

INSPECTION REPORT

DOWNSSELL INFANT SCHOOL

Leyton, London E15 2BS

LEA area: London Borough of Waltham Forest

Unique reference number: 103044

Headteacher: Mrs Usha Sahgal

Reporting inspector: Doreen Clery
3581

Dates of inspection: 31 January - 3 February 2000

Inspection number: 188775

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Downsell Road Leyton London
Postcode:	E15 2BS
Telephone number:	020-8534-2217
Fax number:	020-8519-7050
Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Walsh MBE
Date of previous inspection:	11 – 14 June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Doreen Clery	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Design and technology	How well the school is led and managed
		Physical education	
		English as an additional language	
		Equal opportunities	
Barry Wood	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Lesley Barlow	Team inspector	Mathematics	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Music	How well are pupils taught
		Religious education	
Marilyn Morgan	Team inspector	Art	Work of the Downsell Centre
		Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Susy Powlesland	Team inspector	English	
		Geography	
		History	
		Under fives	
Mike White	Team inspector	Information technology	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development

The inspection contractor was:

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Downsell Infant School is a community school for children aged from three to seven; it has 259 pupils in the main school and 70 children in the two nursery classes, the majority of whom are part-time. The school shares a site with the Junior School and the Downsell Centre, which is now managed by the Local Education Authority (LEA) and offers provision for primary pupils with communication and emotional/behavioural difficulties. The school is surrounded by a mix of low-rise council flats, with some other rented and owner-occupied properties; the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. More than 60 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and 30 different languages are spoken within the school. Eleven per cent of all pupils come from refugee and asylum-seeking families. The number of pupils on the special educational needs register is above the national average at 35 per cent. Children's attainment on entry to the reception year is generally below the level expected for children of this age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Downsell Infants is an improving school where standards continue to rise. Inspection findings indicate that overall standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with the national average and the school's most recent national test results generally compare very well with those of similar schools. Pupils try very hard and have good attitudes to their work. Almost all the teaching is satisfactory and much of it is better. The school is well led by the headteacher and senior staff, who work effectively with the supportive and efficient governing body. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards continue to improve in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and they relate very well to adults and one another.
- Throughout the school over 60 per cent of teaching is good or very good and there are examples of excellent teaching.
- Leadership and management are good and the school is taking very effective action to improve standards.
- The ethos of the school is a strength and the school's very positive aims and values are reflected throughout its work.
- The school has a very successful partnership with its parents and there is a high level of parental satisfaction with the school.
- The provision for equal opportunities and pupils' cultural development is outstanding.

What could be improved

- The curriculum is not sufficiently balanced in that some subjects of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1 and areas of learning for children in the reception year are not given sufficient emphasis.
- Attendance is not as good as it could be, despite the school's best efforts.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has worked hard to tackle the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Progress has been made on all the issues identified and good progress has been made on some. The last inspection reported that the school was making significant progress in raising standards but the report did not contain a judgement on the school's attainment in relation to the national average. In June 1996 inspectors judged that overall attainment in English was variable, standards in mathematics were below average and standards in science were improving. However, these findings did not reflect the results of the most recently reported National Curriculum tests at that time where the school's results were well below the national average in all three subjects. Current inspection findings show that standards have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. The school has developed effective monitoring procedures and this monitoring programme, coupled with the national strategies in literacy and numeracy and good schemes of work, is a contributory factors to the improved quality of teaching and learning. While the school reviewed its timing for lessons,

following the last inspection, there is still not sufficient time allocated to some areas of the curriculum. The school has worked very hard to improve the attendance of all pupils but not all parents fulfil their part in ensuring that their children come to school regularly.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	E	D	D	A
Writing	E	D	D	C
Mathematics	D	C	C	A

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E

These results include three pupils from the Downsell Centre

The most recent National Curriculum tests indicated that the school's attainment in reading and writing was below the national average, while standards in mathematics were in line. However, in reading, the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average and, in mathematics, the number attaining this level was above the national average. The school is doing well when compared with schools with a similar intake. Teachers' assessments in science showed similar high attainment at Level 3. Trends over the last four years show steady improvement and this has led to the school's achieving the realistic targets set for it by the LEA earlier than expected. Inspection findings show that standards continue to improve and overall standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with the national average. Standards in information technology have improved and all aspects of this subject are now in line with the national average. Pupils' attainment in religious education meets the expectations of the London Borough of Waltham Forest's Agreed Syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like coming to school and have positive attitudes to their work. They work well together and are also able to work independently.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils understand the school's expectations and are pleased when they are rewarded for their good behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good and contribute strongly to the school's effectiveness.
Attendance	While attendance has improved it remains below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
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.

Ninety five per cent of all teaching in the classes of children under five is satisfactory and better; there are examples of very good and excellent teaching in the nursery and one of the reception classes. This better teaching provides children with appropriate learning activities because teachers and support staff have very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for children of this age. At Key Stage 1, 98 per cent of all teaching is satisfactory and better. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall and there is evidence of excellent teaching in both subjects. Teachers' knowledge and understanding have been improved through good in-service education based on the national strategies. Lessons in literacy and numeracy are well structured and, in particular, whole-class sessions are lively and engage pupils' interest. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils' different levels of attainment; the quality of the support provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs makes a significant contribution to their progress. Throughout the school, pupils' learning is good overall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	At Key Stage 1 the school provides a broad curriculum and places heavy emphasis on English and mathematics. This results in a limited amount of time for other subjects and does not allow for all the key skills of these to be fully taught. The curriculum in two of the classes for children under five does not take sufficient account of the areas of learning appropriate for this age group.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good; pupils are appropriately identified and placed on the special educational needs register and realistic targets are set for their individual progress. Support is well planned and carefully implemented to give pupils good access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Careful assessments are made of pupils' linguistic and other learning needs; the effective partnership, which exists between the specialist team, class teachers and parents, enhances the quality of the good provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory while provision for their moral development is good. The social development of the pupils is very good and the school's provision for their cultural development is outstanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community in which all members of staff provide very good support for the pupils and work hard to ensure their welfare.

The school works hard and successfully to involve parents in their children's learning, both at school and at home. Parents, in their responses to the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting, spoke highly of the school, as did all those spoken to during the inspection. The school provides well for its pupils in terms of welfare and guidance. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and there are very good procedures for monitoring behaviour and attendance.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led. The headteacher provides strong leadership and ensures clear educational direction for the work of the school. The deputy head works well with the headteacher and they share a firm commitment to raising standards for all pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school manages this aspect of its work very well. The results of detailed analysis of test scores are used to inform future planning and an effective programme for monitoring teaching and learning has been established.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, resources and accommodation are used efficiently and effectively. Teachers and members of the support staff work together very successfully and the knowledge and expertise of the support staff make a significant contribution to the standards attained. The school uses its open-plan building very well.

The school runs very well on a day-to-day basis. Planning for development is very good and underpins the school's thorough financial planning. The school's administrative staff are highly competent and office procedures are very efficient. The school has made a good start in developing systems to ensure that it gets the best value for money.

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 school and make good progress. • Teaching at the school is good. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of after-school activities. • The standard of toilet provision for their children.

Inspectors endorse parents' positive views about the school. They share parents' concerns about the children's toilets and agree that pupils would benefit from a wider range of after-school provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is well below the standards expected for children of their age, particularly in language and literacy. While good progress is made throughout the nursery, the results of base-line assessments indicate that, by the age of five, children remain below the Local Education Authority's (LEA's) average in speaking, listening, reading, writing and some aspects of mathematics; they meet the standards expected in numeracy and in their personal and social development.
2. Children under five make good progress in their personal and social development; they learn to co-operate and to work independently and make good relationships with adults and one another. They show good perseverance and can concentrate on activities. Overall progress in language and literacy is variable. Children listen carefully and develop confidence in explaining their ideas. They enjoy books, know how they work and experiment with writing letters and simple words. By the time they reach the reception classes some children can write their names accurately but, by the age of five, most will not have achieved the levels expected for children of their age. Although progress in mathematical understanding varies between the classes, the majority of children will reach the Desirable Learning Outcome in this area; they learn to use mathematical language, recognise simple shapes and develop good counting skills. The lack of planned opportunities to develop historical and geographical understanding leads to lack of progress in these areas but children develop good computer skills. In the areas of creative and physical development children meet the expected levels; they use a wide range of materials to make pictures, enjoy singing, handle tools well and move confidently and with good control.
3. The most recently reported National Curriculum tests and assessments indicated that the school's overall attainment in reading and writing was below the national average, while standards in mathematics were in line. In reading, although the overall standard was below average, the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. In mathematics, a third of all pupils attained Level 3 and this was well above the picture nationally. Teachers' assessments in science showed similar high attainment at Level 3, although the number of pupils attaining Level 2 was slightly below the national average. Overall standards indicate that boys achieve less well than girls and the school's own analysis shows that the achievement of African/Caribbean boys is a concern. The school compares more favourably with schools of a similar intake. Standards in reading, mathematics and science are well above the average for similar schools, while attainment in writing is in line with the average for such schools.
4. Trends over the last four years show that standards in reading and writing have been well below the national average but, following a slight dip in 1997, standards have improved. There has been a steady improvement over four years in mathematics, with standards over this time being close to the national average. This continuous improvement has led to the school's achieving the targets set by the LEA earlier than expected; already, 74 per cent of all pupils are achieving Level 2 and above in English and 81 per cent are achieving this level in mathematics.
5. Inspection findings indicate that overall standards of attainment in English are in line with the national average. Pupils listen well, both to their teachers and to one another. While their speaking skills are not as well developed, the whole-class sessions at the beginning of the Literacy Hour are having a positive impact and pupils engage in thoughtful and interesting discussions. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books and develop different strategies to read unknown words. At the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils read confidently and fluently and are happy to talk about stories and characters. In their writing, pupils show their good knowledge of phonics and punctuation and, at the end of the key stage, the majority have handwriting that is accurately formed and consistent in size, though few are learning to use cursive script. Their writing communicates meaning but opportunities to write in different areas of the curriculum are limited.
6. At the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards of attainment in mathematics are in line with the

national average and there is evidence of higher attainment. Pupils build on the skills gained in the nursery classes and make good progress in most of the early years classes. They develop good number skills and, by Year 2, work confidently with numbers up to 100 and find different ways of adding and subtracting numbers with at least two digits. They measure length in non-standard and standard units, understand the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and recognise reflective symmetry. They develop confident mental arithmetic strategies and are able to explain how they work things out.

7. Standards of attainment in science are in line with the national average and pupils make satisfactory progress throughout their time in school. They develop good understanding of materials and their properties. Year 1 pupils are able to name different materials and decide which materials are most suited to a particular purpose. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand what makes a fair test, carry out investigations and record their findings in written and diagrammatic form.
8. The standards attained in information technology have improved and are now satisfactory, with evidence of higher attainment in some aspects of the subject. Pupils in Year 1 assemble text and symbols on screen to improve their knowledge of phonics and to create their own rhymes. By the end of the key stage, they control a 'roamer' on screen as part of their work on co-ordinates; some pupils explain how to link their hand-held computer to the main computer before printing their work. Standards attained in religious education fulfil the requirements of the LEA's Agreed Syllabus and, overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. While insufficient time is allocated to this subject in some classes, pupils also gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions through school celebrations of different festivals.
9. Good standards are achieved in art and throughout the school pupils use a wide range of techniques. Younger pupils know how to refine and improve their work and, in Year 2, they improve their skills and reflect upon the work of other artists. While there are some good features in design and technology, geography and history, the lack of time spent on these subjects results in limited experiences for the pupils and, consequently, skills and understanding are not developed progressively. Similarly, in physical education, insufficient time allocated to the subject means that pupils do not refine, practise and improve their key skills. In music, pupils sing well and instruments are used effectively to develop understanding of the musical elements; however, too little time is devoted to listening to and appraising music.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all classes; they are supported well by special needs support staff and class teachers and Individual Education Plans are well matched to pupils' needs. The large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language receive effective focused support and make good progress throughout their time in school. A particularly good feature is the targeted support for pupils at all stages of English language acquisition in the Literacy and Numeracy Hours. The school has set targets for improving the attainment of African/Caribbean boys and the well thought-out programme of work, devised by the responsible teacher, is having a positive effect upon the standards of these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The last inspection report stated that pupils behaved well and made good relationships and that their response in lessons was either satisfactory or good. These aspects of the pupils' development continue to improve. Inspection findings show that pupils' behaviour is very good and that they are supportive of one another and display positive attitudes to their work and school.
12. Good communication between home and school ensures that pupils settle well into school routines. They gain in confidence, behave well and have good relationships with adults and other children. Children under five come into school confidently and enthusiastically at the beginning of the school day. They show initiative, help each other and tidy away sensibly at the end of sessions. They are polite and appropriately independent and their personal development and relationships are enhanced through regular 'circle times'.
13. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are happy, friendly and enjoy coming to school; they are very aware that school is a place for learning. Pupils come into school with a sense of purpose and this attitude is

carried through the whole of the school day. They settle to work quickly, most becoming absorbed in their work and responding enthusiastically when presented with a challenging task. They are confident enough to ask questions and most know how to take turns. When working in groups, they are able to collaborate, share ideas and help one another.

14. Since the last inspection, there has been a review of the school's approach to behaviour and discipline and the school has also been involved in a behaviour support project. Meaningful rules have been agreed between pupils and adults and these are prominently displayed in the school hall. Pupils know the rules and, for most of the time, adhere to them. They behave very well in class and around the school, responding to the school's good procedures for ensuring high standards of behaviour and discipline. Good behaviour is looked for and recognised; in particular, pupils' good behaviour in the playground is rewarded by a 'ticket'. Pupils are enthusiastic and determined to collect ten 'tickets', which then guarantees the class a special treat. Pupils behave well in the dining room and in the playground behaviour is generally good. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and there was little evidence of any anti-social behaviour. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.
15. Pupils' personal development is good. They quickly become aware of the need to accept school routines, learn to listen and consider the welfare of others. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. Pupils are polite and considerate, they display trust in the staff and have confidence in them. Boys and girls work and play together in a friendly and supportive manner; this was the case when pupils in a Year 2 class co-operated positively when investigating the different properties of insulating materials. Pupils care about each other and have a strong sense of community and personal commitment. They are proud of their own culture and respect the cultures of others and the harmony that exists between the large number of ethnic groups within the school is a strength of the school. While some opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility - for example, they take registers to the school office - these are insufficient.
16. The positive attitudes to school life shown by the pupils, their very good behaviour and the good relationships within the school have a significant impact on the standards attained.
17. When compared with national levels, the attendance levels at the school are unsatisfactory. However, attendance levels have improved significantly since the last inspection and the school now has one of the better attendance performances in the Local Education Authority. The school's strong focus and guidance have led to parents' becoming increasingly aware of their statutory responsibilities regarding attendance and the majority of pupils attend school regularly. Absence due to holidays taken during the school term is a small aspect of authorised absence. Unauthorised absence has stabilised at a high level, despite the school's efforts and innovative strategies to gain parents' interest and commitment. This is partly due to some families being new to the expectations of the English education system and some communication difficulties. Attendance levels and unauthorised absence improve markedly as pupils progress through the school, from the nursery to the end of Key Stage 1, and there are no indications of any truancy. The school receives very good support from the Educational Welfare Officer who has the status, ability and communication skills to operate across many of the ethnic groups that make up the school family. Many pupils find it difficult to come to school on time but punctuality throughout the rest of the day is good.
18. Registers are completed in accordance with statutory requirements within the classroom bases and the registration period is carried out courteously and efficiently and provides a positive learning experience for all pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is good and this makes a major contribution to the pupils' good progress and their improving attainment. Teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all the lessons observed; 35 per cent of lessons were good, 22 per cent were very good and some excellent teaching was observed during the inspection. This marks a considerable improvement on the last inspection when 90 per cent of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better. Examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen in the classes of children under five and in the core subjects of English and mathematics at Key Stage 1.
20. All members of the teaching team plan the curriculum for children under five and this is particularly helpful to the two teachers who have only just joined the school and have a limited knowledge of current early years practice and the school's procedures. The majority of teaching in the classes of the children under five is good, with evidence of excellent teaching; there is a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, which is also the case at Key Stage 1.
21. In the best practice, teachers have high expectations and effectively challenge pupils of all abilities. There is evidence of this in many of the oral sessions that begin numeracy lessons; teachers consolidate and build upon pupils' previous knowledge and ask questions, relevant to different levels of ability, to increase understanding. Pupils enjoy these mental mathematics sessions, try hard to get the answers right and are pleased when they are successful. The subject knowledge of these teachers is of a high standard; they know exactly what they want their pupils to learn and share their intentions with their classes. In one whole-class session in a Year 1 Literacy Hour, the teacher developed pupils' ability to read and spell words ending with 'ck', purposefully and at a brisk pace; pupils knew what was expected of them and responded with enthusiasm, continuing to think about and practise the words as they went about their group activities.
22. All teachers manage and organise their pupils well and expect high standards of behaviour. They make positive relationships, respect their pupils and value their contributions. Pupils feel confident to approach their teachers; they manage themselves well and know their class routines and procedures. Pupils contribute to the effective and smooth running of lessons and the overall quality of learning. Another contributory factor of successful lessons is the teachers' good use of time and available resources; pupils use equipment carefully and productively.
23. Teachers are confidently implementing the full requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and this is having a positive effect upon the progress made. Good use is made of shared texts to engage pupils' interest, focus their attention, reinforce previous knowledge and introduce new ideas; pupils enjoy these sessions and generally try hard to join in the shared reading and identify particular features of the text. All teachers plan a range of group activities that include guided reading and writing and, in the most effective lessons, these activities are well matched to pupils' different abilities and motivate their interest and concentration. However, in some lessons, group activities are rather mundane and provide insufficient challenge. Plenary sessions are used well to consolidate understanding and value pupils' work in both the Literacy and Numeracy Hours. The teaching of numeracy is good overall and the introduction of the National Numeracy Project and subsequent implementation of the Numeracy Strategy has had a significant impact on the methods and organisation teachers use in the classroom. They all begin their lessons with mental mathematics and this is having a positive effect on the pupils' counting skills and learning about numbers. They are encouraged to think carefully and explain how they work things out. Group activities are well prepared and organised and involve pupils in a range of practical and problem-solving tasks.
24. Teachers' planning for literacy and numeracy is thorough and detailed and provides clear guidance. Plans identify focused objectives for learning and maintain a clear progression from one lesson to the next; this ensures that pupils build upon earlier learning and understand what is expected of them. Teachers' experience of planning for the national strategies has improved their understanding of what constitutes good planning and has had a very positive effect on their planning for science. This improved planning is having a direct impact on the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. Conversely, the more superficial planning, which is found in the majority of the non-core subjects, results in teaching being less well informed and pupils not receiving their full entitlement. An exception to this is music, where the precise guidance provided in the clear and

detailed scheme of work gives teachers confidence to teach the subject to a good standard.

25. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, teachers make thorough assessments of pupils' work and use these to inform their planning. The good practice in assessment, identified in the last inspection report, has been built upon and developed. Teachers' understanding of pupils' different learning needs and capabilities has enabled them to set appropriate and challenging targets in literacy and numeracy. Targets for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed termly and work is planned to meet the needs identified in their Individual Education Plans. Specialist teachers have a clear understanding of the differing needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. These pupils benefit from the focused support provided by teachers and support staff. Teachers take particular care to involve all pupils in activities and discussion.
26. Members of the support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment and progress, particularly those with special educational needs, pupils for whom English is an additional language and children under five. Generally they are well briefed by teachers, their expertise is valued and they work in a very effective partnership.
27. The school has a carefully planned programme for homework. This includes reading, spelling and mathematical activities and teachers make effective use of homework to help pupils build upon what they have learned at school. Pupils are enthusiastic about the work they do at home and know that it will be valued by their teachers.

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

28. In the 1996 inspection report the school was judged to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, reflecting closely the aims of the school and its commitment to equal opportunities. However, insufficient use was made of information technology and the outside area for children under five. Inspection findings show that the outside area is now well organised for the continuation of areas of learning. The curriculum in the nursery is broad and balanced and is carefully planned to provide a wide range of experiences. The curriculum provided in the reception year does not always take sufficient account of the areas of learning appropriate to this age group.
29. Currently, the curriculum meets statutory requirements, includes all required subjects, is sufficiently broad but is not well balanced. It does not fulfil recommendations in all areas as key elements of the foundation subjects are not present; examples of this occur in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. There has been a commendable improvement in provision for information technology. This now meets all requirements and pupils throughout the school have planned access to computers; this is having a beneficial effect upon learning. There is appropriate provision for health and sex education. Personal and social development are well addressed through the curriculum; equality of access is offered to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
30. Pupils have been significantly assisted by the school's planned focus on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. High priority is given to the teaching of English and mathematics and more time than usual is given to these two subjects, particularly English. Additional time is afforded to the teaching of handwriting with yet more to spelling. This impacts adversely upon time allocated to other subjects, some aspects of which are not adequately covered.
31. The governing body is well informed on curricular matters and has approved existing policies and schemes of work. However, policies are not in place for all subjects - for example, art and design and technology. The core subjects of English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education benefit from the national and local strategies and good schemes of work which provide effective guidance for teaching. At present, the curriculum is not effectively planned to provide continuity and coverage from year to year and within year groups for the majority of the non-core subjects.
32. The school plans its curriculum through a mix of topics, discrete subject teaching and combinations of the two. Review and monitoring procedures for the core subjects are effective and informative;

currently, these arrangements are less rigorous for other curricular areas. During the week of the inspection, lesson times were not reflective of those indicated in planning; for example, three classes had no art on their timetables and, in one year group, religious education was timetabled for 35 minutes instead of the proposed one hour 15 minutes per week as stated in the school's planning documents. Anomalies also occur in geography and history, where few lessons occurred.

33. Curricular planning ensures that pupils with special educational needs have access to a broad curriculum that is appropriate to their needs and in line with the National Curriculum. All teachers use Individual Education Plans well and are fully conversant with targets and objectives. Special needs assistants provide good support for pupils and contribute well to the overall curricular provision.
34. Extra-curricular activities are sparse and there has been little advancement in this area since the last inspection. However, the school does provide a facility for pupils to undertake work at the end of the school day and this has a beneficial effect upon the raising of attainment for some pupils. Regular use is made of the local environment; pupils visit places of interest, such as the church and the mosque, and the immediate area is also used to support work in a range of curricular areas. The curriculum is also enriched by visitors to the school; during the inspection week these included the local vicar, who led an assembly, and a Muslim parent who contributed to a religious education lesson.
35. Overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength of the school. The school aims have a clear emphasis on creating a secure and happy environment in which all children can develop respect for each other and consideration for all. These aims are achieved through the very positive ethos that is promoted.
36. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The school fulfils the legal requirements for assemblies through a programme of whole-school, phase and class acts of collective worship; in all of these, time is planned for reflection. Pupils learn about Christianity and other world faiths through assemblies and religious education lessons and different religious festivals are celebrated. Pupils show delight in some aspects of their learning and this was the case when pupils in a Year 2 science lesson were amazed and showed wonder at the rapid changes of temperature recorded on their thermometers.
37. The provision for pupils' moral development is good and a major contributory factor to this is the school's programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and to respect and care for one another. This is apparent in the daily life of the school. A feature of all Monday assemblies is the 'Thought for the Week' provided by the pupils; teachers are often seen discussing the thought and its effect upon their own actions with pupils.
38. The very good provision for social development is enhanced by the whole-school behaviour policy. Pupils' very good behaviour and social skills are particularly commendable, given previous concerns in this area. Throughout the school relationships are pleasant and non-threatening and during the inspection no incidents of bullying or threatening behaviour occurred. Teachers plan for co-operative learning and pupils respond well to the challenges that are posed. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
39. The provision for cultural development is excellent. Parents from a wide range of cultural backgrounds make valuable contributions to assemblies and the general work of the school. School displays celebrate Christian festivals and those of other religions. Information about leading figures from a wide range of cultures is introduced to the pupils and enriches their experience. Assemblies are themed and include examples from the religions and customs of the school population. Pupils use their community language at informal times and this often enhances learning opportunities and enriches experiences for all pupils. The school's teaching and support staff, who come from a wide range of different religious and cultural backgrounds, provide very good role models and help to make the school a happy secure place in which pupils thrive.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The last inspection judged that the support and welfare arrangements for all pupils were very good;

this remains the case and the school's aim to 'create a secure and happy environment' is effectively implemented. A parent's comment reported in the prospectus - 'the staff are very dedicated and committed to the welfare and education of my children, keep up the standards - is well-realised in practice. This commitment often commences before the child enters the school, through the work of the education visitor, and is continued with the welcoming of parents and children into the toy library. This provision, funded by the Local Education Authority, contributes to children's smooth entry into school and develops parents' understanding of play and other appropriate activities for children's early learning. Members of the school staff have a very detailed knowledge of all of the pupils in their care and the harmony and integration of all parts of the school community ensures that pupils have a very happy and positive experience of their first years in school.

41. Teachers' individual knowledge allows them to evaluate children effectively, with the help of the support staff within the school and outside professional services. The school has a high number of pupils with special educational needs and the good quality of the provision made for them is a testimony to the determination of the staff to ensure that all pupils gain their full entitlement to all aspects of the curriculum. Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs are good; targets are reviewed termly with parents and the plans are used well by teachers and members of the support staff. There is a strong focus on the inclusion of all pupils in all activities and the school's behaviour policy gives guidance on this practice.
42. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. A practical and detailed policy is in place that gives clear guidance for assessing pupils' work. Assessments are made of children on entry to the nursery and reception classes and individual portfolios, containing annotated samples of work, are developed as pupils move through the school. Regular assessments now take place in English, mathematics and science and, along with the portfolios, these provide a clear picture of pupils' progress. The practice of setting targets is having a positive effect on the standards achieved. Appropriate individual and group targets are set for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for all pupils in English and mathematics.
43. The pastoral care of all pupils is a strong feature of the school's work and is underpinned by policies and procedures which have been developed internally or by the Local Education Authority. The school welcomes and benefits from the support of outside agencies, such as the school nurse, the Educational Welfare Officer and the police. Child protection procedures are good. There has been a thorough training of all staff through regular in-service education and the school keeps parents informed through displays in different languages. The staff are very aware of the importance of this aspect in the life of the school.
44. The school has high expectations of behaviour and works hard to realise the self-esteem of individual pupils. Members of different cultural groups are valued through the many displays of work and photographs celebrating the wide range of cultures within the school. In particular, the project focused on raising the achievement and self-esteem of African/Caribbean boys is having a positive effect. The discipline code is simple and effective and incorporates school rules and the pupils' own class rules. The school's reward systems and implementation of the code are effective in producing very good relationships. The school has worked successfully to eliminate bullying, inter-personal conflict or racial incidents between pupils and the tolerance and harmony within the school are distinctive features. Attendance procedures are very good and have produced a significant improvement in attendance levels. The many effective strategies that the school uses include a display of attendance levels, a league table for the individual classes and the award of certificates on a regular basis at celebration assemblies.
45. The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff, despite there being an above average level of minor accidents incurred by pupils. Some accidents are caused by the playground gradients and slopes that are not compatible with the exuberant play of some pupils. The school has a very good complement of first aiders and emergency procedures are effective. Health and safety procedures are very good and are underpinned by a policy; however, the appointment of a school governor to oversee the implementation of the policy would be beneficial. The school has been alerted to a number of minor health and safety points and action has been taken. The parents' concern at the hygienic standards of the toilets is justified but some of the problems are connected with the difficulty small children have in flushing the toilets and their close proximity to working

areas.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents have expressed a high level of approval for the school over recent years. They clearly recognise and value the efforts of the headteacher, governors and staff in developing all aspects of the school, raising standards and respecting the different cultural traditions of all members of the school's community. All families are made to feel welcome in the school and there are no significant areas of parental dissatisfaction.
47. Prior to admission, prospective parents are visited at home by the educational visitor and are encouraged to become better acquainted with the school through using the toy library. On joining the school, parents are able to use the on-site parents' room. Many parents play a regular direct role in the school, either as volunteers or as employees, while some give occasional help depending on their work commitments. During the inspection, a talk on Islam given by a parent governor was particularly enriching for Year 1 pupils and there is an after-school club run by enthusiastic parents. The school does not have a formal parents' association but there are ample opportunities for parents to meet; a celebratory millennium party, attended by over three hundred parents, demonstrated a harmonious and thriving community.
48. The communications with parents are very good. Formal documents, such as the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents, are of good quality but do not fully observe statutory requirements. Other written communications are informative, precise and timely and give parents sufficient time to respond. The parents' room and other public areas display a wealth of accessible information. A major strength of the school's communications with parents is its commitment to be a 'listening school'. This allows informal communication to flourish at either end of the day in the school playground or in classrooms; problems that arise are dealt with immediately rather than being allowed to grow. All formal open evenings are well attended, including the annual governors' meeting for parents. Annual reports are based upon a computer library of evaluation statements and teachers' own written comments; the end result is a report that gives good judgements of pupils' performance. The reports set targets and include space to allow pupils to express their feelings about the school year, and for parental comments.
49. The growth of the educational partnership is a very good feature of the school and all parents sign the home-school agreement on admission to the school. In a quest to learn more about education and schools, parents have formed self-help group meetings at the school. The school also organises regular curricular meetings and topics have included literacy, numeracy and information technology. Pupils take work home regularly and this includes reading, spellings and mathematics. The majority of parents approve of the school's homework policy and reading diaries are well used to sustain a dialogue between parents and teachers. The school further encourages this enthusiasm for learning by running a book club where books and other learning materials can be purchased at cost price. The close collaboration with parents of pupils with special educational needs is impressive and they are involved in developing meaningful Individual Educational Plans, which contribute to good progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher gives very clear educational direction to the school and has a direct concern for the sustained improvement of quality and standards. She has a deep commitment to pupils' achieving their very best and provides strong and effective leadership. The deputy headteacher works in a successful partnership with the headteacher; their commitment to equal opportunities is exemplary and this is evident throughout the work of the school. The headteacher has a good understanding of new educational initiatives and how these need to be implemented.
51. The headteacher works very well with the school's governors. A new governing body was constituted at the beginning of this academic year and effective committees were re-established and governors identified for specific subjects and areas. Governors have a good understanding of

the strengths of the school and areas for development. They regularly monitor standards and are proud of the school's achievements. They are concerned to fulfil their statutory duties and, with the exception of the omission of some national statistics from their annual report to parents, all legal requirements are met.

52. The headteacher and governors have been successful in establishing a cohesive staff team, which reflects the rich cultural mix of the school's community; all members of staff work purposefully and conscientiously and are very supportive of one another. Key members of staff have been involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and the subsequent action taken has contributed to raising standards. Careful analysis of the baseline assessments and National Curriculum test results has led to the successful targeting of particular groups and improved the quality and coverage of the curriculum, particularly in mathematics and science. A comprehensive programme, which involves the headteacher, deputy and the core subject co-ordinators, has been established for monitoring teaching and learning. In addition, the headteacher and deputy review teachers' planning every week. This monitoring programme is providing co-ordinators with increased knowledge and understanding of their subjects and has begun to have a good effect on the quality of teaching. Further development of this monitoring, to include the non-core subjects and religious education, should help to ensure improved continuity and balance in the curriculum. The area of special educational needs is effectively managed by the deputy headteacher.
53. The last inspection judged the school's ethos to be very good; this remains the case. The school's aims, which are widely published, are thoughtful and meaningful and provide a clear picture of the school's purpose; they are evident in all aspects of school life.
54. The school's planning for development is very good and the school is well placed to make further improvements. The current School Development Plan, drawn up following full consultation with staff and governors, is very well constructed and is clearly an effective tool for managing change. The plan details achievements, progress and priorities and is regularly reviewed. Following the last inspection a clear and purposeful action plan was drawn up, which showed a good understanding of the issues and detailed practical ways of making improvements.
55. The carefully constructed School Development Plan is the cornerstone of the school's financial planning. The plan analyses the achievements and issues of the prior year and, as a result, plans the forthcoming year; the school does not yet have a longer-term strategic plan. Through the governors' and headteacher's awareness and a good evaluation of suppliers' quotations prior to order, the school has made a good start in using and evaluating value for money in many of its financial decisions. The school receives very good support from the Local Education Authority finance department in setting up budgets, which are tracked monthly by the highly competent administrative staff and governors. The school carries out the principles of the finance procedures' manual, as evidenced by the latest audit, so that there is no risk to the school. The highly effective school administration allows the headteacher to maximise her input into the school and makes good and productive use of information control technology in the office environment.
56. The present accounts incorporate the school and the Downsell Centre. While the school no longer carries any responsibility for the Centre, its annual income and expenditure inflate the school's accounts so that meaningful comparisons with other equivalent schools are difficult. As a result of analysis, the correct expenditure per pupil indicates a much lower expenditure than is evident from a superficial overview of the raw figures. A distinctive feature of the school's accounts is the extremely high carry-forward figure from year to year, which is well above the recommended amount. The balance has grown over the years due to a number of factors, which include the Downsell Centre. If the school is not to be penalised financially, or to take financial decisions based on incorrect figures in the future, it is necessary to rectify this situation while there is still good local knowledge of the Centre's development. Through the headteacher's unstinting efforts the school has been able to acquire an impressive amount of grant money, which has been well spent on many initiatives within the school. The carry-forward balance presently comprises a grant for a new staff room, which will be started soon. Funds for ethnic minority achievement and for special educational needs are used well by the school to provide effective support for the pupils.
57. The school has been able to recruit teachers through its many contacts with outside institutions. There is a good number of teachers for the needs of the National Curriculum and this allows the

school to have favourable class sizes. All staff are suitably qualified and most teachers carry responsibility for a particular subject or aspect of the school's work. While there is a distinct bias towards the arts in their initial training, subsequent in-service education has generally addressed any shortcomings in the balance of subject knowledge. The school has decided that the level of support staff is a key to the personal, social and academic development of all children and has rightly allocated funds to support this decision. There are a very good number of experienced, caring and knowledgeable staff within the support team.

58. There are good induction procedures for all new staff; they quickly become integrated into the daily life of the school and are well supported by the senior management. The training and involvement of all staff is very good, so that no group feels excluded from the team. There has been a major input of in-service education, for the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in particular, and co-ordinators have attended national and local courses. Training for the support staff has focused on behaviour management and the application of the good principles and practice they have developed is evident through the school. Staff have a good attendance record and provide good role models for pupils and parents.
59. The accommodation has many good features and overall it provides a satisfactory environment for teaching and learning. It is greatly enhanced by attractive, colourful and informative displays for both pupils and parents. The school uses its open-plan building very well; the hall is a good facility and is also used well. The temporary mobile classrooms have limited space; they have inadequate toilet provision and pupils have to cross the playground in all weathers to get to them. The additional mobile building provides good accommodation for dining, an after-school club and a toy library. The toilet provision is adequate but many parents complain regarding their condition and inspection findings substantiate this view; present provision does not take sufficient account of gender needs or the ability of young children to flush toilets.
60. The school has worked hard to improve its outside environment and the building is now set in pleasantly landscaped gardens. While the hard playground areas contain gradients and slopes, which can cause accidents, they provide sufficient space for pupils to run and play. There is a designated early years playground, which is separate and satisfactory. The school benefits from the commitment of a helpful and friendly site officer.
61. The school has an above average expenditure on teaching resources and there are no subjects where these are insufficient to support the needs of the National Curriculum. In particular, maths, music and information control technology show the benefit of this expenditure as they have good quality resources. The quality of resources in all other subjects is at least satisfactory but will need some improvement to meet the needs of the revised curriculum to be introduced in September 2000. Pupils generally have good access to resources, which are well placed for use around the school, and generally teachers use resources well to support lessons.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In the context of its many strengths, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- improve the balance of the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that all the key aspects of the Programmes of Study for non-core subjects are planned for and taught at Key Stage 1; (paragraphs 9, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 52, 104, 107, 115, 118, 120, 124, 126, 133, 137, 138)
 - ensuring that all children in the reception classes receive an appropriate early years curriculum; (paragraphs 2, 28, 70, 72, 74, 75)
 - continue to place emphasis upon raising levels of attendance. (paragraph 17)
63. The school should also consider the following issues:
- in conjunction with the LEA, re-establishing the financial relationship with the Downsell Centre (paragraph 56)
 - improving the standards of the toilets (paragraphs 45, 59)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The effectiveness of the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant (EMAG) and its impact on the achievement of pupils

64. The school places emphasis on developing the language competence of all pupils. Currently, there are 157 pupils on the roll of the school for whom English is an additional language. Thirty languages are represented in the school, of which Urdu, Bengali and Somali are the most prominent. Forty pupils were admitted to the school in the last year from families who have recently arrived in the country and have refugee or asylum-seeking status. Approximately half the children admitted to the nursery are at an early stage of English language acquisition.
65. Since April 1999 the EMAG grant has been devolved to the school. This allows the school to make decisions about how best to spend the grant to ensure that pupils acquiring English are appropriately targeted and have full access to the school's curriculum as speedily as possible. The EMAG team consists of two teachers, one working four days and one working just one day each week; there are also four support members of staff working in the team. Regular team meetings and good leadership from the team's co-ordinator ensure that the team have a clear view of their roles and responsibilities.
66. Language support staff work in partnership with class teachers; they liaise closely and work within the school's planning procedures. A major thrust of their work is to support the school's work in literacy and numeracy and this they do effectively. They also support pupils' language development in other curricular areas. This was the case during the inspection when the co-ordinator was observed, working with a group of recent arrivals, in geography. The class was engaged in looking at different sorts of homes, such as houses, bungalows and flats, and the EMAG teacher used the opportunity with the focused group to reinforce their knowledge of known words - for example, door - and introduce them to carefully selected new vocabulary. The pupils made good progress. Where teaching was observed it was judged to be good.
67. Major contributory factors to the success of the school's work in this area are the partnership which exists between the team and class teachers and the careful assessments made of individual pupils' linguistic and other learning needs, particularly new arrivals. The work also benefits from the commitment and knowledge of the co-ordinator. This is used to good effect, not only with her teaching colleagues and other members of the team but also in the analysis of national tests. This analysis has resulted in some innovative and well-planned work, undertaken by another member of the teaching staff, with African/Caribbean boys; it focuses on developing self-esteem and raising their levels of attainment. Successful involvement of parents through regular planned meetings enhances the parents' understanding and strengthens the very good partnership which exists between home and school. The co-ordinator's annual report to the governors provides them with

information that contributes to their understanding of the attainment of this group of pupils and enables them to reassess their targets if necessary.

68. Given the number of pupils who need support in developing their competence in English - many at the very early stages - the funding which allows for one (full-time equivalent) teacher and four support staff is barely enough. The school has made the decision to use the teaching members of the EMAG team mostly in Year 2, using the support staff in the early years and Year 1. Newcomers to the school are also assessed and targeted regularly by teachers. Should the current funding be increased the school should continue to target new arrivals while considering the needs of the younger pupils who, although supported, would benefit from some specialist teacher input in addition to support staff.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	22	35	34	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	35	259
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	128

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	98

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	157

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	42

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		99(98)	51(58)	38(44)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33(37)	34(40)	37(45)
	Girls	33(35)	36(35)	35(36)
	Total	66(72)	70(75)	72(81)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74(71)	79(74)	81(79)
	National	82(81)	80(79)	86(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32(36)	39(45)	40(42)
	Girls	33(34)	36(35)	34(33)
	Total	65(70)	75(80)	74(75)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73(69)	84(78)	83(74)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	22
Black – African heritage	36
Black – other	18
Indian	22
Pakistani	21
Bangladeshi	16
Chinese	4
White	23
Any other minority ethnic group	27

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.6
Average class size	23.3

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	20.6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	742967
Total expenditure	651091
Expenditure per pupil	2074
Balance brought forward from previous year	59053
Balance carried forward to next year	150929

*within this there is some money allocated to the Downsell Centre

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	307
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	20	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	35	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	35	4	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	40	10	1	5
The teaching is good.	63	29	3	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	32	3	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	32	5	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	51	37	6	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	52	31	6	1	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	39	4	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	42	8	4	22

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

69. The previous inspection found that progress in all the areas of learning in the nursery and the reception class was good. Assessment on entry, either in the nursery or in reception, was not yet developed and the outside area lacked wheeled toys and was not yet well organised for the continuation of curriculum activities outside. The nursery has maintained its high standards and has improved in the aspects mentioned. Assessment of every aspect of children's development on entry to the nursery is very detailed and thorough and the reception classes carry out the Borough's baseline assessments. The outside area now has a satisfactory selection of wheeled toys, although these are only used twice a week. It is also well organised for the continuation of curriculum areas outside and has a base for role play, wooden bricks, large paper fixed to the wall for big drawings and writings, as well as apparatus for climbing, balancing, sliding and jumping.
70. The nursery is organised into two home bays where children meet for the first and last part of each session. It has two teachers and two nursery nurses in each home bay. The children start the session in the home bays with a short whole-group time based on number, shape and letter recognition, songs and activities. They then move out of the home bays to use the large open-plan classroom spaces well set out for all the areas of learning, to which they have free access throughout the rest of the session. They return to their home bays at the end of sessions for stories, singing and discussion. During the second part of the session children have access to the outside area and can choose to go out or stay inside. There are three other classes with children under five, one of which the school calls a transition class. It has summer-born nursery children who are all full-time and who have all had two, or in some cases three, terms in the nursery. This class has a temporary teacher and a nursery nurse. There are also two classes with reception age children. The nursery and reception classes have a high and growing proportion of children who have English as an additional language and of these most are in very early stages of English acquisition. The number of children coming into the nursery with language delay and speech difficulties is also growing. The accommodation in the nursery, including the outside area, is good and well resourced for the areas of learning. Each area is well planned by the staff to ensure good use by the children. Wall and cupboard top displays are attractive and well planned to invite children's interest and promote their learning. In the transition class and one of the reception classes, however, although the open-plan spaces allow provision for children's work in the areas of learning, the quality of this provision is not as high and, as a consequence, children do not use these classroom areas as well. In the third reception class, provision is more interesting to the children and they make better use of it.
71. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is well below the standards expected for children of their age, particularly in the aspects of language and literacy; there is evidence of better attainment in numeracy. All children are assessed on entry to the reception year and this provides teachers with a picture of their learning needs. While good progress is made throughout the nursery, the results of base-line assessments show that, on entry to the reception classes, children remain below the LEA's average in all areas of language and literacy and aspects of mathematics, other than number. Children in the nursery are making good progress; progress in the transition and reception classes is more inconsistent.
72. Ninety five per cent of all teaching in the classes of children under five is satisfactory and better. Teaching in the nursery and in one reception class is good and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching. In these classes, all the staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the under fives curriculum. In the nursery, teachers, nursery nurses and support staff work very well and closely together as a team, under the effective leadership of the early years co-ordinator. They plan together and keep careful and detailed records to which they all contribute. The very thorough record and assessment-keeping systems result in the early identification of children with special educational needs. These children are carefully monitored, receive good support and make good progress. In the nursery, observations are kept for all children and a checklist is also kept to make sure that they all have experience of working in all the class areas and in each major activity. These observations are then kept as records and used to inform planning and

evaluation of activities. Each child has specific targets set for each half term and these are also shared with parents. Good opportunities for work in staff-led activities are provided and a check is kept to make sure all children take part in them; for example, small groups of children take part in a session of shared reading of 'Mr. Gumpy's Outing', with a toy boat and animal figures to act the story to help their understanding of and interest in it. Children also work with a nursery nurse making animals and figures of their choice with playdoh, developing vocabulary, manipulative skills and observational skills well. However, the nursery does not regularly plan particular activities to enable certain targeted children to develop specific knowledge or skills which observations and assessments show them to need. Within the remaining early years classes, one teacher is in her first year of teaching and the other two are new to their class responsibilities this term. As yet not all of these teachers have a good understanding of the early years curriculum and are, for instance, presenting a full and unmodified Literacy and Numeracy Hour with insufficiently interesting activities. This is inappropriate for a reception class and even more so for classes of nursery aged children and does not follow the suggested programme to be found either in the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning or in the National Numeracy Strategy advice about reception classes. Although all teachers for the early years plan together, the monitoring of these plans and their implementation is yet to be developed. The school is aware of the need to provide in-service education for some members of this team.

Personal and social development

73. Personal and social development are good. Children come into the nursery confidently and happily at the beginning of a session and the staff deal well with any new children that still find it difficult to part from their parent or carer. Children are learning to share, to take turns and to work both independently and collaboratively. Staff place great importance on good relationships with and between children and intervene sensitively and effectively on the rare occasions when inappropriate behaviour arises. Good relationships and personal development are also fostered by the very good use of 'circle times', which take place regularly in each home bay. In one excellent circle time observed, for instance, children passed a smile, which soon became a beam, around the circle and the teacher used the class puppet to help children reflect and talk about their feelings and experiences. They listened to their teacher and to each other with rapt attention and the occasion helped them to develop an understanding of their own and each other's feelings and lives. Children often show good perseverance and concentration; for instance, when making and illustrating little story books or when engaged in observational drawing of catkins. Partnership with parents is good and makes an important contribution to children's personal and social development. Parents, including those from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, regularly come into the nursery to help, for instance to make sandwiches with groups of children. There is usually a member of staff available to maintain a good day-to-day dialogue with parents when they bring and fetch their children and there is a formal parent conference when parents can share information about their children's progress. A toy library, funded from the Borough's central budget, meets weekly and parents who are waiting for a place in the nursery come to it with their children. The teacher in charge of the toy library also visits new parents or parents whose children have special educational needs at home and has regular meetings with the nursery teachers to share information. This very good initiative promotes good understanding between parents and carers and the nursery and helps to prepare the children well for entry to the school. Children in the reception classes also have good relationships with their teachers and staff are supportive and look after them well.

Language and literacy

74. In the nursery, children's development in the area of language and literacy is well supported and they make good progress. Staff are aware of the importance of talk and use every opportunity to foster children's vocabulary and confidence in speaking. Staff all use good questioning skills which encourage children's thinking and speaking. Talk is not as consistently fostered in the transition class and in one of the reception classes and children's progress is not as good. There is a well provisioned role play area and nursery plans indicate that this is varied to provide different experiences for children. A small carpeted bay is often used by staff to share books with small groups of children and there is also a well used and comfortable book area with a good display of books, although it does not have story props for the children's use to encourage further their independent re-telling of stories from familiar books. Children's name writing and independent attempts at writing are fostered very well in the nursery and there are frequently used note books

and writing tools in the home corner, on the writing table and in several other areas. Children's independent attempts at writing are valued by staff and are often mounted and displayed. As a consequence children gain confidence in their writing skills and many can make recognisable attempts to write their names, while a few can write them accurately. In the reception and transition classes several children can write them correctly. Groups of children in the nursery regularly work with a member of staff on well planned and provisioned writing or reading activities to promote their knowledge of letters and print, as well as their writing skills. However, the practice of targeting groups of children with similar learning needs is not sufficiently developed. At the beginning of a session, children spend time in their home bays, often engaged in activities that help them to recognise letters and words and most children can recognise and name some letters from their names and some others. The story times at the end of sessions are well used and children are beginning to know how books work, to understand the words 'author', 'illustrator' and 'logo', to find the front of a book and to know that writing in English proceeds from left to right. Both teachers and nursery nurses tell stories very well, with good dramatic emphasis, and children are developing a love and knowledge of books and stories. Most children will not, however, meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy by the age of five.

Mathematics

75. There is good provision in the nursery for activities that effectively promote mathematical language and understanding. Many occasions are used to encourage counting, such as the number of children in a group or the number of coxcombs on the toy chicken's head which one child is modelling in playdoh. Many children entering the nursery have numeracy skills which are higher than their language skills and are more confident with counting and numbers than with other aspects of mathematics. The nursery has responded to this finding by putting special emphasis on the recognition of shapes and learning of shape names and there is at the moment a weekly song to teach a particular shape, which all children throughout the early years classes learn and take home as homework. This is an effective programme and children in the nursery and in reception are beginning to be able to identify shapes and talk about the number of sides and corners, as well as being able to count objects and to recognise some written numerals. Children are familiar with other number rhymes and games and some are beginning to understand mathematical language such as 'less than' and 'more than'. Children make good progress in the nursery and, in two of the reception classes, progress is either good or satisfactory; these children are likely to reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes in mathematical development by the age of five. However, in the remaining class children make slower progress as the curriculum provided for them is not fully meeting their learning needs.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. Children in nursery and reception classes are often able to talk about where they live and the way to the shops. Nursery children have followed routes around the school and can describe where different parts of it are. Some can name the different countries of origin of different children and a few can describe what they see on a wall display of India and name the country. The nursery has a display of animals in the past and the present and nursery children know that dinosaurs lived long ago and several know the names and characteristics of some dinosaurs. There is a display in the nursery which has screwdrivers and various mechanical artefacts, such as old radios and telephones for children to investigate and children are beginning to enquire and form ideas about how things work. Children also investigate the characteristics of materials such as sand and water and begin to understand the nature of living things by growing plants and looking after the nursery goldfish. No geography or history lessons were seen in the reception classes and the scrutiny of work did not indicate what work they had done previously. Their computer skills are good. Nursery children have the use of four computers in a small multi-purpose room and children in the reception classes have regular access to computers in the working areas. They develop good control of the mouse and keyboard and can make decisions about what they want the program they are using to do. In the nursery children make recognisable models, such as aeroplanes and buildings, from manufactured and recycled materials. In the reception year they use tools competently and sometimes modify what they are making to improve it; this was the case when children developed their work of the previous week by using a different medium, taking account of their earlier experience. Children make good progress in certain aspects of this area of their learning. By the age of five, most will have good foundations for technological learning but will be less secure in

their historical and geographical awareness, due to lack of sufficient planned opportunities.

Creative and aesthetic development

77. Children in the nursery and in the three reception classes have access to a good range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and often use these well to explore sound and sometimes rhythm. In the nursery, these are seldom used imaginatively - as an accompaniment to a story, for instance, or to develop children's knowledge of each instrument further. In the one lesson seen in a reception class, children played instruments rhythmically and made decisions about the quality of the sounds they made. Children take part in singing occasions, often with enjoyment, during their time in the home base area and in reception class lessons. They engage in imaginative play in the role play area and with small world materials, a doll's house and puppets in a small puppet theatre. Children are able to use a wide variety of materials to make pictures, including drawing objects like catkins from life, to paint and to make collages and models. They can make appropriate choices which result in attractive products. Good teaching, especially in the nursery, allows children to be independent and to complete their activities. Overall, most children are likely to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in this area by the time they are five.

Physical development

78. Children handle tools such as scissors, pencils and brushes as well as construction and malleable materials safely and with good control; standards in this aspect of physical development are good. In the outdoor area they use some small apparatus, such as bean bags and balls, to throw into nets, as well as larger equipment for sliding, balancing and climbing. Most children can do so confidently and with good control. Although the staff who are outside with the children do a little to encourage the development of physical skills, such as encouraging children to jump, they miss opportunities to develop children's throwing and catching skills or to put out more challenging apparatus such as a small obstacle race, or more demanding sliding and balancing apparatus, to enable children to develop their physical skills further. Wheeled vehicles are put out only twice a week. The transition class uses the outdoor area only twice a week, as a playtime rather than as part of the curriculum, but it has a designated physical education lesson in the school hall once a week as do the two reception classes. Generally, children make sound progress in this aspect of their learning.

ENGLISH

79. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments show that pupils' attainment was below the national average in reading and writing. It was very slightly lower in reading than in writing, and a little lower for boys than for girls. In both reading and writing, results were above the average for similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that overall attainment in English, at this stage in the year, is now in line with the national average.
80. The previous inspection found that attainment in speaking and listening was satisfactory or better; attainment in reading was varied, ranging from very good to that which was low, and attainment in writing was satisfactory overall, although there was also a wide range. No judgement was made in the written report about attainment in English as measured against national expectations but the key indicators show that the school was below these in reading and slightly lower in writing than in reading. Standards in both reading and writing have improved significantly in the last two years. There was a wide range of attainment in all aspects of English, with some pupils at the top of the key stage who were enthusiastic and competent readers and others who found the task difficult; some pupils who wrote and presented their work well and others who still had difficulties. This wide range still exists but attainment has improved for all pupils and there are now more who are reaching the higher standards. Standards are still higher in reading than in writing. There has been good school improvement in all aspects of English since 1996, particularly in the last two years.
81. There are well above average numbers of pupils with English as an additional language, many of whom come into school at the early stages of English acquisition and a number of these have refugee status. A number of children also enter the nursery with language delay and speech difficulties. Good management of pupils results in good behaviour and good relationships between

pupils and between pupils and staff. This ensures that pupils listen well to their teachers and, in some classes, the very good use of teachers' dramatic presentation effectively promotes pupils' understanding. Pupils also listen well to each other. However, their speaking skills are not as well developed and their talk often consists only of short sentences with a limited vocabulary. The work on the class text at the beginning of the Literacy Hour has a positive impact on pupils' speaking and listening skills through the introduction of a wider vocabulary and through engaging the pupils in thoughtful and interesting discussion or in dramatic representation of parts of the story. In a reception class in which the children had been studying the book 'Mrs Mopple's Washing Day', for instance, children, including some who could speak almost no English, expressed Mrs Mopple's feelings when she saw her muddy animals with great conviction and clarity.

82. Across the key stage, pupils develop an enjoyment of books. They learn to use several strategies to read unknown words and to predict what might happen next in a story. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils read with confidence and fluency, paying good attention to punctuation and meaning. Pupils can talk about the stories they have read and the characters in them. They are less able to compare one book with another or to recognise authors or different kinds of stories. However, work on the class text during the Literacy Hour is having a good effect on pupils' knowledge of a wide range of stories and their understanding of how books work; and they can talk about the fact that the book has an author and an illustrator and about the way the print is set out on the page. Pupils generally show interest in and sometimes enthusiasm for this part of their day. Although some teachers do not pay enough attention during the guided reading time to a discussion of the text or the vocabulary to promote pupils' interest and full understanding, overall, the guided reading groups, which are part of the Literacy Hour, are also developing pupils' acquisition of reading skills. Attainment in reading is good.
83. During the Literacy Hour, pupils engage in work which effectively promotes their knowledge of phonics and punctuation. However, in some classes, much of the work given to the different groups of pupils is mundane and does not engage their interest or enthusiasm. In these classes there is not a sufficient balance between the learning and practice of these writing skills and their use for a range of purposes. In only a minority of classes do pupils work sufficiently on different kinds of fiction, letters, reports, instructions or poetry. Although writing in other subjects such as history and geography occurs, this is limited because of the small amount of time given to the foundation subjects until now, although the school is developing this aspect of its work. In most classes, pupils have handwriting lessons additional to the Literacy Hour. Most pupils are learning how to form letters correctly but very few of the oldest are beginning to use a cursive script. Pupils' standards in writing, though improving, are not as high as they are in reading.
84. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, have appropriate targets set for them in their Individual Education Plans and make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language also have skilled support from the specialist teachers but the time these teachers have in the school is scant for the number of pupils who would benefit. Many class teachers have a good understanding of the activities and the classroom support that will enable these children to make progress, although in a few classes the pupils are set inappropriate and uninteresting tasks. In a reception class, for instance, one group of low attaining and bilingual pupils spent their group activity time squabbling over magnetic letters with which to make their names on a magnet board; there were insufficient letters for them all to do so and some of them were able to write their names correctly already. By the end of the key stage, however, pupils with English as an additional language have made good progress overall.
85. The teaching of English is generally satisfactory and it is good or very good in some classes; there was also evidence of excellent teaching. Teachers' knowledge and understanding have been enhanced by the whole-school training for the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. They use the whole-class sessions well to teach reading strategies and a knowledge of how books work, and this part of the Literacy Hour is very successful in interesting, involving and enthusing pupils. Most teachers keep a good pace, present the book in a lively way and use good questioning skills. Teachers' planning follows the good school format and organisation of lessons is good. The weekly and daily planning does not always sufficiently identify the intended learning outcomes for the different groups. In some classes teachers do not present the group tasks in an imaginative way so as to interest the pupils and the tasks are too narrowly skills-based for too high a proportion of the week. Teachers' management of pupils is very good and all teachers have positive and

supportive relationships with the pupils and support pupils' good relationships with each other well. The school provides training for support staff and they are skilled and hard-working. Teachers mostly use support staff well and they make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Assessment in English is very thorough. The school keeps levelled and annotated writing samples and detailed reading records. Assessments are used to inform the grouping of pupils and the level of the tasks for each group. All pupils take books home to read and have other homework tasks, such as spellings to learn, regularly, usually at weekends.

86. Pupils' acquisition of understanding, knowledge and skills in English is generally good and where the best teaching occurs it is often very good. The nursery assessments on entry and the baseline assessments in the reception classes show that most children start school with low competence in all aspect of English. By the time they leave the school, they can read a book with good understanding. There is steady progress in the basic writing skills. Pupils learn to form their letters correctly, to know the spelling of an increasing number of words and to make good attempts to write others. However, pupils do not generally develop their competence as independent writers sufficiently and do not develop cursive handwriting skills. The oldest pupils show a good understanding of what their teachers say to them and begin to be able to make thoughtful contributions to discussion, for instance, when comparing texts in the Literacy Hour. They work diligently and with good effort and concentration, especially when tasks they are given are appropriate to their attainment and have been presented to them in an interesting and imaginative way.
87. An experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator for English has recently been appointed. She has a useful monitoring role and plans to focus it on raising standards, particularly in writing and those groups of pupils, such as boys and pupils of African/Caribbean origins, some of whose attainment is too low. The school has started to analyse its assessment results to find out which groups of pupils are not achieving as well as others and also which aspects of English need to be developed further and the English co-ordinator is using this information to guide her action plan. The leadership of the headteacher and of the co-ordinator shows a clear intention to raise standards and they have started to plan effective strategies for doing so. Resources are sufficient, of good quality and well organised. All classes have well-organised book areas and listening areas and these are attractive and inviting in most classrooms. There is a small and comfortable library with a selection of books, which is about to be increased. Both book areas and the library have a good selection of books which are bilingual or which show the life of other countries and cultures and bilingual examples of writing are used well around the school to celebrate the diversity of the school's intake and to increase pupils' knowledge of writing and scripts. The library is too small to be used by a whole class but it is also not used by groups or individuals for browsing, research or for promoting a wider knowledge of books, authors or genres. Pupils are not learning library skills and there is nothing in the library to introduce pupils to the classification system used.

MATHEMATICS

88. At the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards of attainment in mathematics are in line with the national average and there is evidence of higher attainment in two of the Year 2 classes. Throughout the school, pupils of different abilities make good progress and standards have continued to rise since the last inspection.
89. This improvement reflects the findings of the national tests and assessments over the last four years, which show a steady rise in the standards attained. While the school's most recent overall results were in line with the national average, the number of pupils achieving Level 3 was above average; overall results were also well above those of schools with a similar intake. In the past, girls have attained more highly than boys but inspection findings show that there is no significant difference in achievement between the sexes. Similarly, there is little difference in the attainment of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and the school's focus on raising the attainment of African/Caribbean boys is having a positive effect on their achievement.
90. The school's nursery classes offer a rich and stimulating mathematical environment and provide a sound foundation for numeracy. Children's ability to count and sort, recognise simple shapes and recreate patterns is built upon in their reception year and they are well prepared for the dedicated

mathematics lesson that is part of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in their understanding and use of numbers; the majority have sound understanding of number bonds to ten and count in tens up to, and back from, one hundred. Through practical shopping activities they learn to recognise coins and calculate small amounts by totalling the value of the coins. Some of the more able pupils understand the concept of giving change, as was evident in a lesson when they played at buying and selling books and independently increased the amounts of money needed for their purchases.

91. Their ability to measure in non-standard and standard units is developed in Year 2 and, by this stage, pupils recognise that different units and measures are required for different purposes; they know that a ruler is not the best equipment for measuring kilometres. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils possess good number skills. They enjoy mental arithmetic and most display confidence in using mental strategies to add and subtract numbers up to 20 and beyond. They count in twos, fives and tens and many have begun to find methods of adding and subtracting numbers with at least two digits. They identify and use halves and quarters, recognise the properties of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, describe positions using simple co-ordinates and re-construct reflective symmetry in different forms. Following the last inspection, opportunities have been planned for pupils to extend their basic concepts through exploratory and investigative activities; a good example of this occurred when a Year 2 class worked in pairs to make, complete and discuss symmetrical patterns using a wide range of materials. At the end of the key stage pupils discuss their work and are beginning to explain their thinking; this was the case when pupils were able to discuss the ways they had arrived at their answers to problems, involving the comparison of different heights, in a lesson on measures. Where work is recorded, pupils use more than one standard written method; generally, their work is well presented but, in some cases, untidy presentation masks the accuracy of their calculations.
92. A significant contributory factor to their attainment is pupils' enjoyment of mathematics. They respond very positively to the brisk, challenging questions that begin all lessons, are eager to participate and pleased with their own and others' success. During group or paired activities they co-operate well and remain focused on their tasks, using equipment sensibly and carefully. There is no evidence of time being wasted or pupils having to queue, as was the case in the last inspection. They often choose to continue mathematical activities after a lesson is over, are keen to take work home and enjoy showing what they have done to others. This was the case when six Year 2 boys proudly showed the geoboards on which they had made symmetrical patterns with elastic bands and pupils in another Year 2 class excitedly explained how, for homework, they had made the paper outlines of their body shapes as part of their work on measures.
93. There is evidence of pupils using their mathematical skills in different areas of the curriculum. In science they read the temperatures shown on a thermometer and were able to use the negative scale in one Year 2 lesson. Their work in geography incorporates their knowledge of co-ordinates and they identify the shapes used in local buildings. Younger pupils estimated the amount of material needed and size of the puppets they were making in a design and technology lesson. While there is some evidence of information technology being used to support mathematics, this is an area for further development, as was the case in the last inspection.
94. The overall quality of teaching is good; it is never less than satisfactory; the majority of lessons are good or very good and there was an example of excellent teaching. Lessons are carefully planned, have a clear structure and contain a good balance of activities; pupils know the procedures and what is expected of them and use their time well. The most successful lessons are lively and purposeful. In these sessions, teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge; they conduct activities at a brisk pace, ask questions to challenge pupils of different abilities and explain and demonstrate to good effect. They use plenary sessions effectively to ensure that pupils understand and can explain what they have learned. In the lesson where teaching was judged to be excellent, every opportunity was used to reinforce and develop the pupils' learning; during the paired activities, the class was drawn together on a number of occasions to focus on particular aspects and good examples of work were shown to strengthen and extend understanding.
95. A contributory factor of the good teaching is the shared planning undertaken in different year groups. Teachers follow the yearly teaching programmes detailed in the National Numeracy Strategy, identify the key vocabulary and questions to be asked, set group targets, organise the

sharing of resources and plan activities based on prior attainment. There is occasional evidence of work being insufficiently matched to pupils' different abilities but, generally, the good support provided by members of the support staff ensures that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Relevant termly assessments have been devised, some of which have involved parents, and pupils' coverage and understanding of their work is checked on a weekly basis.

96. Mathematics is very effectively led and managed by the knowledgeable, experienced and enthusiastic co-ordinator. In-service training, provided within the school and through local and national courses, has enabled the school to implement the National Numeracy Project followed by the National Strategy. Very good resources have been purchased to support the teaching of mathematics and these are in evidence in every area of the school; all class and shared areas provide a rich and stimulating mathematical environment. The co-ordinator is involved in monitoring teaching and learning and the development of this monitoring programme should help to raise standards further by ensuring that tasks are always matched to pupils' ability and there is consistency in the way work is presented. Providing teachers with the opportunity to observe some of the excellent and very good practice that exists within the school should also help to make satisfactory teaching good.

SCIENCE

97. The school's 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments show that, at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was just below the national average for pupils reaching the national standard (Level 2) and well above the national average for those exceeding this standard (Level 3). The school's results compare favourably with similar schools. Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection in 1996. In that year standards were well below the national average with only 61 per cent attaining level 2 and above against a national average of 84 per cent.
98. Inspection findings confirm that trend. Observations of lessons show that the present Year 2 pupils, at this stage in the year, are achieving in line with national expectations. The scrutiny of pupils' recorded work, along with the observation of lessons, shows that pupils are developing their scientific knowledge and understanding progressively. The school has worked hard to improve its standards. Effective development of the subject, following a careful analysis of the test results, has led to this improvement. A new planning format has been introduced and teachers jointly plan units of work supported by an improved scheme of work. Monitoring of the subject by the co-ordinator along with staff in-service training and the opportunities provided for the co-ordinator to work alongside teachers in classrooms, has contributed to this improvement.
99. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were observed carrying out an experiment to ascertain which insulators keep water hot. They used a glass thermometer safely, made links with numeracy by counting in tens and twos as the red line in the thermometer rose and fell and knew what made a fair test. While there is variability in the recorded work between the classes containing Year 2 pupils, there is evidence in all classes of pupils planning, hypothesising and carrying out experiments. Appropriate coverage of all the Attainment Targets of the National Curriculum is evident in the work; progress since the beginning of the academic year is good in two of the classes and satisfactory in the others.
100. In Year 1, while progress in lessons ranged from satisfactory to good, there was less recorded work on which to base a judgement about progress over time. When making a hat to keep the class toy bear dry, pupils were able to name materials and suggest reasons why these may or may not be suitable for the purpose. Some pupils, through experimenting, were able to describe which materials were most suitable for the hat, while others used pictures and simple sentences to record the properties of the materials.
101. Pupils' attitudes towards science are good. They enjoy experimenting and are delighted when their hypotheses are correct. When responding to their teachers' questioning, they are able to contribute their own ideas clearly and confidently. In all the lessons observed, pupils behaved well, worked co-operatively with their peers and showed a high level of respect for their teacher and each other.

102. The quality of teaching in science is never less than satisfactory; often it is good and there is evidence of very good teaching. Teachers plan in year groups using a common format and guided by the school's scheme of work. Learning outcomes are clearly identified and work is differentiated, usually by outcome. In the case of pupils with special educational needs and for those acquiring English as an additional language, access is supported by the use of additional adults. These support members of staff are well informed by the class teachers, are knowledgeable and contribute significantly to the standards achieved. Where teaching is very good, expectations are high, teachers' questioning is challenging and work is closely matched to the pupils' learning needs. Satisfactory teaching would be improved if more opportunities were given to the pupils to bring their own ideas to the task and there was less teacher control of investigations and experiments. In all lessons, teachers' classroom management skills are effective and meaningful links are made to literacy and numeracy whenever possible.
103. Since the last inspection, science has undergone significant and successful development. Following an analysis of teacher assessments and the realisation that planning from a topic basis did not allow for appropriate coverage of all the Attainment Targets, a decision was made to teach science through discrete units and the time allocated to the teaching of science was increased. The previous subject co-ordinator, who is still a member of staff, was allocated time to work alongside teachers, building confidence and modelling good practice. All staff's views were sought on the subject and in addition a bank of assessments was introduced at the end of the last academic year. At the beginning of this academic year another member of staff took over the leadership of the subject and continued to build on the achievement of her predecessor. Both these teachers show commitment and enthusiasm, have attended longer science courses and have been the providers of in-service education. The co-ordinator has monitored the recorded work of pupils and observed teaching and learning in classrooms, giving feedback to colleagues following her observations; she also makes an annual report to the governing body. Both co-ordinators have made a significant contribution to the overall improvement in science. Teachers select from the available resources and use them well but the amount of resources available is barely adequate and more purchasing is necessary.

ART

104. Good standards are achieved in art. During the week of the inspection it was possible to observe only four lessons, due to timetable restrictions and the fact that for three classes art was not taught. Judgements are therefore based upon additional evidence seen in display in classrooms and in public areas around the school.
105. Across the key stage pupils use a range of techniques when painting and making collage with a wide range of materials and using clay, to express ideas of colour, texture shape and pattern; a good example of this was seen in the hall display celebrating the work of different authors. Pupils are introduced to colour mixing, simple repeat patterns, printing techniques and modelling in three dimensions using clay and dough. They are taught to evaluate their own designs and to improve them. Pupils in a reception class demonstrated sound skills when working on modelling animals. Others draw aliens and learn from the efforts of fellow pupils how to absorb and adapt ideas to their own work. In Year 1 work on designing houses, pupils also learn how to refine and improve their initial attempts. They study shape and pattern and use objects such as paint brushes and different small artefacts when designing and modifying work. Older pupils in Year 2 study the work of great artists, for example Monet. They look at colour and learn how to use water to modify tints, blending shades well. They understand the effect of light and shade and show the movement of the sea by using different brush strokes. They are learning to appreciate their own work and say what they like about the work of others.
106. Pupils enjoy their work and the good quality of display enhances the learning environment. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory and, in half the lessons observed, it was good. In one lesson the main components of the subject were missing and the skills of the pupils were not developed sufficiently.
107. Teachers know their pupils well and verbally assess their work with them but there is no school portfolio of assessed work to ensure that their assessments are recorded and accurate. Long-term

planning is unsatisfactory as there is no policy for art and no oversight of provision to ensure that the key elements of the Curriculum are fully met. Art features as part of the overall topic planning; time is inconsistent and varies across classes. There is no current co-ordinator for art. While skills are carefully developed in lessons and are evident in display, there is no completed scheme of work showing the systematic development of knowledge and understanding, which leads to new set targets for each year group.

108. Resources are satisfactory and are available to all pupils. The work of all pupils is celebrated in the consistently high quality of school display.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. While there were few opportunities to observe teaching in the previous inspection inspectors judged standards to be satisfactory. Their report stated that there was no up-to-date policy or scheme of work and that there was a need to ensure curriculum continuity. This is still the case.
110. It was possible to observe only one lesson at Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Consequently there is insufficient information to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. Judgements about strengths and weaknesses in the subject are based on a scrutiny of present and past work, a 'show and tell' assembly, photographic evidence and discussions with pupils.
111. In both year groups, pupils are provided with the opportunity to work with reclaimed materials, textiles and construction kits. When designing and making models of their bedroom, pupils in Year 2 were able to draw upon their own knowledge to help them to generate their ideas. In discussion, they were able to refer to their model when giving an account of the difficulties they had encountered in its making and explain how they overcame their difficulties.
112. In the Year 1 lesson observed, pupils practised and developed their skills through the focused task of making a puppet. They were able to refer to their freehand drawings produced the previous week, clarifying their ideas through discussion, and the majority of pupils could make suggestions about how they were going to proceed. All pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs, made progress.
113. In this lesson, pupils displayed a high level of concentration and perseverance. They behaved well, were enthusiastic and shared their success with each other and their teacher; the premises manager, on his way to carry out a maintenance task, was waylaid and invited to share in their success.
114. Scrutiny of teachers' plans shows that all teachers plan for design and technology but their planning is insufficiently detailed and is not supported by an up-to-date policy, nor is there a scheme of work.
115. When given the opportunity to engage in design and technology, pupils achieve across a range of skills and make progress. However, the amount of time allocated to the subject results in limited experiences for the pupils. Skills and techniques are not taught and developed progressively and, as a consequence, pupils do not achieve as highly as they should. There is a lack of evaluation of the school's current practice and of a whole-school decision about exactly what is to be taught in each class to ensure that the key elements of the subject are present within the limited time available. The subject is currently without a curriculum leader. While the school is well resourced for construction and consumable materials, the resources stored centrally are only satisfactory and more purchases will need to be made as more emphasis is placed upon the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

116. The previous inspection found that attainment in geography was average and that pupils were making satisfactory progress. It mentions weather and local studies but not any studies of another place. Elements of geography such as scale and features of the environment were not generally taught. There was no co-ordinator for geography and there were insufficient resources for small area studies such as photographs.

117. Four lessons in geography were seen during the inspection. Additional evidence was taken from the scrutiny of pupils' work, an examination of wall and other displays, an interview with the newly appointed co-ordinator for history and geography and conversations with staff and pupils.
118. Inspection findings indicate that, although in the individual lessons pupils' attainment was satisfactory, too little time is given to the subject throughout pupils' years in the school. There has not been a scheme of work until now to ensure continuity and progression and some key aspects of the subject are not covered.
119. In the younger classes, pupils keep a simple class record of the weather which introduces them to appropriate vocabulary to describe this feature of places. This was appropriately extended in one Year 1 class with work on Bimla Bear who travelled to different countries which are hot, cold or rainy, with pupils drawing the clothes he would need in the different countries. A few pupils could name the countries and many drew suitable clothing for him to wear in the different weather conditions. They had little idea whether the countries were far or near or whether it stayed that temperature all year, but most knew that they live in London where it often rains! Pupils have gone on local walks and one class used this starting point very well to develop geographical enquiry, with help, finding places they knew on a local map and discussing leisure and other facilities in the local area and their use.
120. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand some simple map skills. With help, for example, Year 2 pupils are able to use an index, find the page and use co-ordinates to find a given place. They are not able to find a route on an underground map, however, because this is a new activity which they have never tried before. A scrutiny of the walls showed that pupils have gone on local walks and been encouraged to notice the doors, windows, walls and roofs. They have drawn their own houses and written their addresses. Teaching and learning in these lessons and activities were sound and good in one of the lessons seen. However, almost no geographical work was seen in pupils' past work and conversations with pupils show very little past experience in geography and little development of geographical skills. Opportunities have been missed to promote pupils' learning in geography; the annual school trip to the seaside has not been used for the study of another place and the school has not collected resources for local studies, other than a local map.
121. The school has now adopted a good scheme of work and a co-ordinator for the subject has just been appointed. The co-ordinator plans to take in teachers' plans regularly and check them against the scheme and also to collect samples of pupils' work to verify quality.

HISTORY

122. The previous inspection found that attainment in history was satisfactory and so was the quality of teaching. At that time there was no co-ordinator. The subject was taught through topics, not all of which lent themselves to historical enquiry and this aspect was not well developed. The school lacked first hand sources. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.
123. Only two lessons in history were seen, one in a Year 1 class and one in a Year 2 class. Additional evidence was taken from the scrutiny of pupils' work, an interview with the co-ordinator for history and geography, a scrutiny of displays and conversations with staff and pupils.
124. Conversations with pupils and the evidence seen in the scrutiny of walls and in displays indicate that there are gaps in pupils' learning, although the teaching and learning in the lessons seen was sound in one lesson and good in the other. Very little time has been given to the subject and there has, until now, been no scheme of work to ensure coverage, particularly of key elements.
125. Pupils have covered some of the areas of study. They have learnt about the lives of famous people; for example, as part of Black Achievement Week, which the school celebrates regularly, pupils learnt about Mary Seacole and Martin Luther King and they can remember various facts about their lives. In the two lessons seen, pupils were investigating everyday life in the past. In one lesson there was a good use of an artefact, a slate, which led to a comparison with the present day chalk and rubber and pupils were developing historical enquiry well. In the other lesson, pupils discussed similarities and differences in the everyday lives of people of the present day compared to people living at the beginning of the 20th Century but had almost no artefacts to support the discussion. Within the scrutiny of work there was evidence of some mundane and uninteresting activities, consisting, for instance, of cutting out and sticking pictures into exercise books. Pupils do not develop the historical skills well. There was little evidence of much use of reference books or other documents to aid historical enquiry. Conversations with pupils showed that they had not developed a sense of chronology well and there were no time lines, even from pupils' personal history, either on the walls or in pupils' past work.
126. In the two lessons seen, teaching was sound in one and good in the other. In the good lesson, the teacher shared her enthusiasm and interest with the class, had planned the resources for the lesson well and kept a good pace. She used good questioning to make the pupils think and used the support staff well. She had good subject knowledge. The work seen indicates that subject knowledge is very inconsistent among teachers. In one class, for instance, the pupils had done very good quality work in science, showing good coverage and good understanding by the teacher; the same books contained two scrappy, undemanding pieces of work in history which showed quite poor subject knowledge by the same teacher. There has been no staff in-service training in any aspect of the subject.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

127. The last inspection report judged standards in communicating and handling information to be satisfactory but judged the standards attained in control technology to be low, set against national standards. Standards have now improved and overall attainment is judged to be satisfactory with some higher attainment in both aspects of the subject. The school has worked very hard to improve its standards and resources. Information technology is now an integral part of the learning process and teachers' planning is now guided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) scheme of work.
128. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to extend their mathematics work on co-ordinates by controlling a 'roamer' on screen. Through discussion they understood the need to issue instructions, recognised that instructions could be repeated and used the keyboard confidently to move the 'roamer' on screen. Pupils were able to work out why things went wrong and were able to self-correct. These Year 2 pupils gave clear instructions on how to print their work and knew that the Alpha Smart had to be connected to a main computer.
129. Pupils in Year 1 supported their work in literacy by using an Alpha Smart hand-held computer. They

extended their understanding of the shared text and improved their spelling and knowledge of words containing 'in' by reorganising the words entered by their teacher. Less able pupils, working with a support member of staff, were able to identify words containing 'i' and entered them into the machine. Pupils in this year group working with a member of the Leytonstone Education Achievement Project (LEAP) using small work-pad computers were able to support their work in literacy by completing the last word of a rhyme and subsequently entering the whole line on to the computer. They selected a suitable picture from a bank of pictures to enhance their finished work. All pupils within this group knew that, when a word was underlined in red on screen, this word was not in the computer dictionary. One boy could explain the reason why the computer accepted his name, as he had earlier entered it into the dictionary. Pupils of all abilities, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress; they acquire knowledge, skills and understanding systematically.

130. Pupils are very enthusiastic about information technology and most are interested in using the computer and are involved in their learning. They concentrate and behave well and respond positively when asked to collaborate; equipment is used well and handled carefully. All pupils display a pride in their work and a willingness to share their ideas with their peers. They respect the advice given to them by the adults working with them and are receptive and respond to the careful questioning.
131. Teaching overall was judged to be good although there is evidence of satisfactory and very good teaching. The good teaching was characterised by secure subject knowledge, clear planning that guided teaching, good use of support staff and tasks which matched the pupils' learning needs. In the very good lesson observed, it was the enthusiasm and questioning of the teacher which enhanced the learning for the pupils. Satisfactory teaching would be improved by making the activity more interesting and enjoyable. The knowledgeable support staff contribute significantly to the standards achieved. Teachers plan in year groups, identifying opportunities for information technology and guided by the QCA scheme of work. While they keep records of their pupils' experiences, assessment procedures generally are underdeveloped. The school is addressing this weakness by buying into the LEA's assessment initiative and a date for the commencement of training has already been identified.
132. The co-ordinator shadowed the previous co-ordinator for a half term before assuming responsibility for the subject almost a term ago. Since his appointment he has addressed his own learning needs by attending a course on web building and the needs of his colleagues through informal advice and workshops to introduce new software programs. Parents have been helped to understand the place of ICT in their children's learning through a morning session; future sessions are also planned. The school has been selected to be in the first phase of the National Grid for Learning and the School's Development Plan was amended to take account of this. One network and web-site have already been set up and three whole-school training sessions have been planned to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and understanding to make the best use of development in the subject. Hardware resources are now very good and money has been identified to purchase the necessary software as developments take place. During the last term the LEA has monitored the teaching and learning in information technology and the school has taken account of their observations.

MUSIC

133. Good improvements have been made in this area of the curriculum since the last inspection. The quality of pupils' singing is good, instruments are used effectively to develop understanding of the musical elements and teachers are more confident because of the guidance provided by the school's clear scheme of work. Throughout the school, pupils are actively engaged in making and responding to music through performing and composing; however, as was the case in the last inspection, opportunities to listen to and appraise music remain less well developed.
134. Pupils sing a wide repertoire of songs from different cultures - confidently, sensitively and from memory - and develop good control of breathing, dynamics, rhythm and pitch. This was evident in the Key Stage 1 singing session when a range of songs was sung with an increasing awareness of others and the occasion. In this same session pupils also responded enthusiastically to the changing character and mood of different pieces of music by moving rhythmically and with good

control. In their class lessons they develop knowledge and understanding of the musical elements, use sounds from a variety of sources and learn how to communicate musical ideas. In Year 1 pupils experiment with texture and recognise that sound becomes 'bigger' and 'thicker' as more voices or instruments are added to a song. They use sounds to create musical effects, as was the case when they developed a sound picture of a rain storm, using body percussion, and represented raindrops, drizzle and a heavy downpour in their performance. Pupils in Year 2 classes learn about timbre and recognise the different qualities of the sounds made by percussion instruments. They use the correct names for the very wide range of instruments available and play them carefully and appropriately.

135. These instruments, which come from different countries and cultures, make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment in and enjoyment of music. They are accessibly stored in the room known as the forum, in which all class music lessons take place. The forum is a welcoming, quiet, 'special' space and provides an excellent environment for music-making. Pupils respond positively in their lessons; they are interested and enthusiastic, listen carefully and take turns readily. This is the case for pupils at all levels of ability.
136. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good overall; it is never less than satisfactory, is often good and sometimes very good. While teachers have different levels of confidence and expertise, they are well supported in their teaching by the detailed scheme of work, developed by the co-ordinator. All teachers are prepared to take a lead in singing and demonstrate and explain effectively; this means that their pupils are clear about what is expected. Teachers manage their classes well, value the contributions made by pupils and allow time for repeating and rehearsing. Lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace and, where teaching is at its best, contain a balance of activities that incorporate opportunities for listening to recorded music and sounds.
137. While listening to music is a positive feature of some assemblies, as was the case when the deputy headteacher drew pupils' attention to a piece of Native American flute music, this aspect of the school's work is underdeveloped. The knowledgeable and purposeful co-ordinator is aware of this and has built up a reasonable collection of taped music from a wide range of cultures and styles, in addition to including a time and suggestions for listening within each section of the scheme of work. She provides a very good role model for her colleagues and is well placed to develop a monitoring programme which should help to ensure that there is full coverage of the key aspects of music and standards of teaching and learning are raised further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. While no lessons involving large apparatus were seen during the last inspection, judgements made on the other aspects of the subject – gymnastics, games and dance – reported the standards to be just above those expected nationally. This is now not the case and standards have been adversely affected by the lack of opportunities for pupils to refine, practise and improve the key skills, due to the insufficient amount of time allocated to the subject. Additional time is allocated in the summer months for pupils to swim and to give them the opportunity to make use of the pool housed in the on-site junior building. During the week of the inspection only dance was shown on the timetable for both Years 1 and 2 and this for only 45 minutes.
139. In the two dance lessons observed, attainment was judged to be satisfactory. Year 2 pupils performed movements safely and were aware of their own space and that of others. Through practice they refined and improved their movements, linking them and making them into a sequence. Pupils in Year 1 developed their co-ordination, balance and poise through exploring moods and feelings when flying an imaginary kite. They demonstrated their ability to travel, turn and jump as the imaginary wind made flying a kite difficult and they responded rhythmically to the music
140. Pupils dress appropriately for physical education. Most pupils are able to listen carefully and behave well but in the Year 2 lesson inactivity led to some unsettled behaviour.
141. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching.

However, in the two lessons observed one was judged to be satisfactory while the other was judged to be good. The good teaching was characterised by very good subject knowledge, good class management, clear planning and teaching that displayed enthusiasm and imagination. In the satisfactory lesson insufficient emphasis was placed on performing and composition and too much on training. Teaching is guided by the Durham LEA scheme of work.

142. The co-ordinator assumed the leadership responsibility for physical education at the beginning of this academic year. His first task was to update the policy and the new policy, in draft, is now ready for implementation. The staff have been issued with the units of work to be covered each term but these are still based on an unsatisfactory allocation of time. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a clear view of the way forward. He is aware of the need to look carefully at the transition between the early years and Key Stage 1, to ensure that development is continuous and progressive. Kits have been organised for use in the playground at lunchtime and in-service education is planned for the midday meals staff. The large apparatus is of a satisfactory standard but the small apparatus, stored in the PE cupboard, is only barely satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

143. The standards attained, by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1, meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and, overall, pupils of different levels of ability make satisfactory progress in their learning. There is no evidence of the 'narrow range of experiences' described in the last inspection report and time for religious education is now explicit in the weekly teaching programmes. However, although the school states that six per cent of its teaching time is allocated to religious education, in reality this is not the case for most classes. Pupils learn about religion and from religion, not only through their designated lessons, but from the celebration of festivals and the sharing of experiences within the school's rich multi-cultural community.
144. Pupils develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions and relate what they learn to their own experiences and thoughts; this was the case when a boy in a Year 2 class participated in a discussion on prayer, following a visit to the local church, and talked about his own experience of praying with his father at the mosque. While the school has made the decision to focus on Judaism and Islam, in line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, pupils also learn about the other religions represented within their community. They benefit from teachers and parents of different faiths sharing their experiences and beliefs. Evidence of this was provided during the inspection when a Muslim parent governor talked to pupils in Year 1 about customs and prayer practices among the Islamic community; following this pupils learned about the importance of the Qu'ran and other special books. Pupils in Year 2 visit the local mosque and church and recognise the importance of these buildings; they begin to understand the significance of religious symbols and handle artefacts with care and respect.
145. The implicit aspects of religious education are an important part of the life and work of the school and the high quality of pupils' attitudes, relationships and social development provides clear evidence of this. Pupils have positive attitudes to themselves and others; they are open-minded, respect other people's views and look after their environment. Younger pupils talk about what makes them sad and recognise the importance of their friends; pupils in Year 2 share their experiences and talk about things that are important to them.
146. This open-mindedness is a reflection of the teachers' own approach. In one Year 2 class, the fact that the teacher shared her feelings about why certain books were important to her prepared the way for pupils to do the same. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there is evidence of good and very good teaching; it is good overall. Planning throughout the school is consistent, supported by the scheme of work developed by the co-ordinator from the Agreed Syllabus. Good use is made of 'circle times' to encourage thinking, talking and listening skills. Very good teaching is characterised by purposeful and effective questioning, careful preparation and appropriate pace.
147. However, in spite of the clear guidelines detailed in the school's policies and scheme of work, there is some evidence of confusion between the requirements of religious education and collective worship. This is generally due to an attempt to incorporate both within very limited time. While the knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator has done a great deal to increase the knowledge and

understanding of her colleagues - by supporting their planning and demonstrating the special nature of collective worship - religious education, as a subject in its own right, is not given a sufficiently high profile within the school. Resources for the subject are only adequate and are supplemented by teachers' own collections and artefacts brought in by different families. An increased budget, allocation of teaching time and in-service education, along with the involvement of the co-ordinator in the monitoring programme, should help to raise standards in the rich environment of this multi-faith school still further.