

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLEBAR SPECIAL SCHOOL

Ealing

LEA area: Ealing

Unique reference number: 101966

Headteacher: Mr David Perkins

Reporting inspector: Michael McDowell
Rgl's OIN: 1405

Dates of inspection: 14 - 17 February 2000

Inspection number: 188748

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special - moderate learning difficulties
School category:	London borough
Age range of pupils:	4 - 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hathaway Gardens Ealing London
Postcode:	W13 0DH
Telephone number:	0181 998 3135
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Mary Delger
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael McDowell	Registered inspector	Art, physical education, French	How well is the school led and managed? How high are standards?
Gordon Stockley	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Geoffrey Binks	Team inspector	Geography, history, religious education, English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities? Pupils' personal development.
Andrew Margerison	Team inspector	English, equal opportunity.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Helen Maskew	Team inspector	Mathematics, information technology.	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Nicholas Smith	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, music, special educational needs.	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castlebar is a maintained day special school for boys and girls between the ages of four and twelve who have moderate learning difficulties. Currently, there are no pupils who are under five. Most pupils come from the London Borough of Ealing, but a number attend who live in adjoining areas. The majority of pupils are brought to school each day on transport provided by the local authority. There are 117 pupils on roll: 46 girls and 71 boys.

The areas from which pupils are drawn are socially and ethnically mixed. Just over a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the average for schools of this type. About half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with predominantly Asian heritage. The school has grant funding to help meet the needs of some of these pupils who have English as an additional language.

The school cannot accommodate all its pupils within its premises and, temporarily, one class is located in an adjacent primary school.

The school sets out amongst its aims the promotion in its pupils of confidence, self-esteem and independence. The range of learning difficulties of pupils has steadily widened over recent years. A proposed reorganisation suggests that the school will be designated for both moderate and severe learning difficulties in 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that continues to improve and has moved forward significantly since it was last inspected. Standards of achievement are good and teaching is of a high standard. Pupils personal development is good. The school is very well led and managed and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and as a result pupils achievement is good, overall. In music, physical education, French and science pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning because of the very good relationships they have with their teachers and the interesting and frequently challenging work they are given.
- It promotes good personal development by encouraging pupils to work together, to undertake tasks and to be responsible for their own work and possessions.
- It takes full account of the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and supports its arrangements with good quality teaching.
- It is very well led and managed and makes effective use of its resources to offer good quality education that meets the need of pupils and enables them to achieve well.

What could be improved

- The time covered by the schools development plan, that is currently only one year, does not allow the school to prepare for and adapt to the changes in size, character and age range that are now being proposed.
- The rigour with which the school analyses its performance and sets targets for further improvement.
- The procedures that help teachers new to the school to be well-informed and well supported

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1996. There has been significant improvement and the Key Issues that were raised have been successfully addressed. There have been significant

improvements in: the quality of teaching and learning; the achievement of pupils, overall, especially in literacy and numeracy; the curriculum, which is now broad and balanced; the efficiency with which resources are used, and the leadership and management. The school day is now used effectively and co-ordination and communication are good. The governing body carries out its statutory functions well.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key
speaking and listening		B			
reading		B			good B
writing		B			satisfactory C
mathematics		B			unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education		B			poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*		B			

* IEPs are Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs.

In setting its overall targets for pupils at Key Stage 2 the school acknowledges that, because of their special educational needs, no pupils will reach the specified standards in literacy and numeracy. It does not set additional targets. In most subjects of the curriculum achievement is good at both key stages and good standards are achieved in English and mathematics; very good standards are achieved in science. Achievement is also very good in physical education, music and French. It is good in religious education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are keen to attend. They become very involved in the wide and interesting range of activities planned for them. Pupils are very enthusiastic in lessons and they respond keenly to teachers and to the tasks set.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The rate of exclusions is low and pupils behave very well both in school and on journeys, such as walking to the swimming baths or travelling in the minibus.
Personal development and relationships	These are very good. Pupils, by the time they are ready to leave, have well-developed social skills and they show this by taking on responsibilities, encouraging one another and appreciating and applauding what others do. They relate very well to one another and to the adults who teach and support them.
Attendance	This is good, and pupils have few unauthorised absences. Lessons start on time and there is a good level of punctuality.

The school is particularly successful in promoting very positive attitudes, very good behaviour and strong functional relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils. Attendance is good, at 92 per cent, which compares very well with the national average for schools of this sort (88 per cent). Personal development is very good and pupils leave the school with very good levels of social awareness and responsibility.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen, overall		Good	Good	

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

The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education is good. In science, teaching is very good. Strengths of the teaching include good knowledge of the subject and of the pupils, careful planning that promotes progress, good management of pupils within the classroom and full use of the time available. Communication, numeracy and literacy are well taught and the school meets the needs of all its pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with additional and more complex special educational needs. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons; it was very good in 30 per cent of lessons and good in per cent. Pupils respond to the good teaching and their learning is always at least satisfactory and generally good. They develop in confidence and are able to make use of their previous learning in solving problems, applying their skills or remembering facts. They try hard and are proud of what they achieve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets statutory requirements. It is well planned, and effective strategies are in place to teach both literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Extra provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language through the use of a part-time teacher and 2 bilingual classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision made for pupils moral and social development through direct teaching and through the strong spirit of community that the school has fosters these very well. It provides well for pupils cultural development and promotes spiritual development in a satisfactory way.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Rigorous provision is made to monitor and promote personal development and progress to ensure pupils welfare and encourage attendance.

The schools links with parents are effective. These, and the good quality of information that the school provides, have a positive impact on pupils progress. The curricular opportunities for science, music and physical education are very good. The school cares for its pupils well. It makes good provision for their welfare and procedures to ensure child protection are in place and are understood by staff. There is, however, no analysis made within the school of the comparative performance of groups of pupils such as boys and girls.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is a shared vision of the direction the school must take and also commitment to its aims. This has enabled the school to make sustained improvement since it was last inspected.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors play a full part in planning and in budget decisions and they carry out their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The achievement and progress of individual pupils is well monitored. Teaching is also monitored. It is a minor weakness that the performance of significant groups, such as boys and girls or pupils with English as an additional language, is not specifically monitored. Statutory targets are set but additional targets, which could provide a benchmark against which the school could measure improvement, are not.
The strategic use of resources	Good. It complies well with the principles of best value. However, the time-scale of strategic planning is a single year and this is too short.

There are sufficient well-qualified teachers to meet the needs of the pupils and of the curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory but currently and temporarily, the school has insufficient room for all its pupils and one class is housed in a neighbouring primary school. Learning resources are good and they are well used. The headteacher gives leadership of high quality. The school is managed well and governors play a full part. In making decisions about the use of resources the school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like attending the school. • They make good progress. • The school has high expectations of its pupils and requires them to try hard and to do their best. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities. • More opportunities to meet staff at times suitable for all parents. • Some wanted homework for their children.

The inspectors agree that the school has high expectations and that it helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils are happy and they enjoy their lessons. They are aware that after-school activities are not frequently arranged but they believe that this is compensated for by a full range of visits and trips, including residential opportunities. Homework is given regularly and parents are free to request additional homework if desired. The school is very well led and managed. The school currently offers regular opportunities for parents to meet staff. The extent and range of these opportunities should be made even clearer.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

The special educational needs of the pupils at this school are such that it is inappropriate to make comparisons with national norms and averages when judging their achievement. The report does, however, comment on the progress made by pupils against targets set for them and it gives examples of what they know, understand and can do.

1. Pupils in each key stage achieve good standards across the curriculum. Careful planning, that takes account of their individual characteristics as learners, and well delivered teaching ensures that they make good progress in relation to the targets that are set for them. Their skills in literacy, numeracy and information technology develop well.
2. Pupils in each key stage make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when progress was reported as satisfactory. The introduction and implementation of the National literacy strategy has been instrumental in improving standards.
3. By the age of seven, pupils ability to listen to the class teacher and to follow simple instructions is developing well and a significant number are able to explain their ideas clearly. Less confident pupils need to be prompted in making an appropriate response. Higher-attaining pupils read fluently and with expression from a familiar text and can explain what is happening in the pictures. Lower-attaining pupils know that print conveys meaning, that it is read from left to right and that the pictures provide clues. They know that letters stand for sounds and they recognise a number of simple words. In writing, the higher-attaining pupils write their names and construct a simple sentence legibly with some use of full stops and capital letters. Lower attaining pupils are beginning to achieve accuracy in writing their own name and can over write and copy individual words with some help. Letters are legible and common letters are correctly formed. The communication skills of pupils on joining the school are very limited. Many have significant delay in language understanding and use. Over the key stage they become able to communicate functionally and to make use of the literacy skills they are acquiring. This is good progress and achievement.
4. Pupils make further, good gains in English by the age of eleven. A substantial minority is able to talk confidently about familiar subjects and can explain their ideas clearly. They respond appropriately to questions and listen carefully to the teacher. Other pupils listen carefully, and they use an appropriate tone of voice and vocabulary. Pupils have an interest in reading. Most read hesitantly, but generally accurately. They use the picture cues to help interpret the text and can empathise with the story. When faced with unfamiliar words they use the initial sound as a clue to the word. A minority read simple texts with fluency and confidence and demonstrate an awareness of punctuation, such as speech marks, which give sense and expression to a story. In the early part of Key Stage 2 writing is printed but cursive writing develops soundly over time.
5. By the time pupils leave the school their literacy and communication skills have developed well in relation to their prior attainments. Their reading skills become more secure and their ability to take part in class discussions about a book or text develops well. Most develop a cursive writing style and write short accurate passages.
6. Standards of achievement in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. This is largely due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Higher, and lower-attaining pupils in each key stage make good progress.
7. Pupils enter the school with very limited mathematical awareness and attainment. Most pupils count up to 20 by the end of Key Stage 1. They recognise numbers up to 5 and order these correctly. Some pupils understand and draw simple block graphs. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand 'less' and 'more' and know what 'double' means. They count in 5s, 10s, and 100s, although they find 4s more difficult. A minority does simple addition of money up to one pound. They identify a variety of three and two dimensional shapes. Those in Key Stage 3 multiply accurately two-digit numbers by 1 to 9. They apply what they know to practical

situations, such as making and totalling shopping lists. Achievement of these skills is the result of focused learning brought about by good-quality teaching.

8. Across the school, achievement in science is very good. By age seven, pupils name and correctly identify a range of textures and smells. They distinguish accurately between natural and man-made materials and are able to classify examples using their senses. Pupils know the materials that a range of products is made from and note the physical properties of many materials. The younger pupils in the school predict which items will sink and which will float, and with adult help they record their findings. By the time they are eleven, pupils carry out independent work, making good diagrams for example, naming bones of the body. Pupils thoughtfully consider differences between animals and their different ways of moving. They describe what they see well.
9. Standards of achievement are good in art, history, and geography and very good in music and physical education across the age range. In French, which is taught only in Key Stage 3, very good standards are also achieved. Pupils achieve good standards in information technology in Key Stage 3, and elsewhere standards are satisfactory with steady progress being made. In design and technology, progress is satisfactory. In religious education, younger pupils make good progress and achieve well. Those in Key Stages 2 and 3 make satisfactory progress.
10. Pupils of all ages make good progress towards the targets set for them at Annual Reviews and in their Individual Education Plans. The targets set are generally appropriate and sufficiently challenging. They lead the pupils forward well. Pupils with additional special educational needs also make progress towards the targets that are set for them. However, target-setting in these cases is less specific and outcomes planned for are not easily measured. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because of the special arrangements made for them, which include support from a part-time teacher. The school does not set targets for overall achievement and acknowledges that none of its pupils will attain the standards specified nationally at Key Stage 2.

Pupils attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' rate of attendance is good. The latest return shows that attendance was around 92 per cent, which is higher than the national average for schools of this type, and this is an improvement on the position in the previous year. Registers are completed accurately and comply with the latest guidance. The school makes good use of the Education Social Worker to reduce the levels of unauthorised absence.
12. Throughout the school, pupils attitude to learning, and their personal development, are very good. Behaviour is very good and the relationships with other pupils and with staff are also very good. This aspect of the school is very strong and has consolidated and developed since the last inspection.
13. Pupils consistently have a very good attitude to their work. They are keen, enthusiastic to learn and eager to come to school. All the parents state that their children enjoy school. Pupils listen attentively, follow instructions within their capability and settle quickly to a given task. Even the youngest pupils concentrate well during a range of activities and work diligently. Pupils are interested in the life of the school and participate in all the activities with enthusiasm. They value the contribution of adults, whether they are familiar school staff or visitors, such as the Brentford Football Club coaches who visit on a weekly basis. When given the opportunity, pupils work well together, although younger pupils need the support of adults to help share resources and ideas, in small group or paired work. They are encouraged to do well, and adults give them praise when they show effort, persistence and a positive approach to a task. Pupils' attitudes make a very positive contribution to the very positive working atmosphere throughout the school.
14. Pupils' behaviour is very good in and around the school, and has improved since the last inspection. Most parents feel that behaviour in the school is good. Pupils respond well to the

consistent approach adopted by the adults. They understand the routines of the school and the expectations required in different settings, such as the classrooms, lunch-times and assemblies. No inappropriate behaviour was seen during the week of the inspection. The adults dealt effectively with the small number of pupils known to have behavioural difficulties. There have been no exclusions during the past twelve months. Discipline is a strong feature of the school and provides a sense of security. Pupils know what is right and wrong and are mindful of the class and school rules. The quality of the behaviour also extends to when the pupils are taken out of school to the Log Cabin or the swimming pool. In these situations they are responsible and respond well to the adults' instructions and expectations. At playtimes the pupils play well together in a range of games and activities. The dinner hall is an orderly place for the pupils and adults to eat their lunch.

15. Pupils are very polite and courteous to teachers, their peers and to visitors. They move sensibly about the school and in the playground. Those pupils based in the primary school demonstrate a clear understanding of the expected behaviour when they are moving sites. No incidents of bullying or other oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and parents stated that in the isolated examples when such behaviour does occur the school deals with it quickly and effectively. The pupils' understanding of their actions upon others is good, although some pupils need to be reminded on occasions. The adults in the school provide good role models for the pupils. This makes a positive contribution to the ethos of the school and the pupils personal development.
16. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils of all ages establish very effective relationships with other pupils and the adults in the school. This is demonstrated by the way that they are willing to work together, to take turns and listen to one another. They respond well to tasks and to any jobs they are given, such as returning the registers to the office. Even the youngest pupils are assigned roles at tidying-up times. The teachers have realistic expectations of the pupils to be responsible for their equipment and possessions. There are limited opportunities for the pupils to work independently; when they are given the chance, the older and more able pupils do so with enthusiasm.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is now good across the whole school; there is no unsatisfactory teaching. It is very good or better in approximately one third of all lessons, and it is good or better in four out of five. It is especially good in science, music and PE. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and teaching in English and mathematics is good, overall.
18. There is good knowledge and understanding of the subjects taught and of the curricular requirements. All teachers have a secure grasp of the National Literacy Strategy, for example, and this is reflected in their good detailed planning to promote reading and writing. They are skilful in adapting the Strategy to the needs of the pupils and they produce challenging lessons that lead to the pupils making notable gains in their reading and writing skills. Pupils now enjoy their literacy work and strive to do well. In a Year 3 class, for example, they are eager to read from familiar books and to tell of how much they have accomplished. In a very good motivational strategy the teacher directly relates rewards for the class to successful achievement by individuals. Teachers, link work in literacy to that in other subjects, well. Pupils are therefore given a great many opportunities to consolidate and expand their skills. In an interesting example of this, the teacher of a Year 5 class links the history topic, the ancient Greeks and their deities, to the literacy work in a number of ways. Pupils write good accounts of their visit to a museum where they saw statues and vases depicting Greek gods.
19. Similarly, the National Numeracy Strategy is well understood and established. Mathematics is taught well. Teachers implement it effectively and the pupils improve their knowledge and understanding of number. Lessons are well planned and ensure that the wide range of needs of the pupils, both physical and intellectual, is met. Numeracy is reinforced well in music lessons, through carefully structured activities in counting songs and keeping time; in science, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge on measuring weight.

20. Teaching, overall, has many strengths and no significant weaknesses. Across all subjects the teachers demand very high standards of achievement from the pupils and they show a very high degree of skill in managing their lessons to realise these expectations. They are innovative in the methods they choose, understanding that the pupils learning needs are such that they need to encounter new topics in a variety of ways if their skills, knowledge and understanding are to increase. Thus, in geography, pupils who are trying to come to terms with the concept of a plan view are first introduced to this by means of a simple three-dimensional model of their classroom, rather than the more conventional drawn plan. They are more able to relate the key features of a model to the reality of the classroom.
21. This reflection of good general understanding of the pupils learning capabilities is found in all teaching. Tasks are set that are at an appropriate level but, nevertheless, they are well calculated to move learning forward. The schemes of work that underpin teachers planning and the clear targets that are set for individual pupils are of great benefit to teachers in ensuring that there is continuity of learning as pupils move through the school.
22. Teacher's assess pupils accurately and well and the assessments they make are reflected in their teaching. While, generally, subject knowledge is good, many of the teachers have very good specialist knowledge of the subjects they co-ordinate. In, for example, art, music and physical education teaching has a high degree of specialist input. Very good knowledge of the subject and confident mastery of the skills required in physical education or music is shown in excellent demonstrations. Teachers of these subjects listen and watch very carefully as pupils put into practice what they have been taught. Their expert ear or eye enables them to analyse the strengths and weaknesses in performance and to modify either the task set or their own approach, where this is necessary to secure best results. Teaching is strongly supported by the special school assistants who work at the teachers direction with individual pupils or with groups. They enjoy very good relationships with the pupils but share the teachers high expectations of what is to be achieved. They are always well prepared.
23. There is very effective management of the behaviour of pupils and good understanding of their special educational needs. Teachers communicate well with pupils and listen carefully to what they have to say. This helps the pupils to develop self-esteem and confidence and leads to their being able to take chances and to try new things. Pupils are responsive to the good quality of teaching and they achieve well, making good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. They work extremely hard throughout their lessons and they are very productive. This is encouraged by the general expectation that pupils will concentrate on their tasks. There is great interest shown in lessons, and sometimes, as when in an art lesson colours are mixed with dramatic results, there is genuine excitement. In the classrooms, pupils manage their own learning tasks to an increasing extent as they move through the school. They make good efforts in their lessons and are aware that they are making progress. They are proud of this. Those with more complex special needs also learn effectively, and the pupils who have English as an additional language take advantage of the support they are given and they achieve well. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory. It is given in accordance with the schools policy and marked conscientiously.
24. The previous report found that the quality of teaching ranged from very good to poor and that one out of every four lessons was unsatisfactory. The pace of teaching generally was slow. There has been significant improvement. The school has made good progress in developing the quality of its teaching. It has done this by revising the arrangements made to oversee and monitor it, to manage curriculum areas and to ensure that planning is of good quality. Teachers subject knowledge has developed well.

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

25. The school has undertaken much development work since the last inspection to produce a curriculum that meets all the statutory requirements. All the subjects of the National Curriculum

are now taught, and French, which was not previously taught to pupils in Key Stage 3, has now been included on the timetable. The curriculum is of good quality and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and achievement.

26. The time given to each subject is now appropriate. The previous report drew attention to the fact that too much time was given to some subjects and not enough to others. Time is used effectively across the school to reinforce and improve basic skills. Timetabling of some subjects such as design and technology, is sufficiently flexible to allow longer time for development of ideas and completion of practical projects; within an afternoon, for example.
27. There has been a significant improvement in the curriculum with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These have made a good contribution to the improvements in teaching and learning and now provide a common structure for lesson planning across the school.
28. Since the last inspection, there has been a major improvement in planning within the curriculum. It is well-thought through on an annual, termly and weekly basis and based on the assessment of whole year groups and individual pupils' needs and abilities. Lessons often have good links with and serve to reinforce teaching in other subjects. In one of many examples of this a topic on the Aztecs incorporated aspects of history, geography, and information and food technology, with a strong emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy.
29. The school provides a wide and varied range of out-of-school visits, activities and experiences for its pupils. Easy access to transport, either minibus or local train services, enables the school to take full advantage of the cultural, sporting and environmental opportunities available both locally and in central London. Visits have been made to Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament in connection with history and citizenship, and to a variety of museums, libraries, and local woods and rivers. The annual residential visit to Portsmouth is popular and increases opportunities for pupils' social integration.
30. Pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development is well promoted through the curriculum. Schemes of work for personal and social development include arrangements for sex and health education. Individual Education Plans highlight effectively aspects of pupils' welfare as well as academic targets.
31. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. There is good support by local businesses through organisations like the Rotary Club and The Variety Club. Brentford Football Club has regular contact with the school through its coaching scheme. Links with local schools are good and pupils are included in all educational projects in the Borough; for example, the Pavilion Opera Project and a two-day drama festival.
32. The school makes very good provision for the personal development of its pupils. This is an area where improvement has been made since the previous inspection. There is now a daily act of collective worship. Pupils participate each afternoon in a calm well-organised assembly, which provides a break between the two afternoon teaching sessions. Each assembly seen in the inspection week included some music, a story encouraging pupils to think positively about their lives, and ended with a short prayer.
33. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to think about values and beliefs related to their own backgrounds and to those of others. The school encourages thought and reflection about the important issues of life, but spiritual development is not planned for in any of its schemes of work. The school shows the equal value it places on the customs and ceremonies of all religions. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 compare the ceremonies undergone by babies in their introduction to the Hindu, Muslim and Christian faiths, and in Year 4 they examine, with the help of information from their parents, the different ways of sanctifying and celebrating marriage. Good teaching, thoughtfully combining history and religious education, helps give pupils an understanding of different cultural traditions, values and beliefs. This is reinforced by class visits to local churches, Sikh and Hindu temples and to a Mosque. The school values the diverse cultures represented in the school and its community. The work in music and art, and

the stories and poems read, are drawn from many different cultures. Recent visits to museums have helped some pupils to appreciate at first-hand the beauty of ancient Greek decorated pottery and others to experience what life was like in a Victorian kitchen. Some displays of photographs and pupils' work are labelled in languages other than English to encourage awareness and familiarity with the written forms of languages spoken at home by many pupils.

34. The school provides very good guidance to help pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. Teachers and classroom assistants contribute well to develop in pupils a concern for honesty and fairness. Some elements of this come directly from teaching, for example, in religious education. Much, however, comes from the day-to-day interaction between the adults and the children in school; all of which provides clear guidance on how people should live their lives. During a religious education lesson, most pupils in a Year 5 class had a clear understanding of the meaning of the Ten Commandments as a guide for living. They were able to give reasons why harming people and stealing was wrong. Pupils related an incident of finding a coin lost by another pupil in the swimming changing room and discussed at some length what would be the appropriate course of action to try to return it. Older pupils in Year 7 discuss maturely in a geography lesson the impact of pollution on rivers and the seashore. They are able to link their knowledge of the problem to a consideration of who should take responsibility for seeking a remedy.
35. The school is very successful also in promoting pupils' social development. The adults working with children act as valuable role models in showing respect and politeness in dealing with pupils and with one another. Children learn from their earliest days in the school what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. They are encouraged from the beginning to take responsibility for their belonging and equipment and to share in putting things away in their proper place. They learn when it is necessary to listen attentively, as at story time or in assembly, and when it is appropriate to talk and ask questions. Older pupils take responsibility for putting away chairs at lunch-time and setting them out for assemblies and concerts. Within the classroom, for example, pupils in Year 7 take responsibility for reading the temperature daily, graphing it on a bar chart and displaying it. The success of the school in developing social competence in children who join the school with a diverse range of disabilities allows all the pupils to build good relationships with adults and fellow pupils and to enjoy a wide-ranging education in a secure environment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school monitors pupils' academic and personal development well. Assessment is also used very effectively to inform planning for the curriculum. Detailed schemes of work result from assessment of whole-year groups and individual pupils. In English, mathematics and science formal assessments are undertaken every term, and in other subjects these are done annually. Personal development is monitored and supported through Individual Education Plans and the personal, health and social education curriculum. Staff also have a very detailed knowledge and understanding of the needs of the pupils in their care and there is continuous communication between them to ensure that support is appropriate and consistent.
37. The school's procedures for ensuring the health, safety, care and protection of pupils are good. Health and safety matters are given a high priority, making the school a safe and caring place. Several members of staff have had first aid training and injuries to pupils are dealt with quickly and effectively. Risk assessments have been carried out in relation to activities within the school site and these are reviewed regularly. However, the headteacher and governors are aware that there is a need to undertake risk assessments for activities taking place away from the school. Good supervision is provided during break and at lunch-time and whilst pupils are waiting for collection at the end of the school day. The school's arrangements for child protection are good and follow the local procedures. There is a trained designated senior member of staff and, although formal training has not taken place for some time, staff are aware of their responsibilities. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. It works effectively to ensure that behaviour is good and harassment and bullying are eliminated. It is particularly successful in developing respect and tolerance towards others.

Teachers use their personal knowledge of pupils well to provide support and guidance, and this helps pupils to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do in order to improve. Rewards are given for effort and achievement and this encourages pupils to try hard and to behave well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents have a positive view of the school. They are satisfied with what the school provides and support the attitudes and values it promotes. While most parents feel that the school works closely with them and that they can approach staff with any problems and concerns a small number feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The school has effective links with parents. In addition to the informative prospectus, parents are provided with an annual pack of useful information, and regular newsletters are issued during the year. Teachers also provide advance written information to parents about the curriculum. Parents whose first language is not English can obtain translations with the help of the school's bilingual support assistants.
39. Parents receive a written report each year about their child's achievements and progress. The quality of these reports is variable, but the best include statements about what the child has been doing, how well they have done, and targets for improvement. The school provides an opportunity for parents to discuss the report with the class teacher and the support assistant. There is space on the report for parents to write their own comments and older children have the opportunity to list the things that they would like to improve upon. In addition to the formal opportunity for parents to discuss the annual report, there are two further opportunities each year for parents to meet teachers and to discuss their child's work and progress. Teachers are prepared to be flexible about dates and times in order to fit in with parents' availability. Additionally, all parents are invited to attend an annual review of the Statement of Special Educational Need.
40. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory overall. Whilst some parents are very actively involved in helping their child to learn at home, other parents do not take such an active part. There is about a 50 per cent attendance at parents' evenings. Currently there are no parents helping in school, although a small number have done so in the past. On the other hand, parents give good support to fund-raising events organised by the Friends of Castlebar Association. The school tries hard to establish and maintain effective links with parents. However, there is a mixed response, which limits the impact on some pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership. He has a clear educational vision for the future of the school that is shared by governors and by staff in management roles. The school has clear and appropriate aims. Over time, the school has developed structures to ensure that its teaching curriculum and pupils performance is monitored and that good use is made of information collected to make improvements. The school has successfully rectified and improved almost all of the areas that were judged unsatisfactory in the previous inspection.
42. The effectiveness of leadership and its consistent focus on essential improvement is exemplified by the extent to which changes have been made. The curriculum has been developed well and now fully meets statutory requirements; through regular monitoring, the quality of teaching and teachers' planning has improved and over time the teaching team has been strengthened. Eight out of eleven subject co-ordinators now have qualifications in their subjects. This has helped to bring about necessary improvements in the quality of education. A good senior management structure has now been put in place with members of the team clear about their responsibilities. There is a good structure of regular meetings between key staff, including teachers with particular responsibilities and others, and channels of communication are clear. There is good use of information and computer technology to aid administration and management.
43. The school analyses its performance, overall; it is aware of many of its strengths and weaknesses. It knows that it is a requirement that all schools with pupils in the age range set targets for pupils performance at the end of Key Stage 2. The national standard against which performance is to be measured is too high for pupils with learning difficulties. The school, therefore, acknowledges that no pupils will attain the standard in English and mathematics that targets reflect. While recognising that, because of their special educational needs, pupils are unlikely to attain standards that would make the setting of statutory targets meaningful, the school sets targets for individuals that are challenging and appropriate. In analysing the performance of its pupils the school does not compare its results with those of similar schools because data to support this is unavailable. However, the performance of groups of pupils within the school could be analysed and compared. This would give the school a clearer view of its effectiveness in specific areas. The comparative performance of boys and girls, or of pupils with English as an additional language, is an example of an area that could be looked at in this way.
44. The governing body has a strong and effective committee structure; it is actively involved in the school. The governors set performance targets for the headteacher and his deputy and they play a part in development planning, in budget-setting and in modifying proposals made by the headteacher and the staff. In general, the governors carry out their statutory requirements, although some areas such as special educational needs policy need to be further developed to conform to the Code of Practice for special educational needs. A co-ordinator for special educational needs has not been named, and while this is not a statutory requirement, it would be advantageous in, for example, overseeing the quality of Individual Education Plans, or ensuring that the needs of pupils with more complex difficulties are well met.
45. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning. There is a clear development plan, which is costed and prioritised, but the time-scale of this is too short to allow for proper consideration of proposed changes. At present, the school plans for developments a year in advance. This does not give sufficient opportunity to take account of and prepare for important changes, that will effect the nature and size of the school in the future. The difficulties caused by short-term planning are shown in the recent changes that have had to be made to spending plans. The school had built up a considerable budget surplus, a significant part of which was earmarked for building a conservatory and additional toilet facilities at the front. This decision was, however, overtaken by recent proposals for a change in the nature of the school. If these proposals are adopted, they will require the Local Education Authority to enlarge the school. The conservatory extension would be unnecessary.

Consequently, the governors now intend to use some of the budget surplus to improve the playground area, provide a new climbing-frame, create an improved library, and increase the provision of networked computers.

46. Budget information is networked between the headteacher, the administrator and the support officer at the Local Education Authority. The school is also connected to The Internet and has the facility to use electronic mail.
47. The school receives additional funding in the form of an Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant (EMAG). This is used effectively to provide good additional support to those pupils for whom it is intended. The school has regard to the principles of "best value" in its spending decisions. For example, the school now finds it more cost-effective to employ its own cleaners, and when the present grounds maintenance contract comes to an end it intends to carry out that work itself.
48. The school has satisfactory procedures for evaluating the performance of staff. Appraisal procedures are in place, but these are currently in abeyance because of disagreement between the Local Education Authority and teachers unions about the process. However, outside the formal structure for appraisal, the headteacher has regular professional development meetings with each member of staff, and, through negotiation, targets are set for both personal and curriculum responsibility. These processes have significantly enhanced teaching skills and confidence in the teaching of a range of subjects.
49. The procedures for the induction of new staff are unsatisfactory. The school does not, at present, have any newly-qualified teachers or a formal policy for the induction of new staff. Support for new staff through the staffing and management structure is inadequate to enable them to become familiar with the routines and procedures of school. No formal structure of support is in place, so that new staff do not have a clear way of finding out about issues or to discuss their work. This area was of concern at the time of the last inspection and no significant improvement has been made.
50. There are sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of teaching the National Curriculum and religious education to pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Consequently, teaching groups throughout the school are small and the school is able to use setting arrangements in Year 6 to accommodate the different abilities of the pupils in English and mathematics. The number of classroom support staff is good. A significant number have qualifications in working with pupils with learning difficulties and the majority is suitably experienced.
51. The accommodation is satisfactory. The previous inspection considered that the adapted open plan arrangement impinged upon the learning of the pupils through intrusive noise and movement. There was no significant effect of these factors noted during this inspection. Although some teaching areas are separated only by partitions or screens, the behaviour of the pupils and their response in lessons means that there is no disturbance of other classes. Classrooms are of a suitable size for the number of pupils; but the accommodation is inadequate for the number of pupils, with one class being taught in the neighbouring primary school. While this does not directly effect the learning of the pupils the two schools do have different timetables and this class does suffer from noise from the primary pupils playing at lunch-times and the arrangement does mean some movement between sites for lunch-times and assemblies. The school is well-kept and clean, inside and out, but while the site manager completes much of the day-to-day maintenance successfully some parts of the fabric of the buildings, such as window frames, are deteriorating. Staff utilise the available space well for teaching and displays. There is a designated music room, food technology area, and the school hall is large enough to enable whole-school assemblies and physical education lessons to take place comfortably. The outside areas are extensive, with playgrounds and playing-fields. The library area is satisfactory.
52. The range and quality of resources is good. Resources for music are very good; those for mathematics, science, information technology geography, and physical education are good. All

other subjects have satisfactory resources. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The library is satisfactory, but, as noted by the previous inspection, there are too few books for older pupils with text can read. Resources for teaching pupils with special educational needs are good. Good use is made of resources from outside the school, such as visiting artists and theatre groups, visits to places of cultural interest and residential centres.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The time-scale of strategic planning

- The school should develop its strategic planning so that known and future changes to the designation of the school can be fully taken into account and prepared for in a plan with a time-scale beyond a single year (*paragraph 45*).

Analysis of school performance

- The school should rigorously analyse the performance of its pupils and compare the performance of significant groups, such as boys and girls, to that of the school as a whole (*paragraph 43*).

Induction procedures

- The school should ensure that induction procedures are devised and put into practice (*paragraph 49*).

Weaknesses not included in issues for action but which the school should consider

- Appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator and revise the special educational needs policy so that it conforms with the Code of Practice (*paragraph 44*).
- Complete all risk assessments (*paragraph 37*).
- Ensure that at Key Stage 1 the mathematics curriculum takes full account of the more profound needs of a small minority of pupils (*paragraph 65*).
- Set targets for performance (*paragraph 43*).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.4	34.8	47.8	16.0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	116
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	41

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	91.57	School data	3.0

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stages:

It is inappropriate to report the attainment of the pupils in comparison to national norms and averages. Pupils eligible by age were assessed by their teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 and in some cases they undertook the assessment tasks. Their results were in line with those achieved nationally by pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	-
Indian	34
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	-
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.7
Average class size	11

Education support staff: YR– Y7

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	357

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	779,839
Total expenditure	794,386
Expenditure per pupil	6,732
Balance brought forward from previous year	87,342
Balance carried forward to next year	72,811

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	116
Number of questionnaires returned	25

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80.0	20.0	-	-	-
My child is making good progress in school.	64.0	28.0	4.0	-	4.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40.0	44.0	8.0	-	8.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32.0	48.0	8.0	8.0	4.0
The teaching is good.	64.0	28.0	8.0	-	-
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52.0	36.0	-	12.0	-
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62.0	25.0	8.0	4.0	-
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72.0	28.0	-	-	-
The school works closely with parents.	48.0	36.0	8.0	8.0	-
The school is well led and managed.	56.0	36.0	4.0	-	4.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40.0	48.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32.0	36.0	12.0	8.0	12.0

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

ENGLISH

53. Pupils enter the school with poor communication skills and little awareness of, for example, the fact that print conveys meaning. As they move through the school pupils make gains in their knowledge and understanding across all three stands of the National Curriculum Programme, of Study. Their achievement is good and they meet and surpass the targets set for them.
54. By the age of seven, all pupils listen well to their teacher and follow simple instructions. Higher attainers explain their ideas, read fluently with expression from a familiar book and use the pictures to explain what is happening and make sense of the story. They write their own names and simple sentences. In a few cases, full stops and capital letters are correctly used. Their writing is uneven in size and occasionally mixes higher and lower case letters but it is generally legible. Lower-attaining pupils respond briefly when prompted by an adult. They know that books hold information and stories and they handle them carefully. They turn the pages and read a few words that they recognise. They try to write their names, but can copy or overwrite individual words with help.
55. By the age of eleven, the pupils have made good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Higher-attaining pupils in particular can talk confidently about familiar subjects and can explain their ideas clearly. They respond appropriately to questions and listen carefully to the teacher. Other pupils listen carefully and they can use an appropriate tone of voice and vocabulary. Most pupils have an interest in reading. They read hesitantly, but generally accurately. They use the picture cues to link with the text and can empathise with the story. When faced with unfamiliar words they use the initial sounds, but are not secure in the use of basic phonic skills to build words. The higher-attaining pupils read simple texts with fluency and confidence and demonstrate an awareness of punctuation, such as speech marks, to give sense and expression to a story. They are able to explain the story and the essence of the plot. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. They can use their reading skills to extract information from a simple text to answer questions. Their writing is printed, but is developing the basic skills of cursive writing. Letters are correctly formed and the use of basic punctuation is accurate and consistent. Average pupils can write simple sentences without support, but the use of punctuation is less secure and specific letters are inconsistently formed and uneven. Lower-attaining pupils copy-write individual letters and, with support, can write simple sentences using capital letters to denote the beginning of the sentence.
56. By the time the pupils leave the school their skills have developed well. Reading is more secure and the ability to take part in class discussions about a book or text is good. Higher-attaining pupils use a cursive writing style and they write short written passages appropriate to the reader and the context.
57. The quality of teaching is generally good, which has a direct impact upon the pace of learning in Key Stage 1. Where teaching is very good, pupils make very good gains in their learning. Teachers manage the pupils and the lessons very well, so that the pupils are consistently involved in the activities and as a result they try really hard to complete the task sets for them. The relationships between the adults working in the Key Stage 1 area has a significant impact upon the progress the pupils make. The class teachers make sure that the classroom support staff know what to do in each lesson for either groups of pupils or individuals. All the adults are consistent in their work with individual pupils with specific behavioural difficulties. Teaching is informed by good subject knowledge and knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. The use of assessment is good, with both class teachers and the support staff asking open-ended questions of the pupils to check their learning and reinforcing each section of the lesson to consolidate the learning.
58. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good, overall. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when there were shortcomings in planning, the pace of lessons and

teaching materials. The majority teachers make effective use of the National Literacy Strategy, with appropriate variations to match the learning needs and concentration levels of the pupils. Subject knowledge is consistently good, which has a positive impact upon the interest and concentration shown by the pupils. The pupils make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding in the lessons and they apply themselves well to complete the tasks set for them. They show interest and enthusiasm. The lessons have a good pace and the support staff are used effectively to work with groups and individuals. In lessons in other subjects teachers develop and reinforce the pupils' skills and understanding of English well. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and they encourage them to use their ability to read and write in a variety of contexts. This has a positive impact upon the consolidation of the pupils' learning. Homework, in the form of reading books and spellings, is used appropriately to support work in class.

59. In lessons throughout the school the pupils have a positive attitude. Most pupils answer questions eagerly and are keen to contribute during whole-class sessions. Most pupils concentrate well and persevere to complete tasks. Relationships between the pupils, with teachers and with classroom support staff, are very positive and this creates a good atmosphere in classrooms. Behaviour in lessons is very good.
60. English is very well co-ordinated and the planning and teaching of all teachers of English is monitored. This promotes the generally high standards achieved. Across the curriculum literacy is emphasised. In some curriculum areas there is a good combination of subject and literacy priorities, as, for example, in history in Year 5. Resources for the teaching of English are satisfactory. There are sufficient books for each class in lessons, but the range of age-appropriate books for the older pupils to read is more limited.
61. The school makes satisfactory provision for the support of pupils whose first language is not English. Members of support staff in the school are able to speak the languages of pupils currently attending the school and their parents.
62. At the moment, the school employs two full-time language support assistants who work helpfully in lessons with pupils identified as needing help with English. The school also has the services, for one day each week, of a specialist language teacher who organises language support and gives intensive language help to two Afro-Caribbean pupils. This co-ordinating role is shared with neighbouring schools. This arrangement has some positive features, but the decision to focus the work on a small number of individuals at any time sometimes leads to pupils with additional language needs not having these needs met continually.

MATHEMATICS

63. Standards of teaching and learning in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. This is largely due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils have very low levels of mathematical competence and awareness on entering the school. However, at Key Stage 1, most pupils can count to ten, or using fingers or hands, up to 20. They can cut and lay out numbers up to 5 on a number line. A few pupils with more serious learning difficulties are not able to benefit from the techniques of the numeracy strategy and require other approaches, such as play opportunities and more individual teaching. By the end of Key Stage 1 some pupils can understand and draw simple block graphs. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can understand and explain concepts of 'less' and 'more than', can describe why 27 is less than 29 and know what 'double' means. They count in 5s, 10s, and 100s, although they find 4s more difficult. Some can do simple addition of money up to one pound. They can identify a variety of three-dimensional and two-dimensional shapes. By Year 7, pupils are multiplying two-digit numbers by 1 to 9. They can find methods to calculate a shopping list, and can recognise the correct placement of the decimal point. From their very low starting point pupils achieve well. They make good progress in reaching the targets set for them.
64. Teaching is good or very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the variety of methods of teaching mathematics has improved since the introduction of the numeracy strategy and is now good. Planning is

thorough and consistent, taking into account the needs of the whole school, class and individuals. Expectations of the pupils are very high. Teachers constantly challenge them to succeed and move on to the next, more difficult, stage. They enable the pupils to consolidate their learning by regularly checking what they have learned before, during and at the end of the lesson. In the majority of the lessons they create a calm but purposeful atmosphere. A good range and variety of teaching techniques and resources are used. Games enliven mental arithmetic components of the numeracy strategy. Stimulating materials, like plastic eggs, sausages and chips, which pupils in one class could purchase if they had enough money in their allocation, made the lesson fun. At Key Stage 2, pupils are given tasks appropriate to their ages and abilities. However, in the first and second years of Key Stage 1, this is not always the case. The teacher follows the National Numeracy Strategy, but this is not always appropriate to some pupils' abilities. In the youngest age group, a very small number of pupils with additional and more complex learning difficulties need a modified approach to the Strategy if they are to benefit. Very good use is made of learning support assistants who work closely with small groups and are very skilful in managing both their learning and behaviour. The management of pupils is very good. Teachers have very good relationships with all the pupils, a few of whom have more serious behavioural difficulties and are often very challenging. The teachers and learning support assistants meet these challenges calmly and with infinite patience. Overall assessment is good. However, while work is marked there is some inconsistency in the way in which it is annotated and corrected. Grades are not usually given and on occasions work is not dated. This means that pupils are not always able to appreciate their progress over time by looking through their exercise books. Satisfactory use is made of homework.

65. Pupils' learning is good, overall. Pupils in Key Stage 2, and the beginning of Key Stage 3 particularly, are acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Their attitude to mathematics is good. The majority is very polite and well-behaved. They are interested in their work and co-operate well with staff. Pupils respond well to praise and encouragement. They often show real enthusiasm in class, are very anxious to please and enjoy question and answer sessions. Pupils in all key stages join in mental arithmetic sessions with pleasure and are very keen to be first to answer. The majority is making progress with independent learning, although those who are the lowest attainers rely heavily on the support of staff for prompting and guidance.
66. The quality and range of the mathematics curriculum is appropriate to the needs of the pupils, with the exception of a very few in Years 1 and 2, whose basic skills levels are so low that they cannot access even the basic elements of the National Curriculum. In all lessons, opportunities are taken to reinforce aspects of pupils' personal and social development. They are encouraged to share, help each other and celebrate one another's success.
67. Mathematics is well led. The co-ordinator has introduced the numeracy strategy effectively. Mental arithmetic is having a good effect in challenging higher-attaining pupils. Their achievements are reported to parents effectively in annual reports and reviews. Resources are good. Computers are used in all classrooms, particularly to reinforce basic number work. Higher-attaining pupils can work independently on numeracy programmes. Lower-attaining pupils make progress when supported in the use of information technology. Pupils use their numeracy skills in a range of subjects. In physical education, they use them in a simple way when teams are picked using odd or even numbers. In science, they use them in a more demanding way when data is quantified and compared.

SCIENCE

68. Achievement in science is very good, overall, across the school. By the time they are seven, pupils successfully identify a range of textures and smells. They know the differences between natural and man-made materials and are able to classify some items by means of feeling and lifting. Pupils link materials with products and are beginning to consider the properties of many materials. The younger pupils in the school are now able to predict which items will sink and which will float and, with adult help, they record their findings.
69. By the time they are eleven, pupils carry out independent work, making good diagrams, naming bones of the body and describing some of the functions of the skeleton. All pupils are able to consider the differences between animals and how they move. They develop good descriptive skills and the early work on classification is enhanced. Achievement is maintained through the use of materials that match the pupils' needs and abilities. Because they are made to feel confident pupils behave well in lessons. They are keen to learn and they are attentive, and as a result they have access to the full curriculum. The oldest pupils respond well to the demands of work, relate well with other pupils and adults and cheerfully learn. Pupils up to the age of twelve, behave well too. They try hard to succeed. For example, the pupils in a Year 7 lesson tried many times before they conquered the problems of elasticity. Pupils throughout the school are polite and they take turns.
70. Teaching is very good for all pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and of their pupils. Skilful use of questioning is a particularly good feature. There is a good emphasis on practical activity and this captures the pupils' imagination, as seen in experiments on floating and sinking. There is careful planning, supported by very good teamwork from support staff. This enables pupils to reach their learning targets. Resources are adequate and activities meet the needs of the pupils well.
71. Learning support assistants are crucial to the delivery of science as they enable every pupil to take part in lessons. Pupils learn a great deal about science. They develop very good scientific language and are actively encouraged to think. Their handwriting improves and they label diagrams well, they learn about the function of roots, carrying out experiments to inform their learning. Records of progress are maintained. All staff use appropriate levels of praise and encouragement. The overall result is that pupils have a good scientific learning experience in well-behaved classes.
72. The subject co-ordinator teaches all the pupils in the school and can therefore form a clear view of standards and progress. Since the school was previously inspected there has been an improvement in standards within the subject. Teaching remains of a high quality.
73. Resources are satisfactory and they are well used. They match the needs of the pupils very well. The accommodation is satisfactory.

ART

74. Pupils of all ages achieve well and make good progress in art. This is a notable improvement since the previous inspection. Through careful planning and good teaching they develop their awareness of colour, their powers of visual discrimination and an appropriate visual vocabulary. They learn to draw and paint both from real life and from imagination. They become aware of the work of other artists and learn some of the features that characterise the work of Monet, Cézanne or Matisse, for example. In a lesson on the mixing and matching of colour, pupils are very careful in their work to ensure that the tones they produce match the colour of the fruit and vegetables they are painting. They are intrigued and interested by the changes that occur when colours mix. There is an audible "ooh" of surprise when the teacher drops blue paint into yellow and green almost instantly emerges. Pupils use language precisely and descriptively to indicate the colours they wish to produce or have mixed "golden brown" and "purpley grey" are examples of this. Pupils in Year 7, drawing a model ship, show good powers of observation, and, with the help of their teacher, notice the significant lines and textures of the model. They offer evaluation of their own work and that of others and offer

suggestions for improving it. In a surprising but amusing example of cross-curricular learning one pupil displays his drawing with a flourish crying "voila!" Well-mounted displays of pupils' work illustrate the good standards attained. In other subjects, they use their developing observational skills to look keenly at art and artefacts from the ancient world and from other cultures, as, for example, when pupils in Key Stage 2 visit the museum and look at pottery and friezes from ancient Greece.

75. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and over time they refine their skills. They learn best where they are engaged in practical tasks and are given sufficient time to complete them. They speak enthusiastically about their work and they generally take care to do their best. Their behaviour is generally good.
76. Teaching was observed in Key Stages 2 and 3 only. It is of a consistently good standard, with well-planned activities matched to the pupils' developing abilities as they move through the school. Teachers know their pupils well and understand that, particularly in the early stages, they need considerable guidance to develop the skills and techniques that will eventually allow them to express themselves in drawing, modelling or painting. Tasks are challenging to the pupils and act to consolidate developing fine control, classification and observation skills. The time made available for art is fully used and teachers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils. There is good knowledge of the requirements of the subject and pupils are managed well.
77. Particularly in the later stages of Key Stage 2, and in Year 7 classes, resources do not fully support the work attempted. For example, pupils doing pencil drawing from observation are required to do this with paper directly on hard desk tops because drawing boards, slopes or easels are not available. The subject is well co-ordinated by a teacher qualified in art. The scheme of work produced, and the support that is given to other teachers, is valuable in raising and maintaining standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. Pupils' achievement good. There was little opportunity to see many lessons; however, examples of previous work in the form of models, displays and photographs show that many different projects have been undertaken. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Younger pupils are able to make moving pictures with card and paper, and these are displayed in the school to very good effect. Pupils are given the opportunity to use mouldable materials and they work well in clay and dough. Work is on a rolling programme and covers two years of development. By the time they are 11, pupils are using a wide range of materials, reclaimed and re-usable in many cases, textiles, electrical and mechanical, mouldable, stiff and flexible sheet materials and some construction kits. They take part in tasks that are focused, and this approach reflects the design and make process demanded by the National Curriculum. This is a good improvement since the last inspection report. Some projects are specifically designed to ensure that the pupils had a major input into the object to be made. Class 11 made Aztec masks and are currently engaged in building mountains.
79. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. They concentrate well, help one another and work together well. Very good individual support was observed from support staff who paid great attention to the lower-attaining pupils, ensuring that they were fully included in the practical aspects. A good example is found in the classes for the very youngest, where effective individual support keeps a very distractable pupil on task in a very complex lesson. Good opportunities are created for pupils to participate fully in all the preparations, cutting, pasting mixing, creating a very motivating and stimulating time for pupils.
80. While there were few opportunities to observe the subject being taught, from the evidence of the pupils' work and teachers' planning, teaching is good. For pupils aged between five and seven teaching is very good. Teachers' planning is copious and much work has been undertaken to ensure that the subject is clear and logical, and supports the development of skills and knowledge. The style of presentation of the planning is good, with systems for

recording in place. The planning is extremely useful to class teachers, who are delivering the subject under the guidance of the co-ordinator. It enables them to plan future developments.

81. The school does not have any specialist design and technology room but there is a good food technology base, which is well used.
82. Since the last inspection, the school has paid good attention to the report that had identified weaknesses. There has been a clear action plan in place and much discussion, with the curriculum being revised where necessary. The co-ordinator has been most effective in bringing about improvement.

GEOGRAPHY

83. Achievement is good in all age groups.
84. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn mapping and orientation skills helped by imaginative and skilful teaching. The pupils in Year 3 are able to place the models of public buildings they have made on a large-scale street plan of local roads laid out by the teacher. They then orientate a smaller scale map with reference to the larger plan and mark on the names of main roads and indicate the positions of key buildings. They learn very well about direction and how to locate places on maps.
85. The pupils near the end of Key Stage 2 have a good knowledge of the Caribbean island of St Lucia. In a very challenging lesson they discuss where a new tourist hotel might be located and the impact that this would have on the tropical forest. Pupils consider the evidence and make a decision based on what they know. With very good teaching and support the pupils are helped to think about environmental planning and learn about the use of coordinates to identify places on a map. Older pupils observed in Year 7 have a good general understanding of the water cycle and how water reaches homes. Most are able to identify some of the causes and the effects of the pollution of rivers and the sea. In another Year 7 group, pupils record daily temperatures and record them accurately using bar charts as part of their geographical work.
86. The teaching of geography is very good. All lessons seen were well-prepared and engaged pupils fully in developing a geographical and environmental vocabulary. Two of the lessons seen were of a very high standard; they engaged all pupils fully for the whole of the lesson in thinking, discussing, and then making decisions and completing maps. Teachers and assistants were constantly moving from one group of pupils to the next to answer critical questions and to give guidance when this was needed. All pupils in these groups were given the opportunity to complete a series of complex tasks.
87. In the time available for the teaching of geography, equivalent to one lesson per week for a half of the year, pupils learn a great deal about the subject. They work with interest and enthusiasm and make good progress in lessons, particularly when these are of a practical nature. The high quality of some of the finished work can be seen in the displays of completed work around the school. In one display, pupils have identified their home address on a map of Ealing and printed the maps out on a computer. Teaching in geography has improved since the last inspection, when it was good. Standards of achievement are now consistently good.
88. The scheme of work, in place successfully, selects units of work mainly from the National Curriculum, Key Stage 2 Programme of Study to help pupils reach an understanding of how to record information, to make maps, to develop a sense of place and to learn about the natural world. The subject is co-ordinated efficiently and skilfully. Resources for geography teaching have been built up well by the co-ordinator in recent years to include more maps, aerial photographs and satellite images. Regular visits out of the classroom to look at rivers and to map the local area all enrich pupils' experience. Already the co-ordinator is examining the changes required for the new National Curriculum in September 2000 before the teachers meet to make the annual revisions to the scheme of work for next year.

HISTORY

89. History is taught to most classes for half of the year in the space shared with geography. There were fewer opportunities to observe history lessons during the inspection as most of the older pupils were working on geography topics.
90. Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in their learning about the recent past and ancient times. They follow an interesting history course, which develops their own understanding of time and selects topics from the appropriate National Curriculum Programme of Study. The youngest pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy their first explorations towards an understanding of time. With the co-operation of parents and the help of teachers pupils were able to use photographs of themselves to make a booklet identifying their growth from babyhood to the age of six. All the pupils spoken to were able to describe the sequence of their own story to date.
91. Slightly older pupils in Year 4 were seen constructing a longer time-line of their recent family history. They were also using a sequence of photographs, but were going back to the point where their parents married, and were linking successfully their personal history to religious education. In most cases, these pupils were able to retell their own history to other pupils. They show great enthusiasm in explaining what they have found to visitors. A history lesson in Year 6 gave older pupils an insight into English history in Tudor times. A teacher with excellent subject knowledge uses a wide range of pictorial resources to provide a background to the life and times of Henry VIII. Most pupils in this group have a clear understanding that the past can be divided into different periods of time and that life styles and dress were considerably different in different times.
92. History is taught well, in a lively style, in the lessons seen. Teachers prepare carefully and show concern for individual progress. In some groups, careful adult supervision ensures that pupils with particular behavioural needs do not prevent others from making progress in lessons. There is very good teamwork between teachers and support assistants. There is considerable evidence from the displays of completed work that the organisation of visits to museums by teachers is particularly helpful in the development of pupils' understanding of times gone by. Pupils in Year 3, for example, have gained a useful idea of life in Victorian England from a visit to the Gunnersbury Museum, where they could dress in clothing of the period and experience life in a Victorian kitchen. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 who are learning about the way of life, beliefs and achievements of ancient Greece, visited the British Museum during the inspection week and enjoyed the opportunity to make a careful scrutiny of artefacts which they had previously only seen from pictures.
93. The teaching of history is co-ordinated well. All teachers contribute to an annual appraisal of the schemes of work. The co-ordinator intends to broaden the curriculum options for the coming year to provide alternative subject matter for some pupils who may not move forward with pupils of the same chronological age. She is aware also of a need to develop the resources for history teaching further and, in particular, to create a collection of artefacts that can be handled and examined in lessons. The history curriculum would benefit by the inclusion of some aspect of local history within the schemes of work. In the previous inspection, no teaching of history was observed and no judgement was made. It was inferred that pupils made satisfactory progress from the examination of their work and records.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

94. The provision for information technology (IT) in the school has improved since the last inspection. There are new personal computers and the school has Internet and e-mail access.
95. Achievement is generally good. Computers are used in many curriculum areas across the school, particularly to reinforce basic literacy and numeracy skills. At Key Stage 1, computers are used to reinforce basic literacy and numeracy skills. By the end of Key Stage 2 some pupils are competent at basic word processing skills, including use of capital letters for their

name, punctuation and writing simple sentences. At Key Stage 3, they can type and send simple e-mails.

96. Good knowledge, understanding and use of IT are evident in Year 7. A topic on the Aztecs allows pupils to correlate their birthdays with the Aztec calendar on an imaginative piece of software. Girls are much more confident than the boys, taking the lead and helping those who are not so skilful. Most of the pupils in this group have learned to access their e-mail and can download their messages.
97. Teaching is good. There is thorough planning and good knowledge and understanding of what the pupils know and can do. Expectations are very high and pupils are allowed time and space to work independently and correct their mistakes themselves when necessary. The teacher allows them to anticipate what will next appear on the screen, and they can do this with accuracy. On occasions the tasks set, such as making address labels, do not match fully the aptitudes of all pupils. Where this occurs their rate of working slows. However, because teachers' relationships with the pupils are very good, they are able to keep pupils on task by encouraging them. The good response to IT is shown in the general enjoyment of lessons. In a Year 7 group session where turns are taken at a single computer pupils wait patiently and do not criticise or make fun of those who are less skilled. They are keen to see who has written to them by e-mail, and very excited at having communications with other schools and pupils.
98. The curriculum for IT is good, overall. Planning is thorough and schemes of work are broken down into small steps, targeting access and keyboard skills at Key Stage 1 and developing simple word processing by the end of Key Stage 2. It is now enlivened by the use of the Internet and the acquisition of e-mail. This has broadened the curriculum, particularly for Key Stage 3 pupils, who are now in touch with pupils from a variety of schools in the neighbourhood.
99. The subject is well co-ordinated. The school has access to the National Grid for Learning. Although the existing accommodation for IT is very restricted, a new computer suite is soon to be opened with the purchase of more computers. This will enable whole groups to take part in IT lessons. The majority of staff have had some training and the co-ordinator has recently been on a course to improve Internet skills. Many learning support assistants have computers at home and their skills in this area make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in the classroom.
100. Resources are good and every classroom has a computer. Currently, the range of software emphasises basic literacy and numeracy programs, and software for French has been purchased. It is planned that a variety of other programs will be added in the near future.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

101. The teaching of French has become established since the last inspection, when its omission from the timetable of the Key Stage 3 class was noted as an unsatisfactory feature of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 7 achieve very good standards in their lessons and their progress in French is good, overall. Pupils count to 20 in French without hesitation, and they show keen awareness of aspects of the vocabulary that they are learning. One pupil, for example, points out that he has noticed that the word for language is the same as the word for tongue. Most pupils can answer, "What is your name?" with a correctly formed sentence and they try hard to pronounce their words well.
102. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and are proud of what they can do. They very readily offer answers to questions and are very attentive. Their written work is neat and accurate and they take considerable pride in it. They view the learning of another language as a sign of their own growing maturity and they are pleased to be doing it. They are refreshingly unselfconscious in their approach to oral work. This is a tribute to the very good teaching they are given. In the

single lesson observed, the teacher imbues them with confidence but also insists that they each, as individuals, try the oral responses for themselves. There is an appropriate emphasis on oral work and on good pronunciation. This is reinforced by written work which is meaningful to the pupils and which serves to store up the words, phrases and usages they have learned. The teaching is informed by very good knowledge of the pupils and good knowledge of the subject. Management of the class and full use of available time is very good.

MUSIC

103. Music is an important element in the life of the school. Music was seen as a strong subject in the last inspection. It continues to be a strength. Music permeates many lessons, through songs in class, celebrations and assemblies as well as in discrete music lessons. Overall, pupils achieve very well. Many pupils are using skills and understanding from previous lessons and regular singing of daily activities such as Hello! and number songs to consolidate a sense of rhythm and pitch. Pupils are gaining confidence to perform in groups or on their own. The more able pupils play musical instruments, listen to a very wide range of music from around the world, and give sound appraisals of their performance and that of others.
104. All pupils have access to music at every level; they listen, they sing, they play, they compose, they record and evaluate. Progression is assured for all. Those who cannot practice at home have the opportunity to do so in school. The recorder group is currently practising a new range of songs and anthems.
105. Pupils enjoy music, they are happy in the lessons and take part with enthusiasm. They do so as a result of the resources and activities that are on offer. Work is geared to every need and ability. The music groups are happy; they like to try the instruments, the glockenspiel and the cabasa. They look after the instruments and take great joy out of performing.
106. Teaching is very good. Subject knowledge is good, planning is detailed and precise and takes heed of National Curriculum Programmes. Work is suited to the pupils. Two groups of the same age have different materials and pace to suit their needs. This is an improvement on the last report. Teaching sets high standards, with very imaginative delivery. As a result, pupils' learning is good.
107. Resources are good and very well used. The accommodation is barely adequate; it does not inhibit the learning because of the excellent teamwork of teacher and support staff. The accommodation does, however, restrict the opportunity for public performances.
108. The curriculum is good. Pupils gain much from music; indeed, the school benefits immensely from the high quality teaching and very good response to the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. Achievement in physical education is very good. Over time, pupils undertake the full range of experiences required by the National Curriculum. Very good use is made of expertise from the community in giving pupils learning experiences of high quality. In their swimming sessions pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught by a swimming instructor who is aided by the class teacher and learning support assistants from the school. This ensures that pupils get good technical direction, but also essential support and encouragement to boost their confidence from adults with whom they are familiar and whom they trust. Most make good progress, and about a third are confident enough to remove their buoyancy aids. Some can swim a short distance unaided. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 2 make good progress in agility and balancing work. They improve their listening skills as they hear their teachers instructions and some can, by the end of the session, combine a series of movements into a sequence and demonstrate this to others. Hand-eye co-ordination and the beginnings of team-play develop in lessons in hockey at Key Stage 2 and are taken further in good work on basketball and football. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the pupils and she is a skilful coach, and this shines through in the basketball session, which promotes very good standards of achievement. Teachers talk to the pupils in a way they can understand in order to encourage them to improve. Pupils

listen carefully to instructions and learn dribbling skills, including bouncing the ball from hand to hand; most can travel with the ball using one hand to control it. In football skills practice, which is led by coaches from a local professional football club, pupils learn to use all parts of their foot when running with the ball. They practice, and in a number of cases master, the art of eluding an opponent by “dummying”, pretending to shoot while in fact retaining possession. Ball control is developing very well.

110. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They try hard, listen to instructions well and try to carry them out. Both boys and girls show great enthusiasm during the football coaching. In the warm-up games they enjoy the competitive element and strive hard for their team. They remember their past learning and refine the skills they have begun to establish. They behave very well. Teaching is frequently very good and is never less than satisfactory. Planning draws appropriately on the Programme of Study of the National Curriculum, and the scheme of work include all aspects of the subject. The very good use made of coaches and instructors from the community enhances the quality of work in swimming and football. Lessons are well prepared, and there is good co-ordination by teachers of groups that include more than a single class. All adults involved in lessons know what is expected and carry out their parts well. Where the teacher has specialist knowledge skill teaching is of very high quality. Attention is paid to the importance of warm-up and cool-down activities and the need to stretch and prepare muscles before moving to vigorous activity. The importance of engaging pupils in the task is very much emphasised in the best teaching. Skills are clearly modelled and described in accessible language with good use of imagery. Time is generally fully used and the management of pupils is generally very good. The school has very good resources for P.E. There is also sufficient space in the hall for gymnastics, dance and the teaching of games skills. There are good outdoor play areas with hard and grassed surfaces. The school takes part, where possible, in competitive sporting fixtures with other schools. Provision for physical education was judged to be good in the previous inspection and pupils made good progress. Teaching was satisfactory. There has been good improvement in pupils standards and the quality of teaching.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. All pupils learn about aspects of different religions in a well-taught programme built around the major festivals of the faiths to which most pupils belong. During their time in school pupils learn also about the important moral and social values which are present within the main religions. Across the age range their progress is good.
112. The youngest pupils in the school learn about the differences between customs and rituals of the three main faiths represented in the two classes. After watching video-taped pictures of how different religions receive babies into their faith, discussing this in relation to the children's own experience; more than half the children can recall the main features of the Christian, Hindu and Muslim ceremonies. Some pupils, but not all at this stage, know whether or not they and their families are members of a particular faith.
113. Older pupils achieve in different ways. One group of Year 4 pupils had moved forward well from the earlier work to discussing with their parents details of parental marriage ceremonies. In a lively practical lesson they provided information and photographs for the group to make a chart about the different ceremonies, the different forms and colours of dress, what particular symbols were involved; such as rings and special foods, and how the occasion was celebrated. Pupils were able to share this information well and to find out how other families approached marriage. Other pupils in classes of similar age and slightly older were learning successfully about Bible history: one by listening to the story of Moses from a CD-ROM and another by learning and discussing, in detail, aspects of morality from an examination of The Ten Commandments. These Year 6 pupils possess a clear understanding of the main moral issues within the commandments. This indicates that the wider school guidance by adults gives pupils a lead in thinking about matters such as theft, violence and consideration for others. All the pupils express their own views on such matters with some confidence in the small discussion group.

114. The teaching of religious education is good. The teaching of the youngest children at Key Stage 1 is particularly good. The teachers and support assistant use a very active style of teaching, which involves pupils in changing activities regularly, with plenary discussion, shared whiteboard work, cutting and sticking activities, and opportunities to discuss their work in groups and pairs. Other teachers use different styles, but all are skilled in promoting serious discussion about important matters. Class 7 pupils, for example, have acted the parable of the Good Samaritan as a means of fully understanding and remembering the story. The final versions of pupils' picture stories of the parable, for assessment, are very well produced. Although a few of the lessons rely too greatly on worksheet completion and colouring they all provide good opportunities for older pupils to discuss important issues of neighbourliness and the difference between good and evil.
115. A particularly valuable part of the teaching of religious education is the regular use made of visits to different places of worship. Pupils gain great value from the visits made to Sikh and Hindu temples, to a local Mosque and to a Christian church as a part of the course. The visits provide a valuable point of reference for lessons, particularly, when a photographic record has been made.
116. The new co-ordinator for religious education monitors and records carefully what is taught to each group. She has rightly identified a need to extend the teaching resources, particularly to provide more religious artefacts and more good quality pictures, videotapes and CD-ROMs. It would be helpful also to link more of the work done in religious education lessons to the daily school assemblies, to enable pupils to participate more regularly. The pupils who participated in the performance to celebrate the Chinese New Year in the week before the inspection had enjoyed the experience greatly.