentive. They listen well, take part in singing and contribute to a calm and secure start to the day.
13. Pupils are given increasing responsibility as they grow older and enjoy helping out, clearing up and undertaking a range of tasks. Older pupils are given the opportunity of working with younger ones in breaks or at the end of the school year and take on this responsibility well. Pupils are proud to be elected as school councillors. The council meets regularly and all pupils are given opportunity to contribute their ideas and suggestions to their work through a network of class councils. A head boy and girl are selected and take their responsibilities seriously, well supported by other pupils. By the time the pupils are eleven years old they are mature, confident and ready to

move on to the next phase of their education.

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

14. The school has improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection and this has helped to enhance the progress which pupils make and the standards that they achieve. Across the school, teaching is excellent in 2 per cent of lessons, very good in 25 per cent, good in 54 per cent and satisfactory in 19 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This quality of teaching is particularly pleasing as several staff are new to the school and two teachers are in their first year of teaching. Their performance reflects the high expectations of the headteacher and the value that senior management and governors place on attracting good quality new staff. Also, a good programme of professional development is in place to support staff, and the regular monitoring of teaching and learning identifies teachers' strengths and areas for development. All these features, together with the very strong team spirit present in the school and the strong commitment of staff, result in good practice.
15. The quality of the teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good and in 25 per cent of lessons very good. This is an important factor in the way children develop very good personal, emotional and social skills, attitudes to learning and behaviour. In the reception class, planning is good and reflects the national guidance for teaching children of this age. Appropriate attention has been placed on settling children into school and a good range of activities is provided which maintains the children's interest and supports their learning. A good balance is made between direct adult teaching and activities, which encourage the children's ability to make choices and work independently or with each other. The classroom assistant gives valuable support to children and works with the teacher to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
16. These good features are systematically built upon in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, where the quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers focus well on developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and target valuable support to those pupils with special educational needs. This use of resources is proving successful in enhancing the progress that these pupils make, and the standards that they achieve. The headteacher and literacy co-ordinator recognise the need to develop a more consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting in Key Stage 1 and to ensure that teachers have consistently high expectation of the pupils' work so that pupils always present their work well.
17. Across the school, teachers plan their lessons well. The school has developed a coherent system where clear learning objectives are identified and shared with pupils. This means that the pupils are clear about what they should learn, and at the end of most lessons have the opportunity to reflect on the progress that they have made. Increasingly so, teachers are using the structure of the literacy and numeracy sessions in other subject lessons and this is contributing positively to the overall quality of teaching. Many teachers start the lessons with a clear outline of what the class will be doing, recapitulate on previous learning and introduce new information and skills either through direct exposition or demonstration. The pupils then work either in groups or independently to consolidate this learning and come together as a class at the end of the lesson to share learning points and evaluate what they have done. Within this structure, a satisfactory range of teaching methods is used to gain the interest of the pupils and ensure that they are involved in their learning. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, staff worked well together to offer pupils the opportunity to develop their knowledge of plants and how seeds grow. The lesson

started from the pupils' own experiences when the teacher asked them about what kind of fruit and vegetables they had eaten. This was followed by the teacher showing pupils a range of fruit and vegetable and developing their knowledge of these. Pupils were then encouraged to work in groups or individually to discover new information about seeds or, as in the case of the lower attaining pupils, make a salad whilst discussing where the ingredients had come from. The lesson concluded by the teacher assessing the pupils' understanding and consolidating their learning.

18. Staff have focused on developing the pupils' basic skills in a coherent way and have successfully used the literacy and numeracy strategies to meet the needs of pupils. The Literacy Strategy helps to engender a love of stories and writing for a variety of purposes, and the Numeracy Strategy ensures that pupils get regular practice in using their mental mathematics skills. Additional booster classes have also been provided, which have supported the pupils' learning. Support teachers and assistants work effectively alongside class teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in these areas.
19. In the best lessons, expectations are high, the pace of learning is good and pupils are challenged. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, these good features were evident as pupils were encouraged by the teacher to develop skills in linking units into a sequence without a pause or a break. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge, which is a result of an effective staff development programme, and they use this well in their planning. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection when teachers' subject knowledge was identified as a key area for development. In a very good literacy session for Year 5 pupils, the teacher uses specific subject language well and has high expectations that the pupils will do the same. Consequently, pupils gain confidence and in response to the teacher's question about ballads, one pupil states "The rhythm in the first stanza keeps repeating throughout". Teachers generally use time and resources well, particularly in the reception class and in Key Stage 2.
20. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is excellent and this has a significant influence on how staff successfully manage the pupils in their care. Teachers are encouraging and supportive and this results in most pupils becoming confident, keen to answer questions and put forward their views. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well and encourage them to improve and work harder in lessons. Teachers take full opportunity to comment on pupils' work through their marking and this ensures that most pupils are clear about how they can improve. Targets are set with pupils and this, too, helps pupils to understand and recognise the next stage in their learning. Staff work hard to improve the environment by displaying pupils' work, for example, in art and design and design and technology. This supports the children's sense of self-esteem and encourages them to work harder. Provision of homework is very good in the reception class and good in the rest of the school. It supports the work done in school, particularly in English and mathematics and often offers opportunities for pupils to develop their research skills.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are correctly identified and teaching is well focused towards reaching the targets identified on their individual education plans. Teachers and support staff work well together and provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning which helps pupils to feel secure in their learning and willing to try hard, in most cases. The additional specialist teaching is of a good quality and used well with targeted pupils either within the class or in small groups. The pace of learning in these small group sessions is good and pupils respond well to the specialised programmes of activities which are well tailored

to their needs.

22. The school is currently developing its work with gifted and talented pupils and a small number of pupils in Year 6 have been identified for additional support by a specialist teacher. Although no specialist additional teacher is provided to support pupils who speak English as an additional language, their needs are generally met well through the class teacher and support staff. Teachers work with the specialist advisory teacher from the local education authority to develop their own skills and knowledge, and thereby ensure that the work set is appropriate and challenging.
23. The quality of assistance given by the classroom support staff, who often have other roles in the school to support pupils, is good. They work well with teachers and are encouraged to play a full role in the life and work of the school. Their skills are used well and directed by the teachers, who clearly rely on their expertise to enhance pupils' learning.
24. The school uses specialist teachers to teach music, special educational needs, French and information and communication technology. This is an effective use of school resources and directly supports the progress that pupils make in these areas and the standards that they achieve. In particular, the very good subject knowledge of these teachers is used well to plan lessons which are challenging for all pupils and include activities which are well matched to the pupils' needs. The pace of learning is good and consequently most pupils make good or sometimes very good progress in these lessons.

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

25. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils aged five to seven. For seven to eleven year olds, the range and quality of provision are very good because the basic curriculum is enriched and extended by a wide variety of other activities and learning experiences.
26. Staff plan the Foundation Stage effectively and set clear learning objectives to ensure that the foundation curriculum is covered appropriately and that a balance between practical and knowledge based activities is achieved in lessons. They build upon what the pupils have learned during a wide variety of pre-school provision and use their professional judgement well to determine the best ways to incorporate the more formal programmes of literacy and numeracy into the pupils' learning experiences. Outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage has recently improved and now provides opportunities for structured and unstructured play in a suitable environment. Children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
27. The full statutory curriculum is in place, and religious education follows the national Roman Catholic curriculum and the local diocesan guidelines. The school's clear priorities are reflected in its all-pervading commitment to Christian family values and spiritual development, and equally, in the time and successful attention it gives to promoting higher standards in English, mathematics and science. At the same time, the curriculum provided has good breadth and relevance. It carefully addresses the individual needs of all pupils, and offers quality opportunities for them to develop particular interests and talents in areas such as music and sport. In addition, pupils at Key Stage 2 benefit from very good specialist tuition in French and from good provision in environmental studies.

28. The good quality of the school's response to change is illustrated by the way it has taken on board the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Very effective management of both areas has boosted the confidence, expertise and teamwork of all staff, and improved the accuracy and shared use of assessment information. As a result, planned learning activities suitably challenge the different levels of attainment, and pupils' targets are beginning to reflect their precise needs and best rates of learning. Analyses of assessment are being used to identify and reinforce elements of literacy and numeracy that need improvement, and parents are more closely involved and informed about what their children are doing and how they can support the progress they are making. Teachers work as a cohesive and mutually supportive curriculum team, valuing the improving partnership with parents that makes the homework policy more effective in practice. The quality of planning for teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy sessions is very good, being supported by good guidance, accurate assessment and a clear understanding of what should be taught at each stage of learning. A challenge facing the school is to improve the planning of opportunities to use and extend these basic learning skills, together with information and communication technology skills, to support learning in other subjects.
29. A related challenge is to develop the quality and balance of work in subjects which, in recent years, have been squeezed by the required dedication of time and energy to literacy and numeracy. Science provides a good example of what can be done. Eighteen months ago, weak provision was reflected in seriously declining standards. Well-planned and very effectively managed whole-school action introduced a new policy and scheme of work, improved staff expertise and resources, and dramatically raised the performance of eleven-year-old pupils in the statutory tests. Other subjects all now have policies and schemes of work that are soundly based on national guidance and relate to a good whole-school curriculum plan. These developments, together with the work of all teachers as designated subject managers, represent good improvement since the previous inspection. However, the recently revised curriculum orders will require further review and improvement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Although all required elements are covered in each subject, planning and the allocation of time do not yet ensure consistent balance and continuity. For example, geography units are often taught too far apart for pupils to recall and build on their previous learning. In both art and design and physical education, planned work needs to develop a better balance and relationship between the various elements of the subject.
30. The provision to ensure equality of access and opportunity is very good. The school's mission statement emphasises a determination to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential. The equal opportunities policy is comprehensive and clear on all issues. There is a clear policy for supporting pupils with special educational needs including those identified as gifted and talented.
31. All pupils have equal access to resources and out of school activities. They have the opportunity to participate in a variety of sporting and musical activities and to go on a variety of visits. The school encourages everyone to give of their best. It ensures that they all have every opportunity to do well because in all classes teachers aim to match classroom activities to the aptitudes of pupils.
32. Good procedures are in place for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs from baseline assessment in reception and referrals from pre-school establishments. The curriculum meets the requirements for all the pupils on

the Code of Practice Special Educational Needs Register. The special needs specialist teacher and support staff provide good quality support within the classrooms and in small withdrawal groups. Good specific targets are identified within the individual educational plans and this support makes a positive impact on pupils' learning and contributes to the good progress and sometimes very good progress which they make.

33. Pupils learning English as an additional language have the same curriculum opportunities as other pupils throughout the school. Pupils at the earliest stages of learning English as an additional language are given good support by the class teachers and support staff who have gained from working with the local education special advisory teacher.
34. The curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of more able pupils and consequently assures that the tasks set are appropriately challenging. Individual pupils have been identified by staff and an additional lesson is provided to further challenge and extend their learning. The high percentage of pupils attaining a level of attainment above that expected for their age indicates that provision for these pupils is good.
35. A very good range of other activities and experiences enhances the basic curriculum and extends pupils' learning. Most staff and some parents contribute to a varied weekly programme of clubs and events. A significant number of pupils benefit daily from a very good Breakfast Club and a related after-school facility. Lunchtime meetings provide very popular opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and skills in singing, French, art, computing, recorder playing, games and gardening. After school, other clubs offer training in football and netball. School teams in these and other sports compete very successfully in league matches and local competitions. A good range of visits and visitors, and other opportunities for pupils to achieve higher standards, further extend the curriculum. For example, regular school productions provide opportunities for pupils to develop their performance skills. An annual five-day residential visit to Sayers Croft enables pupils in Year 6 to extend and apply their social, personal, physical, scientific and geographical skills. Recently, an artist-in-residence programme gave all pupils excellent opportunities to work with a professional artist in designing and making large three-dimensional millennium murals. All classes benefit from a good programme of educational visits, which makes well-planned use of the many places of interest in the Richmond area.
36. Outstanding links with the local community make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in a variety of ways. For example, ties with the parish are very strong and the church regularly holds a 11.00am Mass in the school. Pupils participate in events organised by the Barnes Community Association, which has provided funds to enable needier pupils to go on school journeys. The school participates in the Richmond Music Festival, and hosted this event last year. Community service volunteers have been extensively employed in redecorating the building and maintaining the site. Action networks have been developed through meetings of school representatives with the Bishop of Kensington and other leading local figures. Strong links with Channel 4 are enabling pupils in Key Stage 2 to work in television studios, contribute to broadcast programmes and share their resulting experiences with other pupils.
37. Links with partner institutions are equally constructive. Over time, close co-operation with other Catholic schools in Richmond has led to very good agreed provisions in personal, social and health education. Recently the choir joined forces with the choir of the nearby Church of England school to perform a Carols at Christmas celebration

at Barnes Hospital. Good links with the local Montessori school now effectively ensure the school's intake of new pupils. Relations with most of the Catholic secondary schools in the area are strong, and high school students regularly mentor pupils in Year 6. Particularly strong relations with St. Mary's University College mean that the school provides work experience and mentor support for nine student teachers annually. These relations also help the school with the recruitment of teachers and with staff training and advice.

38. The school's provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE.) is very good. For several years the school has collaborated with St. Mary's University College and five partner schools in Richmond to develop a common policy and practice appropriate to the Catholic primary school. Led by the co-ordinator, the school has now successfully adapted the agreed approaches, consulted parents and developed staff expertise. A coherent whole-school programme now covers all recommended themes and issues within a moral, family orientated Christian approach to PSHE, matched to pupils' needs as they grow older. The programme permeates the curriculum and assembly time, and includes established provisions which use the police, fire, health and road safety services. It develops specific topics through science and religious education, and provides lessons on focused features such as first aid or bullying. Very well planned elements continuously develop pupils' awareness of a healthy lifestyle, substance use and misuse, and place sex education in the context of family and relationships.
39. This developing work in PSHE makes an increasingly important contribution to the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is a strength of the wider curriculum.
40. True to its mission statement, the school's very good provision for spiritual development is underpinned by the Christian values, and the attitudes of trust and respect, which permeate the school. The spirituality is expressed in simple, familiar prayers, and promoted by carefully planned and reflective daily assemblies which develop themes such as love and friendship. In one excellent assembly, all pupils in Year 3 used their growing skills in music, dance and drama to perform a short programme of songs and improvised sketches on the theme of respect. The occasion was wonderfully well supported by parents and it fully reflected the school's special quality of commitment to care, achievement, inner values and non-material well-being. These ideals are consistently reinforced by staff who offer good models of care and friendly respect. Teaching styles are calm and positive, and they prompt imaginative appreciation of things studied, such as the delicacy of the flowers that pupils attempted to capture in pencil, or the beauty of the artefacts discovered at Sutton Hoo.
41. Very good provision for moral development is consistently linked to the strong spiritual values found in the school. Pupils work within a secure moral framework based on a behaviour policy that gives clear guidance to staff, pupils and parents. High expectations of moral conduct are manifest in all the work of the school. They are exemplified in the fine role-models presented by the staff, and in the respect and courtesy that adults show to pupils and each other. Pupils' understanding of right and wrong is made more secure by giving them responsibility for agreeing and upholding a code of conduct for their own class. A house system is used to instil pride in their work and behaviour, in each other's achievements, and in the school's successes and the building itself. A popular system of gold stars and other awards formally reinforces and celebrates behaviour that contributes to the happiness and good order of the school community.

42. The school's very good provision for pupils' social development is strongly supported by expanding work in personal and social education and by the excellent links with the local community. Pupils are urged to participate in community events such as Barnes Fair, or to take Harvest Festival offerings to sponsored residents. Teachers consistently plan opportunities for extending pupils' social skills in lessons. The youngest are taught to take turns, share and help each other; the oldest co-operate in most class activities, undertake collaborative projects and are obliged to put a wide range of social skills to the test during a five-day residential visit to Sayers Croft. All pupils in Year 6 are prefects and monitors who have a range of responsibilities to fulfil, including the support of younger pupils at lunchtime. The School Council provides opportunities for pupils to take significant initiatives for improving the school. Their social awareness is further increased by busy fund-raising activities on behalf of the Marie Curie Appeal and the Catholic Children's Society.
43. Good provision for cultural development includes well planned use of the many nearby places of interest to extend pupils' understanding of their own local history and culture. A growing appreciation of Western culture more generally is promoted through the study of famous artists and composers. Work in history and geography develops awareness of past civilizations and other places and ways of life. The school makes a strong commitment to fostering a respect and understanding of other world faiths. The school community includes a wide range of different national backgrounds and these are used well to bring special insights into different cultural traditions and the bonds between them. For example, a lovely display in the reception class maps out the entire range of nationalities represented and becomes a focus for positive discussion and shared learning.

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

44. This is a caring school which makes very good provision overall to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. The personal needs of the pupils are met well. There is a very positive atmosphere and all the staff know the pupils well. Pupils say that all the staff are kind and supportive. They describe the school as having a good atmosphere, warm and caring. They say that there is always someone to turn to. 'It's friendly, kind and "cool" '. The needs of pupils are identified early and those with special educational needs are given appropriate support to help them make progress. The few pupils with English as a second language are given sufficient support to ensure that they make good progress. The school recognises the need to develop further support for pupils who show particular gifts or talents. These pupils have been identified in each class, and the oldest of these are given some separate group work and kept challenged and motivated.
45. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is carefully tracked with the help of individual targets in which pupils are encouraged to be aware of the impact of their actions, and ways in which they can change. The school supports pupils experiencing difficulties regarding their conduct and tracks their behaviour offering to work closely with parents to support their children. The school is well aware of the need to ensure that behaviour is monitored and does this well. Any serious incidents, including racist incidents, should they occur, would be logged. Certificates and other awards are given to pupils at special assemblies with an explanation of why they were deserved. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions, and know that parents are likely to be involved if behaviour becomes unsatisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to help devise their own class rules.

46. There are many opportunities for pupils to discuss feelings, attitudes and behaviour with each other. This work takes place in assemblies, science lessons dealing with health and development, and class assemblies which can incorporate 'circle time' when pupils sit in a circle and discuss current issues of concern. These issues may cover health and safety, drugs, cleanliness and relationships. Pupils have other experiences that help them mature into responsible and caring individuals. These include religious education lessons. During the personal and social education fortnight, staff and visitors such as police and safety experts help to inform and educate.
47. The school has high expectations of regular, good attendance and monitors attendance well. Staff work closely with the educational welfare officer when necessary and follow up any unexplained absences. Registers conform to legal requirements. It is clear that pupils and their families are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and this is encouraged by the school through the awarding of certificates in recognition of punctuality and good attendance.
48. Visits to places of interest, including a residential visit, help pupils develop an understanding and respect for other people, customs and experience. This is reinforced through a multi-cultural range of music and art. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and collect for charitable causes. Christian values pervade the school and play a balanced part in the lives of all who work, play and pray there. They have a palpable impact on the way in which adults and pupils treat each other.
49. Staff are fully aware of child protection procedures. At playtime, pupils are well supervised by a large number of adults. During rainy days, pupils are looked after at break times and play well in their classrooms. The midday meal supervisors know the pupils well and are well aware of their responsibilities regarding health and safety and child protection. The school has started a breakfast club, and those pupils who take up this opportunity benefit from an unhurried and enjoyable start to their day which this service provides.
50. Two members of staff are trained in first aid and there are records of all incidents. Pupils with special physical needs are well cared for and staff are careful to acknowledge pupils' needs or abilities without drawing general attention to them. There are regular checks on the safety of portable electrical appliances, fire extinguishers and physical education equipment, and governors are fully involved in ensuring that the school provide a suitable and safe environment for all who work and learn there. The headteacher, caretaker, and governors undertake regular health and safety inspections. Staff have worked very hard to provide a building and site which are well maintained and provide a pleasant and safe environment despite the lack of space. During the inspection, a few minor health and safety points were raised with the school and addressed.
51. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good in English, mathematics and science, and the results of these assessments are very well used to guide lesson planning. There is much useful data collected from statutory and optional testing of pupils' attainment and results are carefully analysed to produce a picture of an individual's strengths. This is used as a basis of predicting and target setting for some years ahead, for regular reviews of those targets, and for identifying pupils who for a variety of reasons may not be making expected progress. They are then given appropriate support. Pupils are aware of their own targets, and they are involved in

self-reviews of their attainment. The school acknowledges that the focus of assessment tends to prioritise English, mathematics and science, and that these efforts now need to be broadened to encompass other subjects.

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

52. The school makes admirable efforts to involve parents in all aspects of its work. The information in letters to parents is excellent. In addition to informing parents about events and holidays, weekly newsletters provide very helpful information about what their children will be learning. This, unusually, includes many suggestions regarding additional experiences and visits that parents may wish to share with their children to enhance their learning. Parents are given opportunities to help their children's learning at home with homework and there are reading record books through which parents and teachers can communicate. For one week a term each pupil's work is sampled in a 'golden book' that is shared with parents and helps them and the school track their child's progress. The annual reports on pupils' progress are detailed and evaluative and indicate learning targets for the future. Parents are fully involved in the regular reviews of the individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs. Attendance at meetings with teachers to discuss children's progress is very good.
53. Parental involvement starts before their children enter the reception class, when teachers visit their future pupils in their own homes. Good relationships are quickly built up through regular contact between staff and parents. Parents are encouraged to attend special events such as annual performances, and these are very well supported by parents and other members of the community. During the inspection, when a class presented their assembly to the school, there were more parents than there were pupils taking an active part. It was a delight to see these pupils' achievements being celebrated by so many parents, as well as staff and the other pupils. The parents take this level of support for granted, but it is exceptional.
54. Parents support their children by ensuring their attendance and punctuality and supporting the large proportion that attend after school-clubs and events. Only one parent disagreed that the school provided an interesting range of activities and the inspection evidence does not support this view. There is a full and varied curriculum and a very wide range of further opportunities for learning at lunch times and after school, and this is recognised and appreciated by parents and their children. Parental (and ex-parental) support in the library, for information and communication technology, and in many other aspects of school life is invaluable. There are also plenty of volunteers to help on school visits. There is a strong parent/teacher association, which is well supported by staff and parents. It raises useful funds and contributes significantly to the school community.
55. Seventy-one out of the seventy-two parents replying to the questions sent out before the inspection agreed that the school works closely with them and keeps them well informed. A similar proportion feels comfortable about approaching the school with problems. A suggestion box is provided for parents to use and staff, particularly the headteacher are very visible at the beginning and end of the school day. Inspectors endorse the positive views held by parents and the regard they have for the school. Fifteen parents said they did not feel that the amount of homework was right for their children. It is not easy to interpret this result fully. Some parents feel that there is too much homework and others too little. Inspectors investigating this concern found that the quantity and type of homework set were appropriate for the pupils' ages and generally of a good quality.

56. The school has gone through considerable changes in a very short period and there is a very small number of parents who now feel less comfortable with the current management style. However, this feeling is not shared by pupils or by the great majority of parents who wrote or voiced their opinions. They express considerable confidence in the school, particularly the headteacher, and are positive and supportive.

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

57. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, and central to this is the provision of high quality teaching to ensure good standards. He is also keen to ensure that pupils are well-rounded individuals who are able to relate positively to each other and to a range of experiences. The success of the headteacher's leadership is founded in his beliefs and desires that all who work in the school should do the very best that they can for the children. This is summed up in his statement, " We are dealing with children's dreams - we have to get it right. By the time they leave school I want them (the pupils) to be happy in their learning and to reach their potential". He has a good understanding of the pupils' needs and how they learn and this is reflected in the school's practice, which encourages independence and learning through a range of activities. These features are well demonstrated in the school where an ethos of care and concern together with high expectations are evident. By the time pupils leave school they show a mature attitude and are sensitive to the needs of others. There is a good degree of mutual tolerance and respect, and racial harmony is self-evident.
58. Prior to the headteacher's appointment, the school had gone through a significant period of instability in relation to leadership and management. His vision, drive and energy have proved to be significant factors in how the school and community have come together and brought about significant improvements in the quality of education provided. He has quickly gained the confidence of staff, governors, parents and pupils. The headteacher is particularly effective at team building and motivating staff. An outstanding feature of staffing is the strength of united teamwork that is noticeable on entering the school. It is purposeful and motivated, resulting in improving standards and a determined will to succeed. There is a strong senior management team, and the skills, expertise and experiences of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are complemented well. The senior managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and priorities for development and ably assist the headteacher. The role of subject co-ordinator is developing well and although a number of the current co-ordinators are recent appointments, they share a clear understanding of what should be achieved. Established co-ordinators are well informed and effective in promoting their subjects and in monitoring standards.
59. The school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education are increasingly reflected in its work. Very good systems are used to monitor pupils' progress and to evaluate the quality of teaching. This has brought about significant improvements both in the quality of teaching and the standards which pupils achieve. The school's tracking system, which indicates the gains that pupils have made in their learning, highlights that pupils meet the targets set by the school. When compared with similar schools, the pupils achieved standards in 2000 at Key Stage 1 which were well above average in reading and mathematics, and at Key Stage 2 they were well above average in English and mathematics and within the top five per cent of schools for science. The school was quick to identify and address the relative weakness in the pupils' writing at Key Stage 1 and there are signs of improvement.

60. The school has successfully addressed the key issues arising from the last inspection and the school has made very good improvement. Governors give full support to the school and they and the headteacher have worked hard to attract new staff, raise standards and involve parents and the community. Governors have very good levels of knowledge and are well informed, which helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They undertake their duties diligently and fulfil their roles very well. They have trust in the headteacher and staff. Governors, headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement. There is an excellent culture of monitoring and target setting that keeps the school moving forward towards achieving its aims. The school development plan sets a clear agenda for improvement and is the result of a good consultation process. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
61. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Records are well maintained and pupils' progress is carefully charted. The governing body is well informed and committed to helping the school to meet the needs of all its pupils. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used appropriately, primarily to provide additional teaching and support staff. The levels and quality of support provided have a positive impact on the progress of these pupils.
62. There are sufficient and appropriately qualified teaching staff to ensure that classes are not too large and that the curriculum is taught well. Most of the teachers are relatively new to the school and several are recently qualified. They have rapidly formed a coherent team and between them have a wide range of relevant training and specialisms. The school is well provided with expertise covering music, physical education, French and special education. A specialist information and communication technology teacher from a local Beacon School teaches in St. Mary Magdalen's School once a week. The part-time special educational needs co-ordinator does not have class responsibility, so is able to concentrate on giving good support to identified pupils in small groups and in classes. Her responsibilities include pupils of higher attainment and she has a weekly session with these pupils in Year 6. There is no external teacher provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language, although the school makes good use of the advisory teacher from the local education authority. All these specialist teachers make a significant contribution to the school and the progress which pupils make. Good strategic planning makes effective use of their time and they provide good value for money.
63. Newly appointed staff and trainee teachers receive very good support and guidance and are assimilated well into the life and work of the school. There is a broad programme of staff training available for both teaching and support staff, which is appropriately matched to the priorities of the school as well as individual needs. The headteacher reviews training needs and priorities with each teacher termly. Arrangements for performance management are very good.
64. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory and used well to support learning throughout the school. Resources for information and communication technology are adequate. There are computers in each classroom and an adequate range of software, programmable devices, tape players and CD-ROMs. Resources for science have improved recently, thanks in part to the help of funding by the parent-teachers association. They are now good. Resources for physical education are limited, as there is no grassed surface, although the school uses nearby fields for sports days. A good range of reading books reflect the school's commitment to raising the pupils' standards in reading and getting them motivated to read a range of

texts. The well-resourced library is a particularly good feature and provides a welcoming area where pupils hear stories and have whole class sessions which develop their library skills.

65. The accommodation overall is satisfactory. It is clean and well cared for, and the specialist area for music, the library and room for teaching small groups of pupils have good equipment and are used well. There is a small and pleasant area in which pupils who feel unwell can be cared for. The good displays of pupils' work help to make the environment stimulating and pleasant as well as celebrating pupils' achievements. Part of the school is on a second floor and there are no lifts. It is therefore not wholly suitable for physically disabled people at present. The school grounds have been improved since the last inspection, and there are further plans to provide more activities and games.
66. Good financial planning by the headteacher and governing body ensures the school's income is used to best effect. Governors have a good grasp of the school's finances, and the finance committee, within the considerable constraints of a tight budget, undertakes strategic financial planning. Special educational needs funding is spent appropriately on teaching staff and support assistants, resulting in the good progress made by these pupils. Other specific grants are used appropriately. The school has just received a draft report following a recent audit and is in the process of responding to its findings.
67. Financial planning is thorough and takes full account of the cost of implementing the school's plan for development, so that priorities can be addressed. The day-to-day organisation of the school is very efficient. The senior administrative officer and the administrative officer provide a first-class service to support staff, pupils and parents.
68. The school has successfully addressed the key issues arising from the last inspection and developed significantly since that time. This is due in the main to the very good leadership and direction given by the headteacher and key managers, the support of governors and the hard work of the staff, all of whom endeavour to improve the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. The school now gives good value for money.

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

69. Continue to raise levels of attainment in writing at Key Stage 1 by:

- \* developing a more consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting;
- \* ensuring that pupils have due regard for the presentation of their work;
- \* ensuring that expectations are consistently high across all their written work.
- \* (Paragraphs 16, 84)

Raise standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science by:

- \* reviewing the balance of the curriculum, particularly in art and design, geography and physical education;
- \* developing the procedures for assessing pupils' work and using the information gained from this to ensure that they build their knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic way and achieve as high as they can.
- \* (Paragraphs 29, 51, 111, 121, 151)

**The school has already highlighted through its school development planning process the need to improve practice in the areas identified above.**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	25	54	19	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	197
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	N/A

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	2.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	11	13
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	27	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (71)	89 (86)	100 (96)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	13	12
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	22	27	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (75)	100 (96)	93 (71)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	23	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (78)	88 (74)	100 (70)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	17	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (85)	68 (89)	72 (74)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	193
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	31

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	408,980
Total expenditure	399,244
Expenditure per pupil	2,170
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,019
Balance carried forward to next year	13,755

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	198
Number of questionnaires returned	74

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	27	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	81	18	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	34	15	0	0
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	43	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	20	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	23	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	32	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	14	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	38	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	55	1	0	1

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents stated that the stable leadership and good management had brought about a raising of staff and pupils' morale. They believed that standards had fallen in the past because of inconsistent leadership.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

70. Children are admitted to the reception class on a part-time basis in the September before they are five. They enter with a wide range of skills and experiences and have broadly average levels of attainment in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social skills when compared with children nationally. A few children enter with little or no spoken English but make good progress in communicating with adults and other children. Most children have had experience in a playgroup or nursery before attending school.
71. Children make good gains in learning in the reception classes as a result of the good quality teaching. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers as their work is well planned and they receive good quality support. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, the large majority of children reach the nationally expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical, personal, social and emotional development and a significant minority attain beyond this, particularly in mathematics and personal and social development.

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

72. Teaching in this area is good. The school places great emphasis on developing positive relationships with parents before their children start school and has developed a good induction programme. Staff are effective in creating a caring and stimulating learning environment in which children develop good attitudes to learning and quickly understand routines and the structure of the day. Children were observed playing well together and sharing resources, for example, when playing in the toy shop, and helped each other to act out the imaginary roles of customer and shop keeper. They learn how to share resources and take turns, as a result of the high expectations of the teachers and support staff, who make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation, for example when playing outside. A good balance is created between teacher-directed activities and those when children are able to choose their own activity and play without direct adult supervision. This develops confidence in the children and a growing independence and initiative when presented with choices. The children's skills are further developed as they follow instructions with increasing confidence. They are encouraged to be polite and sensible and usually move easily from work undertaken as a whole class to group and individual activities, for example, when writing their own story books. Staff act as good role models and the children's skills are continually developed through the positive interactions between staff and children. Consequently, children are well behaved and form good relationships with each other and with adults. Children recognise the importance of keeping healthy and are aware of personal hygiene issues. The good gains made in pupils' personal, social and emotional development are a key feature in children feeling secure and learning well in other areas of the curriculum.

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

73. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is very good. Children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress through experiencing a range of activities that stimulate their

learning and maintain their interests. Children listen attentively to stories and relate well to the issues in the books, due to the careful choice of text and good teacher questioning, for example, when reading 'The Night the Toys Came to Life'. Those children who find it harder to sit and concentrate were well supported by the classroom assistant who gained their attention through giving appropriate praise and giving good direction and examples. The children's speaking and listening skills are also developed well across other areas of the curriculum, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, when the children were encouraged to put forward their views when sequencing the ages of three teddy bears. The children's speaking skills are systematically developed through the provision of specific activities such as in the imaginative play areas and through day-to-day interactions between staff and children.

74. Children handle books carefully and know that print carries meaning. Most follow and recall a story by looking at the pictures and enjoy sharing books with adults. They give reasons for their favourite story or book, which indicate a good understanding of character and story line. Higher attaining children read simple common words and are beginning to develop basic strategies to read unfamiliar text. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home and this has a significant impact on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve.
75. Children develop their writing skills by making their own books, for example, following their reading of 'The Night the Toys Came to Life'. Regular sessions on phonics support children well in their recognition of letters and the sounds that they make. In a very good lesson, the teacher and classroom assistant maintained a very good pace of learning throughout by building systematically on what children knew, assessing the children's understanding, introducing new ideas and consolidating their learning. Consequently, the children made very good progress. They sequenced a class story using their own ideas with encouragement from the class teacher to spell out new words using their knowledge of letters and sounds. This was later consolidated when the children wrote their own books. A satisfactory range of resources to encourage writing and communication is available, and results in the lower attaining children making marks on paper and the higher attaining children writing about the pictures which they have drawn. The majority of children write their names clearly on their work and are proud to talk about what they have achieved.

### **Mathematical development**

76. Teaching in this area of learning is good and this makes a positive contribution to the good progress that children make. Whilst there is a wide spread of attainment within the class, most children are already achieving the nationally recognised goals for children entering Year 1 and a minority attain beyond this. Pupils are supported well in their learning by the provision of a variety of activities which develop their skills in number, shape and space. They are encouraged to develop their concept of number by a daily numeracy session that extends and consolidates their recognition and understanding of numbers to 20. This was achieved well when pupils were observed counting forwards and backwards from a given number and playing a mathematics game. The needs of all pupils were well met in this lesson, for example when children with lower attainment were well supported by the classroom assistant when trying to complete a number jigsaw and playing a card game to encourage their ordering of numbers to ten. The higher attaining pupils were encouraged to extend their skills and understanding by completing a sequence of numbers to 59. The match of tasks to the children's abilities was good and consequently they made good progress. The teacher's good subject knowledge is used well and her careful questioning and use of mathematical language encourages the children's mathematical thinking and

understanding. Staff have high expectations and the pace of learning is good.

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

77. Teaching to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good overall. Children are encouraged to develop the scientific skills of observation and investigation by making robots using their knowledge of a simple circuit to light up the robot's eyes. The work coming from this activity is of a high quality for children of this age and reflects the teacher's high expectations. The children respond very positively to the activity and the good questioning by the teacher develops their understanding. When asked why one of the robot's eyes was not working, the teacher prompted several replies from the children, such as, "the battery has run out", "the bulb is broken" and "there might be a problem with the circuit". This good problem-solving activity fully caught the attention of the children and resulted in them solving the problem by "fixing the circuit". The planning sheets and evaluations, which were completed by the children, demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the designing and making process when making their robots. Discussion with the children indicates that they are developing a sound sense of chronology through looking at toys and deciding what is 'old' and 'new'. Higher attaining children are able to sequence a range of pictures of toys along a time line. The staff develop pupils' understanding of place by helping them to identify where children in the class come from and highlighting this on a map of the world. Children are also given the opportunity to develop their understanding of the world through the provision of imaginative play areas which also develops the children's speaking and listening skills well. They have a satisfactory understanding of the uses of everyday technology. Opportunities are provided for children to assemble and disassemble simple models, using a variety of construction kits to try out ideas.

### **Physical development**

78. Due to timetabling constraints, few opportunities were available to observe children developing their physical skills. A formal outdoor physical development lesson was seen and other evidence was gained through observing the children's control and manipulation of objects and materials. Their use of small objects, such as pencils, construction apparatus and paintbrushes is satisfactory, and they handle them safely and appropriately. They have opportunities to cut, stick and join objects together, for example, when making a robot. Pupils made good progress in their physical development lesson and responded well to the teacher's instructions. They developed their ability to climb, balance and move over and under a frame by using the newly installed playground equipment. The very good behaviour and attitudes to learning were a key feature in ensuring that all pupils gained a range of experiences. They took turns to use the ride on toys, stepping stones, stilts and balls and developed a good understanding and use of space. Adults gave clear guidance, so that the children were clear about what was expected of them. Good links were made with other subjects of the curriculum, for example, by using large building blocks to create structures and counting and matching the number of spots on the large dominoes. Children delighted in playing with bubbles and seeing how far they 'flew in the sky'. The quality of teaching in this lesson was good.

### **Creative development**

79. The quality of teaching is good and effective in getting good responses from children in relation to what they see, hear, feel and imagine and their creative development is successfully fostered through a range of activities. Children are encouraged to

experience mixing paint and using this to improve the finish of their robots. Most enjoy this activity and are proud of their work. Attainment is enhanced by the good support of classroom assistants who encourage the children to talk about their work. The children's responses are developed through specific music sessions and through singing rhymes and songs. The children benefit from the good quality, specialist music teaching and make good progress in their understanding of how sounds change. They learn how to use small percussion instruments and handle them well. The role-play areas provide opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own.

80. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good or better in seven out of eight lessons and very good in two. This quality of teaching is characterised by good subject expertise, high expectations, and the systematic development of children's very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. This results in children being confident in what they do and willing to 'have a go'. Staff work hard to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning and plan well. The curriculum takes into consideration the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and staff adapt this to meet the needs of the children. They use good assessments of the children to inform their planning and records are kept to monitor the progress that children make. Staff provide a calm, secure and purposeful learning environment in which the children make good progress.

## **ENGLISH**

81. Pupils currently in Year 2 attain standards that are above average in speaking, listening and reading and average standards in writing when compared with pupils of the same age nationally. This indicates an improvement in standards since the last inspection and an improvement in writing since the National Curriculum tests last year. Over 40 per cent of pupils reached higher levels than that expected for their age in reading but only 4 per cent reached the higher levels in writing. The school analysed these results and developed strategies to improve pupils' performance, particularly in writing, and initial observations are that these are bringing positive results. Pupils currently in Year 6 attain standards which are well above average when compared with pupils of a similar age nationally. This reflects the standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests last year and shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. Nearly a half of the pupils reached higher levels than that expected for their age which indicates that provision for the more able pupils is good and that they are fully challenged. Good support for pupils with special educational needs results in them making good progress towards the targets set in their education plans and in some cases, they achieve the expected level by the end of Key Stage 2. A few pupils join the school with little, or no spoken English. They make good progress as a result of effective teaching and good additional support.
82. When children enter the school, most are interested in their learning and the activities provided although a small minority lack confidence in speaking. Due to the good provision and encouragement of the teacher and classroom assistant, the latter soon begin to join in with class discussions and are keen to answer specific questions. By the age of seven, pupils demonstrate that they have made good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. When reading 'Well I Never', the teacher's good questioning encourages confidence in the pupils to answer and put forward their views. The classroom assistant encourages the pupils with lower attainment and special educational needs to respond and keeps them fully involved. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have growing confidence in expressing their own

opinions on a range of issues. They listen very well and show by their actions and their answers that they have understood. The encouragement from the teacher and challenging questions results in the pupils becoming very clear about their own views and their ability to put these across in a formal way.

83. Staff work well to develop and build on the pupils' interest in reading. They encourage parents to be fully involved with their child's development and the parents' support is a significant feature in the progress which pupils make and their responses to reading. Staff stimulate the pupils' interest and develop their knowledge of letter sounds from an early age and this helps the pupils to tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. By the age of seven, most pupils are confident and fluent readers who can express their preferences and give appropriate reasons for their choice. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support, which develops their confidence and skills in a structured way and consequently they make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils in Year 6 read with good understanding, both fiction and non-fiction books. Research skills are good, with pupils understanding the use of indexes, glossaries and contents of reference books. The library is a good resource which encourages pupils to read by the pleasing display of good quality texts. Also, pupils regularly have the opportunity to hear stories read by either the teacher or librarian, which encourages their love of books. The pupils' library and research skills are also enhanced by the use of this facility.
84. Pupils in Key Stage 1 generally make good progress with developing the content of their writing and the use of punctuation and correct grammatical structures. This indicates an improvement. However, the presentation of their work and development of handwriting is not as good. When practising handwriting, pupils form letters which are consistent in size and legible, but a significant minority do not transfer these skills throughout their other work. Expectations are sometimes not high enough and consequently, some pupils do not always try their best. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 write good, descriptive passages in a story 'The Dangerous Fighting Machine' and use punctuation correctly. Below average pupils need help to extend their vocabulary and do not consistently use capital letters at the start of sentences and full stops at the end. Overall, the content of writing develops well across the school and pupils use different forms of writing appropriately, as for instance when writing play scripts in Year 3, instructional writing in Year 3, report writing in Year 5 and persuasive writing in Year 6. By the age of eleven, pupils use complex sentences, adjectives and similes well to enrich their writing and make it more interesting for the reader, for example, by using humour in a piece entitled 'My Baby Has False Teeth'. Spelling is good, and higher and average attaining pupils spell a good number of difficult words accurately. Below average pupils try hard and use their knowledge of letter sounds to write unfamiliar words. In most cases the attempts made are plausible. At Key Stage 2, most pupils take care with their presentation and respond positively to the teachers' comments. The teachers' marking is generally good and a significant feature in how pupils improve their work. All pupils have appropriate targets which are regularly referred to and reviewed. These, too, help them to know the next stages in their learning and how to make improvements in their work. The good use of homework consolidates the learning in school and encourages pupils to work hard.
85. The climate for learning is very good and results in pupils developing very good attitudes to their work and very good behaviour. Teachers are polite and encouraging with their pupils who, in turn, respond positively. Pupils listen to the views of others carefully and accept those that are different from their own. They are helpful to one another and collaborate well in pairs or groups. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and the pace of learning is good. They use their own good subject

knowledge to ask questions of pupils that challenge their thinking and stimulate their learning. No significant difference was noted in lessons between the progress of boys and girls.

86. Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans, which are followed carefully; this results in good teaching and support which is well focussed. Pupils in Year 6 were given very effective support by a specialist teacher whose good knowledge of the pupils, assessment and planning were used well to ensure that the tasks set were appropriate. The teacher managed the pupils very well and reinforced learning in a challenging environment, which motivated the pupils well. Consequently, they all did the best they could and made good progress.
87. Pupils learning English as an additional language also generally make good progress as a result of the effective teaching and support which is channelled to meet their needs. Staff work with the specialist advisory teacher from the local education authority to develop their own skills but no additional teaching support is provided for these pupils.
88. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good overall and this reflects a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teachers make good use of the results of Standard Assessment Tests and their own assessments of pupils' attainment to plan future work and set useful targets for improvement, particularly in reading and writing. Data gained from these activities is used to identify pupils for additional support. These lessons are well planned and taught, and the creation of a sensitive and stimulating learning environment results in pupils developing confidence and making good progress.
89. The whole-class sessions in literacy lessons are used well and the quality of teaching here is at least good and often very good. Teachers are skilful in their use and presentation of texts to teach reading and writing skills, which build up gradually throughout the week. Pupils are successfully encouraged to respond to texts and answer questions. There is good use of praise, giving value to pupils' answers and thus improving their self-esteem, as well as improving their understanding of the skills being taught. Pupils react very positively when teachers use questioning well to challenge them at their own level of attainment. Another significant feature in the development of literacy lessons is the teachers' planning, which is consistent and usually of good quality. There is good stress placed on the provision of clear learning objectives and precise details of activities. Teachers share these learning objectives with the pupils and consequently all are clear about what they are expected to learn. End of lesson summaries are often used effectively to share how well pupils have done in meeting the aims of the lesson. This gives them a helpful understanding of their progress.
90. The profile of literacy has been raised successfully over recent years and developments have been well managed by the co-ordinator. She has high levels of knowledge and expertise, which are used well to develop curriculum planning and teaching across the school. She has been well supported by the headteacher whose drive to improve standards has also been a key feature in the improvements in teaching and learning. His expectations are high and staff respond positively to this. Overall, standards in literacy are average in Key Stage 1 and well above average in Key stage 2. Due to the good quality monitoring and targeting of additional resources, the school is in a good position to improve further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

91. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards that are, respectively, above and well above those expected for their ages in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. The standards are similar to the results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000, which also showed that standards were well above those of similar schools nationally. Girls and boys do equally well. About a third of seven and eleven year olds reach levels higher than those expected for their age. That this proportion is increasing reflects improving provision for the more able pupils. Very careful monitoring and strong support enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress and, in some cases, to achieve the expected level by the end of the key stage.
92. The previous inspection found weak standards in space, shape and measure, in data handling, in mental recall of number facts, and in pupils' ability to use and apply mathematics in solving real-life problems. It traced these weaknesses to unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1; tasks that were not challenging enough at Key Stage 2, and a complete absence of whole-school structures to give direction and support to teachers. Standards continued to decline and the school was subject to 'intensive care' within the Richmond authority. The rapid improvement since 1998 to the present very good position is due to the excellent work of the subject co-ordinator and local advisers in building the support, training and guidance systems that were previously missing. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in 1999, and the appointment of the present headteacher at the same time, have given vital extra impetus to raising standards. The subject now has very good systems for monitoring its performance. These systems are refined and used with strong subject expertise and attention to detail so that any weaknesses in teaching, learning or the curriculum can be identified and strengthened. The capacity for continuing improvement is very good.
93. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sound progress in their learning. Most pupils in Year 1 can identify common two-dimensional shapes accurately by asking questions such as, 'Has it got straight sides?' They recognise and describe simple number patterns, using words such as 'repeated' and 'extended'. By the time they are seven, pupils know the meaning of word parts such as 'lateral' and 'quad', and begin to understand the difference between regular and irregular shapes. Most show a secure grasp of 'partitioning' by applying it accurately to numbers up to 500. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 build well on pupils earlier experiences and maintain their good overall progress so that, by the time they are eleven, about a third are attaining the levels expected of pupils two or three years older. Pupils in Year 3 very quickly work out and explain four number-facts related to three numbers such as 1000, 300 and 700. In Year 5, they show a secure grasp of fractions, decimals and percentages. By age eleven, middle and higher attaining pupils are able to consult each other in articulate and mutually supportive ways on how to combine such concepts in an effective method for solving problems such as 'x over 10 = 2.1 over 7'. Homework is well planned and used throughout the school to consolidate and extend this progress, and to inform and involve parents.
94. The climate for learning in the subject is very favourable. Almost all pupils show an eager commitment to learning and tackle their number work with interest and well-sustained concentration. Most listen and contribute well in discussion, answering relevantly and constructively. They function in an orderly and responsible manner, maintaining strong intellectual effort whether working collaboratively or independently. They respond enthusiastically to challenge and do their best to cement the excellent working relationships found throughout the school.

95. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good overall. In Years 1 and 2, both the lessons seen were of satisfactory quality, with some good features. Of the four lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, two were good, two were very good and the quality was very good overall.
96. Throughout the school, the National Numeracy Strategy is well established. All teachers plan and teach securely within its framework and in relation to its three-part lesson structure. Planning is always good and includes, where relevant, detailed instructions for the support teacher or assistant. Several good features occurred in all the lessons observed. All teachers manage and organise their classes with good-humoured efficiency and without raising their voices. They conduct the mental numeracy sessions with good pace, challenge and effect, and use resources well to demonstrate, reinforce and check correct methods of working. Teachers effectively enthuse and engage their pupils in these sessions, carrying them along through a rapid progression and requiring them to explain methods accurately in mathematical language, for example, 'Divide by the denominator and multiply by the numerator'. As a result, pupils maintain interest and concentration, work quickly, participate eagerly, apply intense intellectual effort to the development of new understandings, and take pride in their growing command of 'special words'.
97. A number of strengths distinguish the good, and particularly the very good, lessons from those that are satisfactory.
- The learning intentions are not only stated initially, but are also kept in clear view throughout the lesson and, at the end, pupils are expected to use them as definite points of reference to review and fix new learning.
  - The needs of higher attaining pupils are as well provided for as those who have special educational needs. This quality of provision maintains good challenge throughout so that they have constant opportunity to move forward both individually and collaboratively.
  - These lessons have a more stimulating variety of methods. For example, game-like activities such as 'fraction-bingo' remove the stress from a test whilst enhancing the intensity of interest and concentration. Usually, this variety includes a logical progression of activities.
  - There is a strong expectation that pupils explain their processes of calculation and also consider alternative methods. As a result, pupils develop an articulate awareness of their own learning and, at the same time, reinforce that of others.
  - The very good lessons include real-life investigations which challenge pupils to apply their new learning. For example, in a lesson on fractions and percentages, pupils were required to work out and explain which of three 'sales bargains' offered the best value.
- Whilst these expectations are present in the satisfactory lessons, they operate at a significantly lower level. A lower pace and quality of learning result, particularly for the more able. For example, higher achieving pupils who are ready to benefit from a higher standard of recording their mental methods in writing are not being moved on fast enough. A feature that could be improved in all lessons is the consistent failure to require pupils to check their own work or to discuss with them methods, such as estimation or inversion, for doing so.
98. The co-ordinator has developed a comprehensive system of assessment procedures. This includes a very good balance of formal and informal tests by which individual progress is tracked through the school and targets set. Teachers record the outcomes of a variety of observations and mental tests. They make sound, and

sometimes challengingly perceptive, use of this information to plan learning activities for three broad ability levels in each class.

99. In recent years, the role of the co-ordinator has been greatly strengthened and the curriculum transformed. The co-ordinator has organised very good training programmes to develop expertise across the school in relation to its use of the Numeracy Strategy. She also monitors teaching and learning by regular lesson observations and work sampling. Conclusions are fed back to teachers in writing and the process does much to improve quality and standards. Despite the great strides made in developing a coherent and effective curriculum for the subject, two inter-related and significant challenges face the school. Firstly, pupils have too few opportunities, either within or beyond numeracy sessions, to use information and communication technology to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in mathematics. Secondly, there is no co-ordinated whole-school approach to planning opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical learning through practical investigations in other subjects.

## SCIENCE

100. Since the last inspection there has been a very good improvement in the standards pupils achieve by the time they leave the school. There was a dip in results in 1998 and 1999, but in 2000, pupils achieved results that were well above those of all schools and within the top five per cent in the country when compared to those of similar schools. Most marked was the high percentage of pupils achieving Level 5, which is above the level expected, and no pupils failed to reach the expected level, Level 4. In teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was above the national average, but few reached the higher level, Level 3.
101. Standards in the current Year 2 are already at least in line with those expected for pupils of that age and a significant number of pupils are expected to achieve above this by the end of the year. In Year 6 most pupils are already reaching the standards expected nationally. With a small cohort, each pupil's results will have a significant impact on the overall results. Even allowing for this, this year's results are expected to be similar to those obtained last year. There are several reasons for the very significant improvement in standards since the last inspection. The head teacher took over the co-ordination of the subject and succeeded in raising its status within the school in a very short space of time. A science week was held last year, which raised parents' awareness and increased pupils' interest. Support was enlisted from outside organisations to extend learning. For example, a portable planetarium was set up in school. Across the school a higher than normal amount of curriculum time is devoted to the subject, giving good opportunities for teachers to introduce new learning and to develop skills.
102. Staff received appropriate training last year with other schools in the area to raise their awareness of science teaching. In addition, the Year 5 and 6 teachers received training for expected outcomes in the national tests. Both these initiatives raised staff confidence as well as their subject knowledge. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work has been introduced to ensure that new work builds on what pupils have already learned and that the full curriculum is covered. Teachers' planning is carefully monitored and lessons have been observed. Detailed, constructively critical feedback is given to teachers and this has led to significant improvements. Appropriate increased emphasis is now placed on developing pupils' investigative skills and improving their recording of work. The headteacher also

monitors the work completed and comments on the standards achieved and progress made. Clear assessments are made of what pupils know and understand. This guides future teaching well. The school recognised the difference between the levels pupils achieved in teachers' assessments and those achieved in tests. There are appropriate plans to allow staff to get together to agree levels in the same way as they have done for English and mathematics, to give a better common understanding.

103. Teaching is consistently good across the school and this results in good learning by all pupils. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn and they make good links with previous work. For example, Year 2 pupils recapped their previous work on what happened when they melted and then cooled chocolate, before moving on to observing what happened when popcorn was heated and then cooled. Work is adjusted to meet the needs of all pupils in the class, for example through additional adult help, and varied activities, so that all pupils achieve well in lessons. The emphasis on investigative work gives good opportunities for higher attaining pupils to work at a suitable level to extend their understanding. There is also appropriate variation in the anticipated level of recording and the explanations expected for the observed results. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher provided a wide range of different fruits, vegetables and seeds. Pupils were encouraged to handle the items and extend their observational skills and their vocabularies. The classroom assistant worked well with a lower attaining group to extend their vocabularies as they made a salad using a variety of ingredients. The higher attaining pupils looked at a wider range of fruits and seeds and looked at the differences in sizes and textures. Teachers make good use of questions to get pupils to clarify their ideas and also to assess their understanding. A good example of this was seen in Year 6 when pupils explained forces such as upthrust and gravity.
104. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well to devise interesting activities and give clear explanations to pupils. It is also evident in teachers' introductions and their use of appropriate scientific vocabulary. For example, in Year 4 there was good emphasis on the use of vocabulary related to food chains, such as 'predator', 'primary provider' and 'secondary consumer'. Teachers give good opportunities for pupils to develop investigative skills by conducting experiments and finding out for themselves through practical activities. In Year 2, the class teacher guided pupils through the experiment and encouraged pupils to identify what equipment they needed. Pupils are also given good guidance on how to write up their work, so recording skills are gradually developed as they progress through the school. Pupils gain a good understanding of how to make a test fair. They are asked to predict what they think is going to happen and then give explanations for their results. Year 3 pupils grew seeds in a variety of locations and also set up a control experiment showing a good understanding of what seeds needed to grow. They discussed the results obtained and gave explanations for them.
105. The good relationships between teachers and their pupils result in pupils gaining confidence and showing a willingness to express their own ideas. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and keen to take part. For example, Year 4 pupils made mobiles to show food chains and they enthusiastically looked on the Internet and in books to find other examples. They co-operate well with each other when carrying out experiments. Teachers have high expectations, especially of recorded work and this reinforces pupils' literacy skills. Pupils learn to draw diagrams carefully and label them clearly. Good links are also made with other subjects such as mathematics and information and communication technology. A good example of this was seen in Year 6 when pupils made a database based on eight body measurements and used it to work out averages and differences. They also generated tables on the computer to

show the results of their experiment to show how powdered materials dissolve in water.

106. Parents make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Good use is made of homework by encouraging pupils to follow up class work. Parents support this well. The last inspection reported that there were insufficient resources. A large amount of money was donated by the Parent/Teacher Association to purchase new resources. These are now good and are stored centrally in topic boxes so that they are readily accessible.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. Standards in art and design are broadly average by the end of both key stages, but there are examples of artistic achievement that is good for pupils' ages. This is a better situation than that reported in the previous inspection. Two lessons were observed, both at Key Stage 2, together with much work on display and a sample of pupils' sketchbooks. Pupils make sound progress over time in developing a good range of techniques and in using a satisfactory range of media. The school places a strong emphasis on observational drawing and progress in this area is good, being enhanced by practice in history, science and geography.
108. In Key Stage 1, pupils begin to produce careful line drawings in pencil, charcoal or crayon. They also produce other work very different in scale, media and character. For example, pupils in Year 1 have made a large class collage composed of a wide range of materials and images expressive of 'A Rainy Day', and based on the story, 'Circle of Days'. Year 2 pupils have produced some striking individual collages based on their study of the Cubist paintings of Marcel Duchamp.
109. Pupils in Year 4 use a good range of art techniques and media across various themes and subjects. They have produced very well-observed studies of habitats and of Sutton Hoo treasures to support their learning in science and history. They have also explored the potential of a computer program for designing a repeating pattern for wrapping paper. Their very good collage work enhances a Chinese display, and good perspective studies from different viewpoints within the classroom reflect their growing skill in close observation and line drawing. Older pupils also do good work with line and colour in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 have used colour to explore different ways of rotating and interlocking shapes in space. They also show their pencil skill in very fine mathematical drawings of objects such as compasses. During the inspection, Years 5 and 6 developed observational studies of pot-plants and flowers. These lessons were well-prepared and organised by the teacher, and required little management because pupils were so well motivated. The level of concentration was high and pupils used discussion very thoughtfully to support each other's technical control. High levels of enjoyment and appreciation of work in progress contributed greatly to purposeful work and good learning. Careful selection and skilful control of art pencils in both classes produced effectively contrasting studies, for instance between those which expressed the softness of spring flowers and those which captured the stiff, spikily aggressive character of a cactus.
110. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, and the evidence of pupils' work reflects effective planning for learning. Of the lessons seen, one was satisfactory and the other very good. The content of lessons balances instruction with opportunities for creativity and experimentation. In the very good lesson, the new challenge was

very clearly defined and effectively maintained as the discipline for the lesson. This enabled the teacher to establish a rigorous focus for discussion in the final review. This in turn led to a better opportunity for pupils to learn to evaluate their work. Such opportunities need to form a more significant focus in art and design, with pupils annotating their sketchbooks critically.

111. Significant improvements developed by good subject management during the last two years have put the subject in much better health than at the time of the previous inspection. A sound, up-to-date policy is in place, together with a scheme of work which uses national guidance as a framework to ensure coverage of curricular requirements. This is leading to a clearer progression in the development of pupils' skills through the school. Good use of 'paint packages' gives information and communication technology a strong role in extending pupils' skills in manipulating images or colour compositions and designing with pattern. The development of a successful Art Club increases pupils' opportunities to work with art media. Pupils also have far better opportunities to consider and appreciate the work of famous artists. Increasing use of visits to galleries and museums further enriches work in this area, and a good action plan includes provision for staff training. Recent work with an artist-in-residence involved every class in contributing to a large and impressive Millennium Mural that now transforms an outside wall. However, this very good specific experience of work in sculpture does not compensate for a relative absence of three-dimensional work in art. For example, not one sculptor features in the list of famous, and predominantly western, artists for study. This imbalance should be adjusted, and improved systems for monitoring standards introduced.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Due to timetabling constraints only one lesson at Key Stage 1 was seen during the inspection. Evidence was also gained from teachers' planning, a scrutiny of work and discussions with staff and pupils. Pupils aged seven and eleven attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of the same age nationally. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages but pupils with special educational needs often make good progress towards their targets due to the additional support provided.
113. It was evident from the one lesson observed in Year 1 that designing and making activities were purposeful, enjoyable and well taught. Very good planning ensured that the lesson built systematically on what had gone before. Clear learning objectives were identified and shared with the pupils so that all were clear about what they should do and would learn. Appropriate attention had been placed on pupils receiving first-hand experience of looking at playground equipment and building models with construction kits before they went on to designing, making and evaluating their models which were made out of recycled materials.
114. The teacher had a good understanding of the skills to be taught and the adoption of a nationally recommended scheme of work ensures that these skills are systematically developed throughout the school thus providing a progression and continuity of learning. The support given by classroom assistants was effective in getting pupils to evaluate their work as they were going along and consequently change their finishing technique and develop their skills of joining materials. The last part of the lesson was used effectively by the teacher to further develop pupils' skills of evaluation, to reinforce the designing and making process and to celebrate the pupils' work. Teachers and support staff have very good relationships with the pupils and managed

them well. They encouraged pupils to work well together and this resulted in pupils sharing resources unselfishly. Behaviour was good because pupils were interested in their tasks and wanted to complete the work. Pupils' skills are further developed in Year 2 when they make puppets and design a desk tidy.

115. In Year 3, good links are made between design and technology and history when pupils make pyramids when studying Ancient Egypt. Pupils' skills are developed in food technology when they work on making a 'tasty sandwich' and in Year 5 when they make a pizza. Pupils in Year 6 have undertaken some pleasing work with textiles, which was on display in the hall during the inspection. Pupils were keen to talk about this work and gained satisfaction from seeing it displayed in such a prominent position. The finished products are of a good quality and the display indicates the whole process of designing and making garments, which were modelled at a school fashion show. The pupils' work shows clear evidence of project planning, measuring, designing, cutting, joining and decorating. An interesting aspect of this work was the development of pupils' cultural and geographical awareness as they were asked to make garments which were appropriate for hot climates. All the work mentioned above is clear evidence of a broad curriculum covering the different aspects of design and technology.
116. Design and technology has not been a recent focus for school development but the co-ordinator has worked well to review the subject and develop the policy and guidance for teachers. She has a clear view of how to develop the subject further, for example, by developing a more consistent whole school approach to assessing pupils' work and developing the use of information communication technology in the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. The school's current curriculum plan allocates all specifically geographical studies for Years 3 to 6 to the second half of the school year. During the week of the inspection, no geography was taught at either key stage. As a result, no evidence was available on which to base judgements of the quality of teaching or of the standard of pupils' recently recorded work in the subject. The following judgements are therefore based on discussions with pupils, small samples of work completed in previous years and an examination of planning.
118. It is clear that the school adopts a practical, investigative approach which constructs strong links with subjects such as science, mathematics, art and design and history. This approach also emphasises fieldwork and makes good use of opportunities for outdoor studies in the Richmond area and, ultimately, during the residential visit to Sayers Croft. This emphasis is reflected in the development of an environmental trail and orienteering course centred on the school site. Pupils express an extremely positive view of their previous learning experience in geography and show their earlier work with great pride.
119. The standard of work seen is average at the end of each key stage, as was the case the last time the school was inspected. Pupils in Year 2 draw route plans which show growing understanding of landmarks and changes of direction. Their study of an African family shows recognition of contrasting places and lifestyles, as reflected in houses, occupations and amenities. Work produced at the end of Year 5 reflects a sound development of these understandings through a systematic study of a village in India. Pupils currently in Year 6 recall this work vividly and explain clearly how they used atlases and the Internet to inform their understanding of differences between

Chembakolli and Richmond. They show sound knowledge of keys and co-ordinates and are able to discuss how studies of religion, dress and food are intrinsic to geography. However, the fact that higher and lower attaining pupils have produced work of similar quality and extent must reflect some failure to match demand to ability. Standards should be higher.

120. When asked to discuss a picture of a location they have not seen before, these very eager and articulate pupils made informed observations on terrain, land-use and probable climate and economy. They offered sensible suggestions on how they would find out more. However, although they knew that 'a map would help', they could not say what kind of map or how they would use it. Nor could they review their work over time to explain how they had developed the understandings and skills they use.

121. At present, curricular provision for geography is unsatisfactory. Very effective units of study are taught too far apart for pupils to recall and build securely on previous learning. Good links with other subjects are not co-ordinated into a coherent incremental programme of learning. The level of resources does not meet the current technological demands of a fieldwork approach to the subject, and information communication technology is underused to support learning. A scheme of work based on national guidance is not yet fully in place, and planning does not fully address the needs of different groups of pupils. Systems for assessing and monitoring the quality of learning are only at the planning stage. The challenge facing the school is to remedy these shortcomings without compromising existing strengths.

## HISTORY

122. Standards at age seven and eleven are above those expected for pupils of similar age nationally and achievement is good. In Year 2, pupils are able to understand that everyday life has changed for ordinary people and that individuals such as Florence Nightingale and Neil Armstrong have made important contributions to progress for mankind. Pupils in Year 6 show a good level of understanding of the role of key developments in past centuries and of how historians find out about the past. Although standards in written work are only satisfactory in Key Stage 1, they are better in Key Stage 2 and the majority of pupils show good standards of work in research based activities.
123. The process of understanding change over time begins in Key Stage 1 with a focus on significant people and events. The work of pupils in these classes shows that they can compare aspects of life today with life in the past. They are aware of the way historians find out about the past from eyewitness accounts because of detailed work on the Great Fire of London. Pupils are introduced to a variety of sources of evidence about the past. This helps them to understand how and why life has changed as well as how we find out about the past.
124. Work in Key Stage 2 classes is good, with the best work being very well presented and illustrated. Displays of work on life in Ancient Egypt show that pupils understand about a range of topics including mummification and Egyptian gods. Work on the Tudors is well illustrated and pupils show a good level of knowledge about key figures such as Queen Elizabeth, and events such as the Armada. No lessons were seen in Year 6, but pupils were able to talk about their studies of the nineteenth century including work on the extremes of wealth and poverty in Victorian times. Individual pupils show a good recall of detail and a real understanding of the skills required by the historian. Most pupils are able to use time lines of dates and events, although not all are clear about what is meant by BC and AD. Pupils of average attainment can understand the difference between fact and opinion and between primary and secondary sources of evidence.
125. Pupils were seen to learn well and make good progress when given the opportunity to take part in well structured research tasks, for example when considering the voyages of Captain Cook. A particularly effective lesson about exhibits missing from the British Museum helped them to focus on the unique qualities of the items found at Sutton Hoo. From the lessons observed it is clear that the subject is taught in a way that ensures that pupils are able to progress at their own level. Information about life in Ancient Egypt was challenging in content even for the highest attainers, while lower attainers were able to learn about the basic facts, for example that cats and crocodiles were mummified as well as important people. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well and tasks

and resources used are well matched to their learning requirements. The use of information and communication technology to enhance work in the subject is being developed well and pupils have frequent opportunities for independent research, for example, using the Internet as part of their class and homework.

126. The quality of teaching was found to be good and during the inspection some examples of very good teaching were observed. Individual teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject and they are developing an effective, skills based, approach to teaching at both key stages. Pupils learn well because they enjoy their study of history and benefit from a variety of experiences, which enhance their learning. For example, because they go to Richmond museum and take part in role-play activities they have a much greater insight into what it was really like to live in the Tudor period. Resources are sound and they are supplemented by good quality resources from the library service. Links with other subjects such as art and design are well-established and the subject is used effectively for developing skills in reading comprehension, extended writing and in research.
127. The management of the subject is sound. Individual teachers develop resources and teaching strategies very well and there is a clear focus on planning at both key stages. The school ensures that the requirements of the new curriculum are met effectively. There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection in the development of a new approach to planning which is based on research skills, including the use of computers, and real understanding of life in the past. Work in history provides challenge and enjoyment for pupils of all abilities.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

128. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain the standards expected. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be low. There has been an increased focus on the subject over the last eighteen months, which has resulted in a rise in pupils' achievement. Resources have been improved and they are now satisfactory.
129. There are several reasons for the improved standards. The amount of curriculum time devoted to the subject has been increased and each class has time allocated weekly for teaching specific skills. Pupils also have the opportunity to practise what they have learnt. A careful check is made to ensure that all pupils have sufficient time to do this, and they keep a record of what they have done. The headteacher has taken over the management of the subject as the co-ordinator has been absent for some time. He carefully monitors teachers' plans for evidence of new learning and for the use of information and communication technology in other subjects. Each class is now linked to the Internet. Teachers have completed a questionnaire to indicate their training needs, and training is being provided after March through the New Opportunities Fund. Staff are excited by this initiative and they are keen to extend their own learning.
130. In Year 2, pupils have a clear idea of everyday items that are programmed to make them work. They build on previous work when they programme the floor robot to move to the site of the treasure. They discuss what they are doing and show appropriate understanding. They also generate their own pictures using the computer, showing use of a range of colours and different tools to get the effects they want. By Year 6 pupils have a sound range of skills. They produce graphs on the

computer, to show the results of their work in science and set up their own database made up of different measurements related to their bodies. They confidently search the Internet for information and they have sound desktop publishing skills when they produce their own newspaper. A high level of computer ownership at home enhances most pupils' skills. Some parents communicate with the school through e-mail, for example to notify illness, and each teacher has his or her own e-mail address. The school is very aware of those pupils who do not have access to facilities at home and good arrangements are made for them to have additional access, for example to complete homework, if it involves research using the Internet.

131. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and most of them co-operate well with each other when using computers and other equipment. The Year 3 teacher gave effective support and additional guidance to encourage pupils to share and take turns. Pupils often voluntarily undertake additional research at home, for example using the Internet. This not only enhances their information and communication technology skills but also adds to their learning in other subjects.
132. Teachers' subject knowledge is improving and teaching is now satisfactory, with some good teaching seen in Year 5. Teachers make it very obvious to pupils what they want them to learn and they give clear demonstrations and explanations of what is expected. They ensure that an appropriate range of work is provided and that pupils learn the basic skills of information and communication technology. As a result, pupils of all abilities and those with English as an additional language are making steady gains in learning. Sound assessment procedures ensure that there is a record of what each child knows and understands. Teachers follow the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work, which ensures that new work is steadily introduced. The school has also invested in a commercial scheme that gives teachers confidence and useful additional ideas. A teacher from another school visits one afternoon a week. Her teaching is very good and she works with each class in turn, sharing her expertise throughout the school. During the inspection a very effective lesson was seen in Year 1, which linked work in information and communication technology and mathematics. The combining of the two subjects was a good use of curriculum time and pupils increased their understanding of the properties of a square through their practical experiences. Pupils used a programmable floor robot to mark out a square. They made very good gains in learning as a result of the extremely clear and methodical introduction of programming skills. Good support was given to pupils who experienced difficulties and all were helped to succeed, which raised their confidence.
133. Many of the improvements in the management and delivery of the subject are comparatively new and this explains why standards are rising, but they do not reach the high levels found in other subjects, such as mathematics and English. Some areas of the curriculum, such as the use of sensing and monitoring equipment, are not well developed. There are exciting new initiatives which are enhancing the subject. A parent who is teaching Year 6 pupils to make their own web page to go on the school's new website currently runs the computer club. Parents support this project with very good voluntary assistance from software manufacturers. Additional equipment, for example for networking and for ensuring that there is no unauthorised Internet usage, is also being provided free through community links.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

134. The curriculum at Key Stage 2 is enriched by the provision of a weekly French lesson. Due to timetabling constraints only one of these lessons was observed but

information gained from this and from talking with pupils indicate that they benefit greatly from these lessons and enjoy learning another language.

135. The quality of the teaching observed was excellent and particularly effective in motivating pupils to learn. A well-structured programme of activities took place with a good balance of teaching new vocabulary through demonstration by the teacher and responses by the pupils either by speaking or singing in the targeted language. The teacher who used objects and repetition of vocabulary in a lively way to reinforce learning provided a very good model of pronunciation. Her use of humour and the challenge, which she set, were key factors in maintaining the very good pace of learning and the good standards which pupils achieved.
136. As well as developing an interest in another language and culture, these lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and their understanding of grammatical structures. Also, in the lesson observed, pupils reinforced their learning in mathematics through adding numbers and telling the time in French. These French lessons are a valuable addition to the curriculum and provide very good value for money.

## **MUSIC**

137. Pupils at seven and eleven years of age reach levels of attainment which are above those expected for their age and the school has sustained these standards since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers. They are fully involved and have equal access and opportunity to participate in a well-balanced and appropriate curriculum. Pupils benefit from the visiting specialist instrumental teachers and overall music provision is enhanced by the good extra-curricular opportunities for interested pupils to take part in the choir, recorder ensemble sessions, performances in assemblies and concerts. Pupils also participate in the Richmond Music Festival.
138. The choir is well attended by Year 5 and 6 pupils, approximately a third of whom are boys. A specialist music teacher plans these sessions well with an emphasis on developing a good repertoire of songs and pupils' skills, as well as providing an opportunity for pupils to gain enjoyment in singing and the opportunity to perform in front of an audience. In the session observed, appropriate praise was given and key elements were developed. This resulted in pupils developing confidence in performing. Pupils were pleased with their singing and were obviously aware of the good sense of harmony and community that was developed through this activity.
139. A key feature of the school's success in music is the employment of two specialist music teachers, one of whom has responsibility for Key Stage 1 and the other for Key Stage 2. Each class has a weekly music lesson from one of these specialist teachers and the quality of teaching in these lessons is never less than good and usually very good, particularly at Key Stage 2. This indicates good decision making on the part of senior management as pupils' progress is significantly enhanced by this quality of teaching. It also indicates good value for money, as class teachers attend lessons with their pupils and consequently develop their own skills by working alongside specialists.
140. The pupils' behaviour is usually very good as they become fully involved in their learning and keen to participate. Similarly, their attitudes to music are very good; they enjoy music and display good levels of concentration. The enthusiasm of the teachers

and support staff, and the creation of a stimulating learning environment, result in pupils giving of their best. Pupils share instruments well and treat them with care as a result of the high expectations of staff and the clear guidance that they give.

141. Lessons are well planned and the activities provided build the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic way throughout each key stage. The co-ordinators liaise well and thus ensure continuity of learning across the key stages. Although they have only been appointed since the beginning of the academic year they have quickly become part of the team and support other activities, for example, by playing the piano in assemblies and by taking weekly hymn practice sessions. They have a major input and influence on the school performances such as the Nativity performed by Key Stage 1 pupils. The teachers assess pupils' satisfactorily and use the information gained from this to adapt the planning for the next lesson in order that the activities match the needs of all pupils regardless of their ability. The co-ordinators have a clear idea of how to improve the curriculum further and are aware, for example, of the need to develop the use of computers in music.
142. A key feature of the lessons is the identification of clear learning objectives, which are often shared with the pupils. Consequently, the pupils are aware of what they will do and learn and can evaluate their performance at the end of the session. The teachers encourage self-evaluation as well as indicating how pupils can improve their work. This results in pupils in Key Stage 2 having a good knowledge of their own learning.
143. Pupils in a very good Year 2 lesson made very good progress with their singing and playing as a direct result of the high expectations of the teacher and the challenging tasks set. They listened well and followed instructions, which ensured that their learning built up through the lesson in a systematic way. Pupils composed their own short tunes using claves and chime bars and this helped them to become clear about rhythm, tunes and sounds. The pupils' performance improved as a direct result of the tuition and demonstration by the teacher. Very good progress was made, and by the end of the session they were singing and playing instruments well in two parts.
144. Similarly, in a very good Year 6 music lesson, the high expectations of the teacher, the challenging tasks set and the very good pace of teaching and learning resulted in pupils making very good progress. Good links were made with pupils' knowledge of literature as they discussed the mood created when singing about Macbeth. Several pupils identified the use of E minor which they claimed made the "performance more spooky". They used specific language well, indicating a clear understanding of tempo and dynamics.

145. The school has a good range of tuned and untuned musical instruments, including a selection of instruments from a range of cultural traditions. A range of recorded music is available within the school to extend pupils' appreciation of different types of music from around the world. The music room, which is away from the main building, is a valuable feature of the school's musical provision as classes are not disturbed when pupils are performing. Overall, music plays a significant part in school life and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

146. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were broadly average at the end of each key stage. Standards now observed in gymnastics lessons are above expectations by the age of seven, and in line by age eleven. No games lessons could be observed, and the only dance lesson seen was with the Year 1 class, who achieved a sound standard.
147. Provision for swimming is very good. Lessons begin in Year 3 and all pupils at Key Stage 2 benefit from weekly swimming instruction during the Autumn and Spring terms. Records show that, by the end of this programme, almost all eleven-year-olds are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided. Many are working on higher-level skills of water safety and perform well in the annual gala.
148. Throughout a very good gymnastics lesson, pupils in Year 2 showed good responsibility, concentration and skill. They understood the reasons and procedure for warm up, and responded well. They followed clear instructions attentively in floor work, and in assembling and using apparatus. The focus on new learning was intense at each stage; all pupils aimed at a high standard and maintained good physical and creative effort to develop sequences of movements matched to different arrangements of apparatus.
149. These skills, understandings and attitudes are effectively maintained and developed through Key Stage 2. This was evident in a good lesson with Year 4, when all pupils worked with perseverance and imagination to devise and perfect individual sequences of movement and balance with clear start and finish positions. By Year 6, most pupils work collaboratively and confidently to develop and refine quite ambitious movement sequences on both floor and apparatus. In the lesson seen, they reached expected standards, though some, in their enthusiasm, began to neglect good routines for safe practice and a few used inappropriate footwear.
150. The overall quality of teaching is good. Of the four lessons observed, two were satisfactory, one good and one very good. All lessons are well planned, with a clear focus on new learning, and a sound balance and rotation of relevant activities. Pupils have proper time to consolidate and practise skills and sequences, and to consider specific teaching points. In the good and very good lessons, teachers set and achieved higher expectations of pace, focused development, safe and efficient practice, and effective demonstration. However, none of the lessons provided opportunities for pupils to learn to evaluate and improve their performance by commenting constructively and sensitively on each other's work. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons and make good progress. All opportunities in the subject are equally available to girls and boys. Teachers match their expectations to pupils' needs very effectively, and have good strategies for ensuring that every pupil has a clear role and responsibility.
151. The new co-ordinator has had little chance to influence the subject so far, but has

good ideas for its improvement. At present, the established scheme of work does not fit well with the increasing use of national guidance. The school's good strategies for curriculum evaluation and development need to resolve this issue soon, before it damages coherence and progression in the subject. The absence of an adjacent field unbalances provision for all pupils across the different elements of the subject. The school tries hard to overcome this problem with after-school clubs and the development of an orienteering course based on the school site. Football, netball and cricket teams represent the school very successfully in Richmond leagues and various tournaments. The residential trip for Year 6 pupils includes good provision for adventurous and outdoor pursuits. The playground provides an even and well-marked surface for a variety of games, and the school hall offers good space for work in dance and gymnastics. The quality and quantity of apparatus and equipment are good for the size of the school, although the range of music, not least the cultural range, to support dance is very limited.