

INSPECTION REPORT

MOSS HALL INFANT SCHOOL

North Finchley

London N12 8PE

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101295

Headteacher: Elma Bayne

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. Medhurst
15035

Dates of inspection: 12-15 June 2000

Inspection number: 188629

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Moss Hall Grove North Finchley London
Postcode:	N12 8PE
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mary Roe
Date of previous inspection:	8 July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. R. Medhurst	Registered inspector	Science Art Design and technology	What sort of school is it? The schools results and achievements How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs. R. Hall	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr. A. Jenner	Team inspector	History Special educational needs Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
Mrs. C. Pryor	Team inspector	English Geography Under fives English as an additional language	Pupils attitudes, values and personal development
Mr. D. Rosenthal	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Music	How well are pupils or students taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a community infant school for boys and girls aged 4-7 years. There are 265 pupils from Reception to Year 2. The school is large when compared with infant schools nationally. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils currently on the special educational needs register is 64. This represents a considerable rise in numbers from last year and is above the national average. Two thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Just over half the pupils in the school have English as an additional language, the main first languages spoken after English being Gujarati, Japanese, Farsi and Urdu. The school considers that the diversity of pupils' ethnic and social backgrounds is a rich and very positive aspect of the school. There is some movement of pupils in and out of the school and this is rising. For example a little more than a quarter of the current Year 2 were not part of the original cohort to join in Reception, and in one class a third of the children have changed since September. Pupils' attainment on entry is varied but above average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school achieves high standards in reading and mathematics and standards that are at least sound in most of the other areas of the curriculum. Over 90% of the teaching is at least satisfactory with just over half of the lessons good or better, and pupils are generally learning well. The school has successfully adopted national schemes including those for literacy and numeracy. This enables the school to plan effectively for the needs of its pupils in most areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language do well. Strong leadership has been instrumental in establishing a very positive ethos. The school offers a welcoming environment. It places a high value on all, and has a positive partnership with parents. This leads to positive attitudes and good behaviour on the part of pupils. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection and provides at least satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in reading, mathematics and information technology.
- Just over half the teaching is good or better throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress.
- Pupils form very good relationships with one another, with teachers and with other adults.
- A strong lead is given by the headteacher in establishing a positive ethos.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to school, behave well and are keen to learn.
- Social and cultural development is good.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.
- The school works very closely with parents, who are generally positive about the school.

What could be improved

- There are some weaknesses in writing. Children are not taught handwriting systematically. Older children do not always have enough strategies for identifying and correcting punctuation and spelling errors.
- Assessment arrangements do not always enable teachers to make judgements about the performance of their class and to guide them in curriculum planning.
- Children's oral skills are not extended sufficiently to enable them to develop their ideas clearly, to take turns to speak and to listen to each other well.
- Children's achievement in music and physical education is below the level expected for their age.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has addressed most of the key issues arising from the previous inspection in July 1996 and has made satisfactory improvement. The role of subject co-ordinators has been clarified and strengthened. Several co-ordinators, particularly those for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology, some of whom are new, are starting to make an impact on the quality of work. The school now has effective procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating how the National Curriculum is taught. The school needed to write and implement schemes of work which fully cover National Curriculum requirements in all subjects. This has been addressed effectively in the core subjects with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the successful implementation of nationally produced schemes of work for science and information technology. Sound improvement has been made to the curriculum in most of the other subjects, though weaknesses remain in music and physical education. This contributes to the unsatisfactory progress that pupils make in those subjects and to lower standards than those seen during the previous inspection.

Pupils' behaviour outside teaching time is considerably improved. Movement around the school is generally orderly and behaviour during the long lunchtime break is now very good. The children play well together. Good progress has also been made on improving pupils' capability in the use of information technology. The school has established a policy on support for the highest attaining pupils and is now satisfactorily addressing the needs of those pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has done some work to improve its assessment of pupils but this area remains unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	B	C	C	C
writing	C	D	C	C
mathematics	B	A*	A	A

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

Results of the 1999 National Curriculum tasks and tests shows that children achieved well above the average in mathematics. Results for reading and writing were in line with the national average though the number of pupils achieving at a higher level in reading was well above the national average. Over the four-year period to 1999, pupils performed well above the average in mathematics.

By age seven, pupils are currently achieving standards in reading that are above the level expected. Good progress is made in reading. Most pupils are writing at the level expected, though there are some weaknesses in handwriting and punctuation. This affects the number of pupils who achieve well. Attainment in mathematics remains above national expectations though is somewhat lower this year than last. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, gaining solid skills in numeracy. Attainment is generally high in the study of shapes and graphs. The targets set for English and mathematics are realistic.

Attainment in science is in line with national expectations. In information technology almost all children are working at a standard above that expected. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in religious education.

Pupils achieve well in many aspects of art and achieve satisfactorily in design and technology. Standards in music and physical education are below the level expected nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have positive attitudes to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in most lessons. Movement around the school is orderly and behaviour in the playground is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form very good relationships with one another and with teachers and other adults.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average for primary schools. Pupils arrive punctually.

Pupils show considerable interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment in their school work. They get down to tasks quickly and work conscientiously. In some classes they do not listen carefully enough to each other. Children play co-operatively together and are polite and respectful to adults. Pupils of all backgrounds and cultures mix extremely well and help and learn from each other.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	good	satisfactory

91% of lessons observed were satisfactory or better. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Over half the teaching was good or better. The teaching of English is at least satisfactory and often good. Much of the mathematics teaching throughout the school is good or very good. To improve further, teachers now need to place more emphasis on precision and accuracy in written work.

Most lessons have a clear structure and children generally have a good understanding of what they are to learn. Children are well organised, settle quickly to their work and usually complete it rapidly. Most teachers are very alert to the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils and often move quickly to provide help and explanation where it is needed. Classroom assistants are very well briefed and make a good impact on children's learning, particularly for children with special educational needs. The work of the special educational needs co-ordinator is also effective. Children who speak English as an additional language learn well as they move through the school. The teaching and additional adult help greatly enhance the progress these children make.

Although much of the teaching is strong, some lessons need improvement. In a minority of cases, the teacher's relationship with the class is not as good as it should be. Teachers sometimes accept one-word answers on which they elaborate instead of requiring longer responses to which the class needs to listen; this leads to listening skills that are rather weak.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for under fives is good. In Years 1 and 2 most subjects are well planned. Planning for music and physical education is weak.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Children with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These children are very well supported and generally make very good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' social and cultural development is good. Spiritual and moral development is satisfactory. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to co-operate. Pupils have good opportunities to learn from the many cultures represented in the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The children are well cared for. The assessment arrangements are weak.

The school works well in partnership with parents. Parents are provided with a wide range of very good information and are encouraged to be involved in the work of the school. They are well placed to support their children's learning, which they do very well.

Good care is taken of pupils. Attendance procedures are good. Better assessment information is needed to help staff spot strengths and weaknesses in learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led. Senior staff and core subject co-ordinators provide an effective team. Though many of them are new, they are starting to have a positive impact on the quality of work and the standards achieved.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is strongly committed to the work of the school and to school improvement and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has systematic arrangements for monitoring and evaluating how the curriculum is taught and its evaluation of its own performance is sound.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is carried out with care. Spending decisions are linked well to priorities for improvement. Good use is made of the resources available.

Strong leadership helps to create a school where pupils are very positive in their attitudes and are keen and able to learn. The school is suitably staffed to teach the full curriculum. The accommodation is used and maintained very well and learning resources are generally very good. The application of best value principles in the school's management of resources is sound.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school. Children make good progress, particularly in reading. The school is inclusive for all children. The school gives children confidence to learn. Parents feel comfortable about approaching school. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework, particularly for mathematics, to be set with greater consistency. More information to be provided on pupils' progress. The school to work more closely with parents.

The inspection team agree with and endorse the views of parents concerning what pleases them most, but did not find evidence to support the view of a minority of parents concerning areas for improvement. Mathematics homework is set on a fortnightly basis and the programme that is arranged appears to be sound. Children regularly take books home to share with adults. Good use is made of the home-school books. The team considers that the school works very closely with parents. Parents receive good information about pupils' progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school is quite varied but is above average overall. Attainment by the age of five is above the expected standard in all areas. All children, including those with special educational needs make good progress in all areas of learning in the reception classes. Those for whom English is a second language make very good progress.
2. In reading and writing, the results achieved by seven year olds in the 1999 national tests and tasks were broadly in line with those achieved nationally and broadly in line with the average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving at a higher level in reading was well above the national average. During the four year period from 1996 to 1999, the performance of pupils in reading and writing was above the national average. The boys' results for 1999 in both reading and writing indicate that they achieved well when compared with the national average. The previous inspection found that standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening were very good though those in handwriting, spelling and punctuation were less good.
3. The scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations show that current standards reflect last year's results and are similar to those of the previous inspection in reading and writing. By the age of seven, standards in reading are above the level expected. Children of all ages and at all levels of attainment, particularly higher attainers, make good progress. Most older pupils read independently and can use a range of strategies to help them read accurately. All pupils, including those who are not yet independent readers, show considerable interest in books and read regularly at home and in school. Most pupils are writing at the level expected though weaknesses remain in handwriting and punctuation. This affects the number of pupils who achieve well. Most older pupils can write independently and at times use adventurous vocabulary, though the progress some pupils make is affected by insecure understanding of the use of full stops and capital letters. Handwriting skills are not developed consistently enough. Attainment in speaking is high. However, this is not always sufficiently capitalised on. Although many children speak with considerable confidence they do not always listen carefully enough to each other.
4. Results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show that attainment in mathematics was well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. In the four year period from 1996 to 1999, the performance of pupils in mathematics has remained well above the national average. The performance of boys in the 1999 tests, as in English, indicate that they achieved well when compared with boys nationally. Inspection evidence shows that overall attainment by the age of seven, though a little lower this year than last, remains above national expectations. Achievement in mathematics is good. Younger children have sound recall of number bonds to ten. Most seven year olds have good recall of number facts to ten and can use these to work out more complex calculations. Problem solving is tackled logically and computation skills are well established. Attainment is generally high in the study of shapes and graphs.
5. In science, attainment is in line with national expectations. This matches the 1999 teacher assessment for science which found that the percentage of seven year old pupils reaching the expected level was broadly in line with the national average. Most children make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. They are both confident and successful in carrying out investigations and finding out key pieces of information from observation.
6. Almost all children's attainment in information technology is above national expectations. Not enough work was seen in religious education to make a judgement about standards.
7. The targets the school set for the Year 2 pupils this year are slightly higher than the 1999 scores in reading and slightly lower than the scores for writing, mathematics and science. Given the analysis the school has undertaken based on increased pupil mobility this year, the targets seem to be broadly realistic.

8. In English, mathematics and science, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is a result partly of the work that is planned for them but in particular of the effective support they receive in classrooms from the special educational needs co-ordinator and support assistants.

9. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress throughout the school. This is brought about because of the inclusive nature of the school and the very good support provided in classrooms at times that are appropriate to the needs of the children.

10. The development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is generally sound. The school's literacy strategy is effective and the opportunities for developing literacy in subjects other than English are, with one or two exceptions, exploited well. The amount that children are expected to write in one or two subjects, for example in science, varies across classes, and listening skills need to be developed further.

11. Pupils are achieving well in information technology. They have a good understanding of a number of computer programmes. Particularly good attainment and progress are seen as children learn how to control small programmable robots. Pupils are also achieving well in much of the art work that they do, particularly three-dimensional work.

12. There was not sufficient evidence in pupils' books and in discussion with pupils to judge the achievement in history, geography and religious education. Achievement in design and technology is satisfactory, though pupils are achieving below the level expected in music and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes

13. Most pupils have positive attitudes to school and are keen to learn. They show considerable interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment in school work. Most listen carefully to teachers and other adults. They concentrate well on explanations and are keen to respond to and ask questions. They get down to written and practical tasks quickly and work conscientiously at them. Presentation of work is sometimes untidy as a result of poorly developed handwriting skills. In some classes, the conventions of taking turns to speak and listening carefully to others have not been established firmly enough. Consequently pupils in these classes do not listen carefully enough to each other.

Behaviour

14. Pupils throughout the school behave well in most lessons. The previous inspection found behaviour outside teaching time to be unsettled and raised this as a key issue for improvement. This has been well addressed and movement in and around the school is now generally conducted in an orderly manner. The behaviour of pupils during the long lunchtime break is now very good. The children play co-operatively together sharing the available space and equipment well. The pupils interact well with the lunchtime supervisors to whom they are polite and respectful. No evidence of bullying or racism was seen during the week of the inspection. No pupils have been excluded from the school.

Personal development and relationships

15. Pupils throughout the school form very good relationships with one another and with teachers and other adults. The previous inspection found the degree of racial harmony in the school to be exceptional. This continues to be the case. Pupils are taught to understand and respect the views, beliefs and differences of others. Children of all backgrounds and cultures mix extremely well and help and learn from each other. Pupils co-operate well in pairs during practical investigative tasks and help each other to extend their work. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in the daily routines of the school, for example by helping to tidy up after lessons and taking registers to the office.

Attendance

16. The attendance rate at the school is below the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Pupils attend school punctually. There is a

high rate of pupil mobility.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Over half of the teaching throughout the school is good or very good. In some classes it is of a consistently high standard. A small number of the lessons seen across several classes fell below an acceptable standard.

18. Lessons often capture the interest of the children and maintain their attention. This is particularly so in the case of information technology lessons. Most lessons have a clear structure. At the beginning of a lesson, teachers usually discuss its purpose with the children. This is often done simply, so that children can understand what they are to learn. Occasionally teachers' explanations of their objectives are too technical for the children to follow.

19. At the beginning of lessons, question and answer work is often used to develop understanding. Throughout the school a number of good examples were seen. In a reception class mathematics lesson, for example, the children were expected to explain their understanding as they estimated numbers of toys in a box. The rest of the class showed interest and listened attentively. In the reception classes generally teachers introduce precise vocabulary, which helps to build knowledge and understanding. Although in some classes question and answer work is well handled, this generally requires improvement. Too often teachers accept one-word answers on which they then elaborate. This approach fails to get the best from the pupils and implies that children do not need to listen to each other. Listening skills are therefore rather weak in many classes. The school has identified this as an area for development.

20. Teachers often choose practical and written tasks well to reinforce the earlier teaching points. The work is explained very clearly. Children are well organised, settle quickly to their work and usually complete it rapidly. Written notices on pupils' desks are an effective way of giving additional instructions on the tasks. In some cases the number or the range of tasks is greater than it needs to be to meet the children's needs. This means that occasionally teachers spend too much of their time in getting the children started or in organising materials, rather than in teaching. The learning is then not as thorough as it should be.

21. In science lessons, teachers usually set high expectations of children's investigative work. This leads to a good standard of thought and presentation. In English and mathematics, teachers often place too little emphasis on precision and accuracy in spelling, punctuation, handwriting or layout. Overall, standards of layout and presentation are lower than they should be.

22. Most lessons end with a discussion. This is usually fruitful: it firms up understanding or celebrates the children's success. However, the discussion has too little effect if the preceding tasks have been over-complex: individual children have too little insight into the activities of other groups and so they lose interest.

23. In reading, teachers maintain a very productive dialogue with parents through the home-school reading diaries. These help the adults to understand children's progress and to enhance it. School policies show that mathematics tasks are sent home from time to time. These are linked well to the learning covered in class.

24. Most teachers are very alert to the strengths and weaknesses of their children, and often move quickly to provide help and explanation where it is needed. Classroom assistants are very well briefed on the roles they will play and often make a good impact on children's learning, particularly for children with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator's work is focused precisely on children's individual education plans and is effective. Higher attainers are generally stretched through the tasks they are set, although not always by class discussions. However, some teachers' discussion work, for instance in an information technology lesson seen in Year 2, is challenging and places appropriate demands on the highest attainers.

25. Children who speak English as an additional language learn well as they move through the school. This results from the effectively organised adult help provided in many lessons and from the school's positive ethos, in which English-speaking and bilingual children are encouraged to support their peers. The specialist teacher attached to the school provides subtle help and support and

greatly enhances the progress these children make.

26. Although much of the teaching is strong, some lessons need improvement. In a minority of cases, the teacher's relationship with a class is not as good as it should be. This means that in oral work there is an uneasy tension. This tends to occur where the teacher is not confident with teaching methods or content.

27. Teachers know their pupils well and often make individual notes about their progress. This form of assessment is helpful in focusing on individual needs. However, other forms of assessment are weak. There are no systems to allow patterns of strengths and weaknesses to be looked at systematically at the level of the class or the year group.

28. The national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy have been adopted. In general, the school has made a good start. To improve further, teachers now need to place more emphasis on precision and accuracy in written work. In mathematics, some teachers need to provide more direct teaching during the middle phase of the lesson.

29. Adequate progress has been made since the time of the last inspection. There are fewer unsatisfactory lessons. Higher attainers are now catered for satisfactorily and homework activities in mathematics are appropriate. However, assessment requires further improvement and the organisation of some lessons remains over-complex.

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

30. The last inspection of the school identified as a key issue the need to write and implement schemes of work which cover National Curriculum requirements in all subjects. Since then, the emphasis has initially been on planning a coherent curriculum in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Generally this has been implemented effectively.

31. The other foundation subjects are due to be reviewed over the next three years as noted in the school improvement plan. Meanwhile the school has adopted successfully recently published national schemes of work and is currently trialling units of work based on these schemes. A curriculum map has been drawn up since the last inspection and this ensures that all subjects in the curriculum receive sufficient time each week.

32. The curriculum is broadly based and takes account of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, including the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and sex education.

33. The curriculum for the under fives is good. It provides a range of stimulating and practical activities, which cover the full range of experiences.

34. At Key Stage 1 the school plans effectively for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. In English, the school is providing a full curriculum which is carried out mainly through the daily literacy hour. Opportunities for speaking and listening are provided through additional daily class discussion. The teaching of handwriting, however, is not planned sufficiently systematically. This weakness, which was highlighted in the last inspection report, is a priority in the current school development plan and is now being addressed.

35. In science the planned curriculum covers the programme of study in full and provides an appropriate balance across all the attainment targets. Key strands are revisited each year enabling year groups to plan for continuity and progression.

36. Information technology (IT) was highlighted as a key issue for action in the last report and since then a new IT suite has been developed. The curriculum indicates what is to be introduced in each term. This is based on the nationally produced materials and works well. Indeed the planned curriculum provides challenging tasks for the children to tackle.

37. The schemes of work for art and design and technology provide effective coverage of the National Curriculum. However weaknesses still remain in some subjects. In particular, in music and physical education some teachers need clearer guidance because their subject knowledge is weak.

38. There is a consistent planning format for all subjects. The long-term overview indicates what is to be taught across the key stage. The medium-term plans are displayed outside the classrooms for parents to see. Daily planning sheets highlight the intended learning objectives for each lesson. This framework for planning is followed systematically by all teachers.

39. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. Collaborative planning and close liaison with all parties enable all pupils to have access to a wide range of good quality learning experiences. For example, the information pupils bring back when going abroad for their annual holiday is seen as enriching the curriculum. An increasingly high proportion of pupils have English as an additional language. These pupils are generally very well supported.

40. The school has also made effective links with similar schools in Norway and Greece as part of a European project. Good cultural links are being developed. Personal, social and health education is planned appropriately and taught through such subjects as science or in whole class discussions, for example in Circle Time.

41. The previous inspection highlighted that more needed to be done for the highest attainers. The school has addressed this and a policy for the more able is in place.

42. The school provides no extra-curricular activities as such. There is an out-of-school club on the school site which many pupils attend.

43. The provision for the children's spiritual development is satisfactory. The school provides opportunities through assemblies and lessons for pupils to be aware of other faiths. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils' contributions to be valued and their thoughts and beliefs respected. Assemblies are held on a daily basis and broadly meet statutory requirements.

44. The provision for children's moral development is satisfactory. Assemblies and the planned curriculum for religious education lessons provide opportunities for pupils to consider the difference between right and wrong. A year assembly based on the story of the Good Samaritan emphasised effectively the need for pupils to care for other people.

45. The provision for children's social development is good. Significant improvements have been made to pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. During the long lunch break pupils make good use of the wide range of facilities available to them and as a result play sensibly. Teachers make effective arrangements for pupils to work in pairs and small groups in class. This enables pupils to work well with each other both inside and outside the classroom. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to co-operate in practical activities and to share resources.

46. Cultural development is good overall. Some aspects of children's cultural development are very good. The school is represented by a diversity of cultures by which the school sets great store. It sees this as a positive enrichment to the curriculum and is a strength of the school. Pupils have opportunities to be aware of and learn from the many other cultures in school. Pupils work and play without any hint of aggression. Displays and several learning areas continue to enhance this strength of the school. However there are weaknesses in the planned curriculum, particularly in music, where good opportunities to enhance further pupils' cultural awareness are not always taken up.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. Despite the size of the school the headteacher and staff have worked hard to create an environment that has the feel of a much smaller school. The school sees its pastoral role as a priority and works hard to include all children whatever their background or educational need. The good relationships and communication among all staff contribute positively in this area. All pupils are known well as individuals and new children arriving in reception or at other times are settled in well. All systems for welfare, child protection and first aid are good and incidents are recorded formally in detail. The school caters

competently for a variety of medical needs and goes to great lengths to ensure that each child is given the best daily care possible; for example, a notice-board in the dining hall adjacent to the serving area details the dietary needs of pupils.

48. Attendance procedures are good. Registers are completed accurately and annotated with reasons for absence. These are monitored regularly and appropriate action is taken if concerns arise.

49. Since the last inspection, behaviour management systems have been implemented and this has resulted in an improvement in standards of behaviour throughout the school day. The concerns raised about the way children moved around the school during the day and at the end of the day have been addressed well. Playtime and lunchtimes are well supervised and behaviour is good. The provision for the long lunchtime has been improved. Mealtime supervisors have received training in behaviour management and playtime games, and there are plenty of toys and equipment to occupy children at this time. This is a very positive time of day and strengthens pupils' social development. Although there is evidence of some unsatisfactory behaviour within a few classes, the majority of staff deal well with some challenging children. There is no evidence of any bullying taking place and parents at the meeting stated that any incidents of 'unkindness' were dealt with quickly. Good work and behaviour are recognised by rewards and in achievement assemblies.

50. All pupils with special educational needs are monitored closely on a termly basis and support time is allocated appropriately according to need. The school works hard and successfully to ensure that the provision outlined in statements of special educational need is implemented.

51. Since the last inspection the school has done some work to improve its assessment of pupils. The policy has been reviewed, some work has taken place in core subjects, and the co-ordinator is beginning to be involved in analysis. However, this remains an issue for the school, as the current arrangements are unsatisfactory. Pupils are assessed in terms of the level they have reached in English and mathematics, and much improved assessment arrangements are due to be implemented in science in September. The procedures in place for English include an ongoing portfolio of work; such sampling ensures consistency of judgement between teachers but does not inform planning. Teachers make many notes of pupils' progress, for example on the back of their planning sheets, and judgements about individual pupils' progress are often secure. However, at present the school is unable to draw on its assessment evidence to make judgements about its own performance and to guide curriculum planning. Pupils' reports are detailed and meet requirements, and areas for development are noted.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Parents have positive views of the school. The majority strongly support the judgements on the questionnaire that their child likes school and that parents feel comfortable in approaching the school. A minority raised concerns about homework, the information provided on progress and whether the school works closely with parents. The inspection supports the positive views of parents but did not find evidence to support some of the concerns. The school works very closely with parents; this is an area of strength. Parents receive good information about progress both formally, at parents' evenings and in the annual report, and informally, as they deliver and collect their child. Parents liked the mathematics homework but felt it was set inconsistently. However, the inspection team consider the arrangements to be sound. Parents also raised behaviour as an issue although on this aspect the meeting was divided. The inspection team judges that behaviour throughout the school day has improved since the last inspection and is now good. At the meeting parents also felt that pupils make good progress in reading, that the school gives children confidence, that the inclusive nature of the school is a strength and that they appreciate being able to come into the classroom. The team agrees with these views.

53. Parents are provided with a wide range of very good information. The prospectus is attractive and detailed and contains appropriate information about the curriculum. This is supplemented by a meeting held by each class teacher at the beginning of the academic year to discuss class routines and what pupils will learn. Teachers' planning sheets are pinned up outside the classrooms and are available for parents to see as they leave their children at school. As well as at parents' formal consultation evenings, staff are available for informal contact at the beginning and end of the day and parents appreciate this. Meetings about aspects of the curriculum, such as numeracy, have taken place and the school has recently canvassed parents through a questionnaire to find out what further topics parents would like

information about and how this should be delivered.

54. A careful induction is planned for both pupils and parents new to the school and parents are encouraged to use the very pleasant parents' room as their children are first settling into the reception classes. Parents help in the school each day, in the classroom, with swimming, and with special events. One such event is the annual Food Week where children harvest the produce they have grown in the school garden and parents cook food from a wide range of cultures in celebration. The school has an active Parents' Association that raises substantial amounts of money in conjunction with the junior school.

55. The school liaises closely with parents of pupils with special educational needs and involves parents well when reviewing the programme for their children. A drop-in surgery on Friday afternoon is one example of the effective links that have been established.

56. The majority of parents hear their children read at home and the Reading Diary is an effective tool for dialogue with teachers. This is having a beneficial impact on the standards of reading throughout the school. Although no mathematics homework was seen being set for pupils during the inspection, the work planned is precisely targeted to complement the mathematics curriculum and to support this area.

57. Parents are very well informed about the curriculum, the daily life of the school and the progress of their children. As a result they are very well placed to support their children's learning and the school in a variety of ways, which they do very well.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. A strong lead is given by the headteacher in establishing a positive ethos. The school provides a welcoming environment and places a strong emphasis on valuing all. The effect of this is to create a school where pupils are very positive in their attitudes and are keen and able to learn. The school's aims, which seek to enable children to be enthusiastic about learning, to be self-disciplined, independent learners and to provide a caring, sensitive school community, are reflected well in its policies and in its practice.

59. Key members of the senior management team, other than the headteacher, are relatively new to the school, and the co-ordinators for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have held their posts only since September. They are already building into an effective team and are having a positive impact on standards, and the school is well placed to continue to improve. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been well managed as has the introduction of national schemes of work for science, information technology (IT) and design and technology. Raising the attainment of the higher attaining pupils, an issue from the previous inspection of the school, has generally been managed effectively, and this is reflected particularly in the national test results for reading and mathematics.

60. The newly constituted Governing Body is strongly committed to the work of the school and to school improvement and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. The governors have an effective committee structure to support their work. Designated members, who take responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, visit the school on a regular basis, are well informed of the work in these areas and keep the Governing Body fully up-to-date. Governors have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are suitably involved in setting priorities for development. They have trust in the headteacher but expect her to be accountable to them.

61. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating how the National Curriculum is taught, identified as a key issue in the last inspection report, have improved considerably. A systematic programme of classroom observations and feedback to teachers and a regular scrutiny of work provides the headteacher and deputy head with a clear picture of the quality of teaching and of standards across the school. This is having a positive effect on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and on the improvements being made in science and IT. It also helps identify where support is needed, though it is yet to impact on one or two of the foundation subjects. The systematic professional development interviews held by the headteacher with staff, and successful involvement in

the 'Investors in People' scheme, also help the school considerably with its process of self-evaluation.

62. The role of the subject co-ordinator has been strengthened since the last inspection. Most co-ordinators are clear about their role and are generally effective in carrying out their responsibilities. While all provide positive support to colleagues and ensure that their area is well resourced, one or two do not have a sufficiently clear picture of the standards in their subject or of the progress pupils make. The management of the arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs is carried out effectively and this enables these pupils to make good progress.

63. The school has a clear and effective process of school development planning. The current plan is detailed and aims to set realistic targets in the curriculum and whole school environment to raise achievement. There is a clear long-term overview. Current curriculum priorities are broadly appropriate, resource requirements are clearly identified, and staff development is closely linked to the priorities within the plan.

64. Financial control is good. The main recommendations of the last financial audit have been acted on and day-to-day financial administration is carried out efficiently. Spending decisions are linked well to priorities for improvement. Specific funds that are allocated to the school are used very effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Recent national funding for information and communication technology has been used well to develop an information technology suite.

65. The school is suitably staffed to teach the full curriculum; there is a satisfactory balance of experience and expertise. Support staff, who are managed well, work very effectively in classrooms. They make a substantial contribution to the quality of work and to the standards achieved by the individuals and groups they work with. Induction of staff new to the school is effective. A good programme of support is provided for newly qualified teachers and the climate throughout the school is one where staff are very supportive of each other.

66. The school building is well maintained. Very good use has been made of former cloakroom spaces off corridors to create additional spaces for specific activities and for pupils to work in. The computer suite and library, which also open off corridors, demonstrate good use of space and provide a valuable resource for the school. Classrooms are very well organised and provide a stimulating environment for children to work in. Displays in classrooms and around the school are bright, attractive and well organised. They celebrate pupils' work well and provide a valuable resource for learning.

67. The outside environment, including the playground, the school garden and the shaded areas, is designed to enable a good range of activities to take place. This enhances the curriculum and helps children to play well together. A design project that involves the whole school, and is a priority in the school development plan, is aimed at improving the playground facilities further.

68. The school is very well resourced in all areas of the curriculum. Resources for learning are well managed and are organised effectively. Resources in classrooms are sufficient for the day-to-day needs of the children; they are well maintained, readily accessible, and used carefully by the children. Centrally held resources are generally organised effectively and teachers are able to retrieve them easily for specific lessons.

69. The application of best value principles in the school's management of resources is sound.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to improve the attainment and quality of education the school should:

- devise simple methods for assessing pupils' attainment. Use the information gathered to make decisions about ways of improving teaching and learning throughout the school;*
(See paragraphs 27, 51, 111, 119, 141)
- improve standards of speaking and listening in lessons across the curriculum;
(See paragraphs 3, 13, 19, 83, 88, 93, 101, 104, 109)
- improve writing by:
 - teaching handwriting systematically throughout the school;
 - encouraging children to correct their own spellings and to learn them;
 - expecting higher standards of punctuation;*(See paragraphs 3, 28, 34, 86, 90, 94)
- improve standards in music by providing clearer guidance on the structure and content of the lessons;
(See paragraphs 12, 37, 137-141)
- improve the quality of physical education by providing guidance to teachers on the expected standards.
(See paragraphs 12, 37, 142-145)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. They are indicated in paragraphs 26, 82, 102, 108, 149.

* These issues have been identified by the school as areas for improvement and are included as priorities in the current School Development Plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	43	35	2	7	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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	265
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	64

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	137

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.4

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
	1999	56	31	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	48	50	53
	Girls	24	27	30
	Total	72	77	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (80)	89 (76)	95 (95)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	50	49	50
	Girls	25	29	28
	Total	75	78	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (79)	90 (84)	90 (84)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	10
Black – other	2
Indian	39
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	3
White	78
Any other minority ethnic group	42

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	623442
Total expenditure	641242
Expenditure per pupil	2420
Balance brought forward from previous year	41345
Balance carried forward to next year	23545

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	264
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	30	5	-	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	48	5	-	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	58	5	-	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	52	18	5	2
The teaching is good.	48	41	5	-	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	45	19	2	-
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	35	7	-	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	46	14	-	4
The school works closely with parents.	39	38	17	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	45	40	5	-	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	37	4	1	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	40	14	2	19

As not all completed questionnaires provided a response to every question, and as figures are rounded up or down, rows do not always add up exactly to 100%.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. Children's attainment on entry to the school is varied but above average overall. All children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in all areas of learning. Attainment by the age of five is above the expected standard in all areas.

72. A significant proportion of pupils enter the school with good linguistic skills. By the age of five many pupils express themselves articulately using a wide vocabulary. They respond appropriately to questions. Pupils whose home language is not English quickly develop the confidence to speak in English. Most children listen attentively to stories and to adults. However, they do not listen sufficiently attentively to each other in formal situations.

73. Reception pupils enjoy books. Almost all understand that print carries meaning and know the difference between words and pictures. They talk about the pictures and answer questions about the story. Many join in with the repetitive parts of a book and recognise familiar words. Some read simple books accurately and with good expression.

74. They know the difference between drawing and writing. Most can write independently making good use of their knowledge of sounds to spell words. Pencil control is good. They form recognisable letter shapes although not always correctly.

75. All pupils count accurately to 10 and most to 20 and beyond. Many have good estimation skills. Most are developing a good understanding of mathematical language such as "greater" and "less than".

76. Reception children have a separate outdoor area which gives appropriate access to wheeled toys and climbing equipment. This enables pupils to develop a good level of physical control of their bodies as well as learning the skills of taking turns and co-operation. Most use scissors well and can cut in straight and curved lines.

77. Through their drawing and painting children show that they can observe closely, such as when recreating a picture of a big wave from a famous painting. They work collaboratively together to produce animal wall hangings using the technique of screen printing. Indian festivals such as Holi provide good opportunities for making colourful patterns by dropping coloured ink onto fabric. In musical activities most are able to sing simple songs accurately, listen carefully, discriminate between sounds and beat out the syllables of their names. Many have a good sense of rhythm.

78. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They can select equipment and materials and explore them responsibly through play. They can observe differences in the surfaces of materials in order to predict which will make the best slide for a teddy bear. They understand that the more vertical the slide, the faster the ride will be. They know which objects sink and float and why. They can cut and join materials such as when making model boats from junk materials. They can use a mouse and the arrow keys on a computer.

79. Children make very good progress in the development of personal and social skills. Behaviour is good. They relate well to adults and each other. They play co-operatively together, taking turns fairly and sharing resources. They help each other. For example, one child counted out 14 unifix cubes but was unsure how to write the number. Another child found a number line, pointed to 14 and waited patiently while the first child copied it. He then put it away.

80. Pupils are able to select tasks and resources quickly and independently. Most sustain concentration on self-chosen tasks extremely well and persevere to complete them. Most join in teacher-directed activities with interest. They clear up carefully.

81. The teaching in most lessons in the reception classes is good. The best teaching is

characterised by clear objectives which are explained in simple terms to the children. Good questioning keeps the children interested and actively involved. Practical tasks are carefully chosen to reinforce the planned learning and are pitched at an appropriate level of difficulty for the children. For example, groups of children were learning to sequence the events in a story following the shared reading of a book. Children in one group were able to sequence pictures and sentences independently. In another group they were helped by the teacher to sequence the events practically using models of animals, buildings and vehicles on a floor mat.

82. Sometimes the teaching is less satisfactory because the organisation of activities is too complex and there is a poor match of work to the children's needs. Some children then find the work difficult and lose concentration. This leads to unsatisfactory behaviour.

83. Teachers' expectations of oracy during whole class sessions need to be higher. Children need to be taught to take turns to speak and to listen more attentively to each other.

84. The curriculum for children under five is challenging and stimulating. There is a strong emphasis on active, practical, exploratory activities which promote the children's learning well in all areas of learning. Children are given plenty of opportunities to choose activities independently and so initiate and direct their own learning. They are given ample time to explore, discover and follow their own interests and to develop self-discipline.

ENGLISH

85. National tests for seven year olds in 1999 show that standards in reading and writing are in line with the national average and match those achieved by pupils in schools with similar intakes. The school gets an above average number of children to higher attainment levels for reading. The number of pupils attaining the higher levels for writing is also above the national average but below that of similar schools.

86. The inspection confirms this picture. While a large proportion of children are reaching the expected level for writing, many are not yet consolidating the basic skills of handwriting and punctuation. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection.

87. Attainment in speaking is high. By age seven many pupils talk confidently. They explore and communicate ideas using a wide vocabulary. Most articulate clearly. They respond appropriately to teachers' questions and ask relevant questions themselves. A very high number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Many are in the early stages of acquiring English language skills. These pupils make very good progress as they move through the school. By working alongside competent English speakers in practical activities, such as tending the school garden, they effectively learn from the good models of language provided by their peers and quickly develop the confidence to speak in English. They respond with increasing appropriateness to what others say. The support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language is very good. The teacher has developed very positive relationships with the children. She unobtrusively checks their understanding and helps and encourages them to contribute orally.

88. Listening skills are not so well developed. Some lessons do not capitalise sufficiently on children's oral abilities. Although most pupils generally listen carefully to teachers and other adults, they often fail to listen to each other in whole class work.

89. Attainment in reading is high. Children of all ages make good progress with reading. All pupils show interest in looking at books and can follow a simple text when reading aloud. Most older pupils read independently with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They use a range of strategies to help them read accurately and can correct their own mistakes. Many are knowledgeable about authors and are able to express their preferences. Comprehension at the literal level is good. Most children read regularly at home and school.

90. By age seven most pupils are writing at the expected level. Most write independently using interesting and at times adventurous vocabulary. They attempt to spell using their good knowledge

of sounds. In one older class some children write in grammatically correct sentences using punctuation to enliven their writing. However, some children's understanding of the use of capital letters and full stops is insecure. Many children form letters incorrectly and have difficulty writing on a line.

91. The school's literacy strategy is effective. Pupils are introduced to high quality texts and given plenty of opportunities for reading. The opportunities for developing literacy in subjects other than English are generally exploited well but need to be planned.

92. The teaching of English is at least satisfactory and often good. In the best lessons teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. They know precisely what children are to learn. They explain and demonstrate the key teaching points simply. They use questioning effectively to develop the children's understanding of a text and to focus attention on particular words or aspects of writing such as the use of speech marks. These lessons are carefully prepared. Practice activities give appropriate opportunities for reinforcement. The lessons are successfully concluded by a plenary which helps to fix the key learning points in the children's minds. The children are well managed and their attention and interest is held throughout.

93. The key weakness in the teaching of English and literacy across the curriculum is insufficiently high expectations of pupils' oral work. The need for children to take turns to speak and to listen to each other is not emphasised enough. Children are not required to answer questions in clear, audible voices which the other children can hear. This affects the quality of the listening and necessitates the teacher repeating and at times elaborating on pupils' responses. This slows the pace of lessons and results in boredom and less progress than should be expected.

94. The teaching of handwriting is poor. Children are not taught handwriting systematically and consequently form letters incorrectly. They repeat these errors whenever they write, so embedding them further. The school has already identified the need to adopt a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting using an agreed style. There is not enough concentration on the structuring and punctuation of writing. Spelling is now taught more systematically than at the time of the previous inspection. However strategies for learning the correct spelling of words from errors made are not consistently applied in all classes. Older children need to be taught how to identify spelling and punctuation errors and be given strategies for learning from and correcting their own mistakes.

95. Pupils enjoy their English lessons and participate fully and with interest in them. They attempt written tasks independently, conscientiously and with good levels of concentration. They work co-operatively together and support each other well in group activities.

96. The curriculum for English is supported by good quality resources. The school gives a very clear message that children's home languages are valued. This is apparent through the wide variety of dual-language text books and tapes and through the use of community languages in displays and signs around the school. The key areas for development in the subject have already been identified by the co-ordinator.

MATHEMATICS

97. The national test results for 1999 showed that by the age of seven attainment was well above that of schools nationally and well above that of similar schools. The school has lowered its targets this year, because it judges that fewer children will reach the expected levels. Inspection evidence and unconfirmed national test results show that overall attainment remains above national expectations but that it is somewhat lower this year than last. This is partly explained by the considerable amount of movement in and out of the school in Year 2 and by some shortcomings in the teaching for particular children.

98. Children are generally acquiring sound skills in numeracy, through discussion, regular mental mathematics tests and written tasks. By the age of seven most pupils have good recall of number facts to ten and can use these to work out more complex calculations. They are beginning to use their knowledge of place value to add ten or twenty to a given number. They tackle problem-solving work logically and are able to discover rules about the ways numbers fit together, making use of well-

established computation skills. Most children are beginning to recall and use table facts for the easier multiplication tables. Attainment is generally high in particular aspects of mathematics such as the study of shapes and graphs.

99. Younger children make good progress. A particularly good foundation is laid in the reception classes. In Year 1 most children develop a sound understanding of the properties of solids and plane shapes, and the relationships between the two. They also develop sound recall of number bonds to ten.

100. Much of the mathematics teaching throughout the school is good or very good. The best lessons are characterised by a slick pace and high demands on the children. Children's interest is captured and maintained. In many lessons, children who find the work more difficult are well supported by classroom assistants or by the special educational needs co-ordinator.

101. Some teachers ask questions well in whole-class work. The most effective questioning keeps children's number skills sharp and makes them think. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, children were asked to give the question which might lead to a particular answer. In the best lessons, children are expected to speak clearly so that everyone can hear. The teacher does not generally need to repeat or elaborate on the answers. Work of this quality was seen in a reception class. Here, attention from the class was particularly good. In too many lessons teachers do not expect children to speak or listen well enough and there is sometimes inattention during oral work. There are too few visual aids to help children who do not have instant recall of facts. A few therefore appear to become dispirited during question and answer activities.

102. Written tasks are often well matched to the teaching points planned by the teacher and meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. Children know what to do and so settle quickly. In the best lessons the number and range of these written tasks is small. This means that instructions can be given quickly and the children have a common experience to discuss at the end of the lesson. Teachers are able to interact with pupils and provide further teaching while work is in progress. In weaker lessons tasks are over-complex or more varied than they need to be. Here the teacher spends too much time getting the children started and too little time in teaching. Some children, often the lower attainers, then make less progress than they might.

103. Endings to lessons are often productive in firming up children's understanding. The endings work least well where the preceding written and practical tasks have been too disparate.

104. In almost all lessons behaviour is good and children are keen to engage with written work. When asked to do so children often work well together in pairs to discuss possible answers to questions. Some pupils are particularly thoughtful and sensitive in providing support for those with difficulties or disabilities. In the best lessons children react well in oral work; they listen carefully and are keen to answer questions. Concentration and behaviour are occasionally unsatisfactory where the oral work is badly managed by the teacher.

105. At the time of the last inspection (1996) the school was using an outdated scheme of work. It has recently adopted the National Numeracy Strategy materials and so meets curricular requirements. Work now needs to be done to improve some teachers' questioning technique and to make the middle part of some lessons more productive through the use of a higher proportion of direct teaching.

106. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the school. She is developing a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of current work. She is well informed about national requirements and has a carefully thought out approach to future development.

SCIENCE

107. Standards in science are at the level expected nationally by the age of seven. This reflects the teacher assessed results for 1999 which show that the number of pupils reaching the expected level was broadly in line with the national average. Good foundations are laid in the reception classes. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of attainment find things out successfully by carrying out

investigations, or by making and describing observations. For example, pupils in Year 2, by experimenting with the materials provided, quickly discovered how to construct a circuit to enable a bulb to light. Before the session ended, they had represented this in the form of a diagram and some went on to investigate the effect of introducing a second bulb into the circuit. Many older children are able to recognise when a test is unfair. The work that pupils have carried out this year indicates that their knowledge and understanding of all areas of science are at the level expected for their age, and in some cases above.

108. At the time of the last inspection, too much weight was given to the study of living things at the expense of the other areas of science, with considerable repetition from one year to another. Much has been done to improve this. Pupils are achieving as well in the study of materials and their properties and physical processes as they do in the study of living things. The last inspection also reported that there was too much variation between what was taught between classes in a year group. This has also improved: teachers in each year group plan well together and as a result there is much greater consistency in what is taught in science. There is some inconsistency across classes in each year group, however, concerning the amount that pupils are expected to record in science, particularly in Year 2.

109. The quality of teaching is generally good. In most cases teachers set out clear objectives for each lesson and as a result children are clear about what they are expected to do. In several lessons children were challenged well to find things out through investigative activities and through observation and this helped them to increase their understanding. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils' close observation of the root system of a plant and the discussion that followed helped them to understand better the function of roots. Resources are used very effectively to support the teaching and learning. Most lessons are organised well and this enables an effective pace to be maintained, particularly when moving from whole class discussion and demonstration to practical sessions. Few weaknesses were observed. In one lesson, pupils were not required to listen to each other when expressing their ideas. In one lesson, in contrast to other lessons seen, there was not a high enough expectation that pupils would record their findings following practical work. The particular strengths observed in teaching, however, enable pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, to make good progress in science.

110. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils co-operate very well in pairs and in groups when carrying out practical tasks, supporting each other and discussing their findings in a positive and productive way.

111. The school has successfully adopted a national scheme of work and provides a curriculum that is well balanced and enables teachers to plan effectively. Science is well led; well thought out extension activities are provided for each class, resources are organised effectively, and shortcomings in the current assessment arrangements are due to be overcome in September with the introduction of new arrangements. Attractive interactive displays in every classroom, based on the current theme in science, provide an additional valuable teaching resource.

ART

112. Standards achieved by pupils in several areas of art, in particular in three-dimensional work, are above the level expected by the age of seven. Work of a good quality is attained consistently across classes in clay modelling, modelling with paste, paper and card, paper sculpture and collage. Standards of drawing and painting are satisfactory overall but are less consistent across classes.

113. The curriculum for art has improved since the last inspection. A scheme of work is now in place. This provides a clear framework which identifies the key objectives for learning and good supporting guidance on what can be taught in each strand of art for each year group. It is enabling teachers to plan a broadly based art curriculum which covers the National Curriculum programmes of study. The next step is to ensure that key skills, particularly in painting and drawing, are taught consistently and progressively across all classes.

114. The teaching of art is generally satisfactory. Teachers are well prepared. In two lessons seen

teachers had planned appropriate strategies to demonstrate techniques of paper folding. The skills required were learned quickly and effectively by the children and this enabled them to use these skills to create imaginative three-dimensional models of a good quality. Although knowledge and understanding of art does not feature in the current teaching in Years 1 and 2, it is suitably represented in the curriculum at other times of the year. In the reception classes, the work of a Japanese artist has been used very effectively by teachers: bold use of colour and line to represent the movement of waves in the artist's work was linked to the children's own work.

115. The progress pupils make is generally good and sometimes very good. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils used a rich range of materials to execute collage pictures with a good sense of form and with great precision. The outcomes were much above average and higher attaining pupils did particularly well. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to art. Their high levels of concentration and perseverance contribute positively to the good progress made, as does the helpful way they share resources.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. By age seven most pupils achieve standards in design and technology that are broadly in line with national expectations. Children work successfully with a range of materials. They can apply their skills of making including marking out, cutting and shaping materials, and they make appropriate use of pictures to help them develop and communicate their designs.

117. It was reported in the last inspection that weaknesses in whole school, year group and individual planning did not secure appropriate progression in the knowledge, understanding and skills in this subject. It was also reported that progress was constrained because design and technology was taught as part of a topic. The introduction and generally successful implementation of a national scheme of work has helped the school to plan effectively across year groups and to improve individual teachers' plans. Distinctive elements of design and technology are now planned and taught rather than the subject forming part of a topic. This enables the school to teach a curriculum that builds each year on the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils require.

118. Not enough lessons were seen during the week of the inspection to judge the quality of teaching. Indications from the work that is available suggest that design and technology is taught systematically, that sufficient emphasis is placed on both designing and making and that satisfactory progress is made by most pupils. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is good. Children in Year 1 have successfully learned how to make moving pictures that include simple sliding and rotating mechanisms and have developed effective models that require winding mechanisms. Year 2 have recently had the opportunity to clarify their ideas of how to construct a wheeled vehicle that relies on axles to enable the wheels to move, by first setting down their ideas with suggestions in note form of how they will proceed, and then putting their ideas into practice satisfactorily using a combination of found and specific materials.

119. The policy for design and technology relates appropriately to the current National Curriculum programmes of study and will need to be reviewed in preparation for the new requirements in September. It places an appropriate emphasis on issues of health and safety. There are no systematic arrangements for assessing the progress pupils make, and this needs to be addressed. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work in design and technology: they co-operate very well with each other during practical tasks, share equipment well and use it safely.

GEOGRAPHY

120. Only one geography lesson was seen during the inspection and it has therefore not been possible to make a judgement about standards or teaching. The amount of recorded work is small and limited in range.

121. On the evidence available, geographical skills are suitably developed through investigating the school grounds and the immediate locality. The Year 1 classes, for example, had been for a walk to look at street signs. Pupils develop basic concepts and language relating to directions and produce

simple directions showing their routes to school.

122. Excellent use is made of the children's own experiences and backgrounds to deepen and extend the knowledge and understanding of all children about other countries and cultures. Many children make visits to other countries. They are asked to record impressions and experiences in pictures, writing and photographs. They bring back inexpensive artefacts such as newspapers, plane tickets, leaflets, food and spices. Back at school these form interesting and informative displays which are an enrichment for all children. The many countries visited - India, Japan, Turkey, Nigeria and America, to name but a few - are plotted on a map of the world.

123. The school has also made effective links with similar schools in Norway and Greece as part of a European project. Children regularly exchange letters and write about topics such as their school day or journey to school.

124. The previous inspection found that a more detailed scheme of work was required for geography. The school has recently adopted nationally produced units of study which provide the basis for long term planning. More needs to be done in terms of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the agreed schemes. Learning resources for the subject are sufficient but need to be developed to support the new study units.

HISTORY

125. There was not enough work available in history to enable a judgement to be made about the overall standards. However, the work that children carried out in the small number of lessons seen was at the level expected for their age.

126. By age seven, pupils are developing well the skills of historical enquiry and learning how to ask relevant questions. The scrutiny of work showed that there has been very little recording of work. The younger pupils have been introduced to simple timelines while older pupils can retell the story of momentous events such as the Great Fire of London. Higher attaining pupils can make simple deductions using their historical knowledge.

127. The last inspection found that the school was aware that more detailed guidance for teachers was required. The school is now implementing a scheme of work for history. This is being achieved mainly by adopting the recently published national scheme of work. However, further guidance is needed for teachers to plan a progressive curriculum where pupils can build on knowledge gained and skills acquired.

128. The teaching of history is generally good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and a wide range of appropriate and stimulating resources. In the examples seen, well-structured question and answer sessions enabled all pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils recalled their knowledge of historical facts such as how houses in the local area have changed over a period of time.

129. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They listen carefully, ask sensible and often probing questions and reflect on what is being discussed. In one lesson, pupils put questions to three senior citizens about their experiences of going to the seaside when they were young. They remained on task and their enjoyment in finding out about the event was evident.

130. Resources are generally good. Artefacts, pictures and photographs are used well to enhance learning. Most classrooms have a timeline for pupils to use and the historical displays are well thought out and very stimulating.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

131. By the age of seven, almost all children are working at a standard above that expected. Lessons and the work on display show that children have a good understanding of a number of computer programmes and can make use of them in their own work.

132. Children use computers to save and retrieve their work. They produce pictures using a graphics package and use some of the tools to make patterns and effects. In word processing work children use simple tools effectively to correct and present their work. Throughout the school, particularly good attainment and progress is evident in the way children learn how to control machines such as tape recorders and small programmable robots. In the latter case, attainment is very high. Older children programme the robot to make a series of movements in order to follow a particular route, moving forwards and backwards in steps of a particular size and making one or more quarter turns.

133. Teaching is generally good. In the reception classes, effective foundations are laid, often through clear instruction which familiarises children with the equipment they will use later. Programmes to reinforce basic skills are used effectively. The teaching seen in Years 1 and 2 is characterised by clear explanations and demonstrations of the machines or programmes being studied. When children use the computers, the school's bank of new machines is used to good effect. Support staff and the co-ordinator are well deployed to give children sufficient help to establish their confidence. A lesson in Year 2 was particularly effective in teaching children control technology with the floor robot. The teacher had very high expectations of the children. Her explanations were very precise and she introduced correct vocabulary very systematically. Help was given to children who struggled, and children were paired to make sure that all pupils could access the work.

134. As a result of the good teaching children receive, they generally make good progress in skills and understanding. Children of all attainment levels and those with English as an additional language do well. All pupils are very interested in the work and are keen to learn. Behaviour is good, and in some lessons pupils show great care for each other, particularly where someone does not understand.

135. The subject is well managed. A new scheme of work has been introduced successfully and teachers' understanding of the work they teach is good. The computer suite is a valuable resource and it is generally well used. It would benefit from a large screen display so teachers could demonstrate more effectively how the programmes should be used. Some good use of information technology is made to support other subjects. In one lesson, for example, a teacher demonstrated symmetry in mathematics, using a drawing package. However, these links are largely down to the decisions of individual teachers. Schemes of work across the curriculum now need to include planned opportunities for the use of IT.

136. The last inspection indicated that children did quite well but that they did not have access to a sufficiently wide range of software. The adoption of a national scheme means that this difficulty has been overcome. Taking into account the new hardware and software in use, the school has made good progress since 1996.

MUSIC

137. Attainment in music is below national expectations by the age of seven.

138. Younger children in reception classes sing and play reasonably well for their ages. They know some of the names of classroom instruments and play them with suitable control and imagination. As children move through the school they do not develop the skills of composing, performing, listening and talking about music well enough. Seven year olds are able to assemble sounds to make short pieces but their performances are uncontrolled. Children lack the technical vocabulary needed to discuss music properly. Singing is not much in evidence in lessons for the older pupils but children generally do sing tunefully and sometimes with enthusiasm. Overall, progress in making and understanding music is too slow; children do not achieve as much as they should.

139. Teaching varies too much in quality, but in most lessons it is satisfactory. Where there is singing, staff lead confidently and accurately. They make sure that all children have the opportunity to experiment with percussion instruments and use the correct names to describe them. In reception classes lessons have sufficient variety, but in the other year groups they are too narrow in focus.

This sometimes means that children begin to lose interest as the lesson progresses. In one poor lesson, the teacher focused on managing resources and the degenerating behaviour of the class. There was little music making and attainment was poor.

140. In most lessons, children show satisfactory interest in the work and behave well. They respond less positively where an idea is extended for too long or where the teaching fails to capture their interest.

141. The last inspection report showed that attainment was around the expected level but that the school needed to plan and assess its work better. Not enough progress has been made in this work, and the available evidence indicates that standards are now lower than in 1996. The co-ordinator is quite new to the post and has recently done her best to begin development work. The school has adopted a national scheme for music, but this on its own does not give teachers sufficient guidance over what should be covered and how it should be approached. There are still no coherent assessment methods.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. In physical education, all lessons seen except one were games lessons. By age seven, pupils are not meeting national expectations. A good start is made in reception but progress across Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory. Too few older pupils are able to show sufficient control or precision in their work.

143. This is in contrast to the last inspection, when attainment in physical education was found to be generally sound and sometimes good. Progress was deemed to be satisfactory at that time, although the work of older pupils, particularly in planning and evaluating, was underdeveloped.

144. The last inspection also found that no detailed scheme of work was available. Progress on this has been slow. A commercial scheme has been introduced to augment teachers' plans and to provide additional guidance. However, more support is needed to enable teachers to plan a progressive curriculum where pupils can build on knowledge gained and skills acquired. The intended scheme provides comprehensive lesson notes on what to teach and how to organise lessons. Further guidance is needed to help teachers to plan lessons, and to provide opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their work.

145. The teaching of physical education is variable, ranging from good to poor. The majority of lessons, however, are broadly satisfactory. Where teaching is good, effective features include high levels of activity and a good pace. Teachers plan well for lessons with a series of challenging activities and many opportunities for pupils to practise and repeat basic games skills. Where teaching is ineffective, teachers' knowledge of the subject is weak. Too many activities are planned and pupils have no opportunity to learn and practise a particular skill. Overall, there are too few occasions in lessons where teachers focus on a particular skill and help pupils to improve by highlighting key teaching points.

146. The attitudes of pupils in physical education are generally good. Pupils are very interested and involved in their work, and space and equipment are shared sensibly. In the best lessons, pupils make good use of the opportunities provided that enable them to make decisions about their work.

147. The curriculum has been planned appropriately in terms of allocating time to the various areas of activity. Swimming is also taught to the older pupils, which enhances the curriculum. Equipment and resources are generally adequate.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. No religious education lessons were observed in the last inspection but from all the available evidence standards were found to be sound. A small amount of teaching was seen during the current inspection. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work and class displays revealed very little evidence of pupils' work, and there was therefore not sufficient evidence to enable standards to be judged.

149. The last inspection found that documentation for religious education was at an early stage and that there was no co-ordinator. Since then a new co-ordinator has been appointed and the school has recently begun to trial some units of work from the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject is a specific focus for development this term. Further guidance is now required to enable teachers to use the materials effectively in order to cover the curriculum coherently.

150. The teaching of religious education is generally satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers structured their questioning so that pupils were encouraged to consider two contrasting viewpoints.

151. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory. Many pupils are confident, knowledgeable and articulate, which allows them to make effective oral contributions. They act sensibly when discussing key issues. During lessons, pupils have opportunities to reflect on special moments in their lives. In one lesson pupils discussed what special qualities they had and, on several occasions, pupils reminded each other of the qualities the other had.

152. Resources are generally adequate. A learning area devoted to Buddhism is particularly stimulating.