

INSPECTION REPORT

Altmore Infant School

LEA area: London borough of Newham

Unique reference number: 102709

Headteacher: Mrs J Holmes

Reporting inspector: Mr N Sherman
16493

Dates of inspection: 10 - 14 January 2000

Inspection number: 189008

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:	County
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Altmore Avenue London
Postcode:	E6 2BX
Telephone number:	0181 472 3555
Fax number:	0181 470 6126
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Evans
Date of previous inspection:	11/7/1996 – 14/7/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr N Sherman	Rgl	Art	What sort of school is it?
		Religious education	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Special educational needs	How well are pupils or students taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs G Ellisdon	Lay inspector	N/A	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs A Fraser	Team	Science	N/A
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
Mrs V Ives	Team	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
Mrs M Ashby	Team	Mathematics	N/A
		Music	
		Under fives	

Mr A Maula	Team	History	N/A
		Geography	
		Physical education	
		English as an additional language	
		Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates
51 St Andrew's Road
Chesterton
Cambridge
CB4 1EQ

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in East Ham in the London borough of Newham. Although pupils mostly come from the school's immediate area, there is a high movement factor within the school roll. For example, 10 per cent of the pupils currently in Year 2 did not commence their full time education at the school. The school also admits a number of pupils who are refugees. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are well below average. Forty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above average. At present, there are 305 pupils on roll with an additional 120 children who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. There is an equal number of boys to girls. At the time of the inspection, there were 100 children who were under-five. Pupils enter full time education at various points of the year. Those whose fifth birthday is in the autumn term enter in September. Those who become five in the latter part of the year enter full time education in January. The school population, as it was at the time of the school's previous inspection, continues to represent a wide cultural background. A wide variety of languages is spoken by pupils. Eighty-two per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language spoken. At present, there are four pupils with statements of special educational need with a further 54 pupils on the school's register for special educational needs.

The main priority for the school has been to raise the standards pupils attain in English, mathematics and science to a more acceptable level. In addition, further work has recently been started to improve the quality of learning in information technology. Such priorities are being developed in a school for which a further aim is to provide a secure environment for all pupils regardless of their background, race or gender.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Altmere Infant School is an effective school. Pupils enter with below average levels of attainment. By the age of seven, they attain standards in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science. Pupils attain such standards as a result of the good and sometimes very good teaching evident in many classes. Pupils enjoy their learning and work hard in lessons. With the exception of religious education, which lacks sufficient status in the school, the school has developed a broad curriculum that is well matched to pupils' needs. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, receive good support during the course of their learning. Assessment of pupils' progress in English and mathematics is good. The school has made good progress since its last inspection – especially in relation to raising the standards pupils attain. The school is well led, with a strong feature of the leadership of the school being the critical way in which it evaluates many aspects of its work. Such measures have provided the school a clear agenda to raise the quality of education. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

The school is very successful in:-

- promoting a high degree of racial harmony;
- ensuring that children in the Nursery and the Reception classes receive a good start to their education;
- ensuring that many pupils are interested in their school work and develop positive attitudes to their learning;
- providing a secure environment for all pupils;
- ensuring that the quality of teaching is good;
- assessing the pupils' rate of academic and personal progress in English and mathematics;
- reviewing the work of the school to ensure that all pupils achieve the standards they are capable of;
- ensuring that the leadership of the school is such that all who work at Altmere Infants are highly valued and given clear direction in the work they are asked to do;
- managing resources effectively for the benefit of all pupils.

What could be improved

- the depth and quality of religious education;
- the role that all members of the Governing Body could play in supporting and determining the strategic development of the school;
- the part that co-ordinators play in the overall management of the school;
- the information contained in pupils' end-of-year reports;
- assessment of pupils' academic progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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 made good progress since its last inspection. Effective action has been taken on the key issues highlighted for the school to develop. The curriculum for information technology, not in line with requirements at the time of the last inspection, now meets those requirements. The range and quality of resources for various subjects have been improved substantially and are having a positive impact on the work that pupils produce. The rate of attendance, judged poor in 1996, has improved satisfactorily. Another key issue for the school to address was to widen the influence of the senior management team on the work of the school. This has been successfully achieved. Particularly effective action, and as a result, progress, has been made in raising standards in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. In 1996, for example, standards were judged to be below the national averages in these three subjects. These have improved markedly over the past few years. The quality of teaching has also been improved. From being found to be unsatisfactory in nearly 20 per cent of lessons, now occurs in only three per cent. The majority of teaching is now of a good standard. Counter-balancing the good progress has been, in part, insufficient progress in improving the part that co-ordinators play in monitoring the quality of teaching in their subject areas. In addition, the lack of a number of governors on the Governing Body means that they, as a full board, are not able to support, monitor and evaluate the work of the school as effectively as they could.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	E	E	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	D	E	D	C	
Mathematics	C	C	D	C	

The information above shows that in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with schools similar to Altmore, pupils attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection findings indicate that by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with the national average in all three aspects. Close evaluation of the school's tests over a three-year period from 1997 indicate quite marked rising standards in all three elements, plus science. The school sets high targets for raising standards further. In mathematics and science, the school exceeded these for 1999. Standards in information technology are in line with the national expectation. Standards attained in religious education are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils attain appropriate standards for their age in art, design and technology, history, geography and physical education. Progress in religious education and music is unsatisfactory.

The children under five make good progress in their learning. By the age of five, the children attain

standards that are in line with what is nationally expected in mathematics, personal and social education, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. However, standards attained in language and literacy are below expectations. In all classes, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Pupils with English as an additional language as an additional language make satisfactory gains in their learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Many children, including those in the Nursery, enjoy their learning. Pupils use and treat the school's resources with care and respect.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. A strong feature of the school is the high degree of racial harmony among the wide number of cultural groups that form the school population.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships at all levels, are positive and focused sharply on ensuring that all pupils are made to feel secure in the school. Provision for personal development is satisfactory.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has made positive efforts to raise the level of attendance in the school over the past three years.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
71 lessons seen overall	good	good

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

The quality of teaching for children under-five is good. Teaching in both the Nursery and the Reception classes is good or better in just over seven out of ten lessons. Good emphasis is placed on children's learning through structured play. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is also good or better in nearly six out of ten lessons. Across the school, there is very little unsatisfactory teaching. Due and proper emphasis is placed on ensuring that all pupils learn the appropriate skills in literacy and numeracy. The quality of teaching in these areas is good – as is the range and depth of pupils' learning in these aspects. Some opportunities to use information technology during the course of everyday teaching are missed by some teachers. However, in general, the quality of teaching of information technology is satisfactory. The teaching of religious education is unsatisfactory: the teaching of the subject is often blurred with the teaching of personal and social education. Consequently, pupils do not get enough opportunity to explore religious ideas and themes. In addition, not all teachers are confident in the teaching of music. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of in religious education and music. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given good support in class, with their particular needs being well catered for by teachers and classroom assistants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Themes and topics are well planned and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Children under-five have a curriculum that is also well planned to meet their level of maturity. However, the subject of religious education does not receive enough time for it to be taught in sufficient depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers are astutely aware of the pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils' individual education plans are detailed and all teachers are mindful to refer to these when planning pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound. Pupils with English as an additional language are sufficiently supported by class teachers. However, not all classes have sufficient numbers of support staff to support the children in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. There are stronger features to the school's provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Provision for the pupils' personal and spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school gives pupils good support as they move from class to class. Assessment procedures in English and mathematics are consistently applied, giving teachers good information on the rate of pupils' progress. This information is carefully used to plan the next steps in their learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is a pivotal figure for the school and provides a clear and firm steer to the school's continued development. The senior management team ably supports her. There is a strong team spirit that centres sharply on raising standards in the school. However, the part that subject co-ordinators play in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is too limited.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The Chair and Vice-Chair of governors are regular visitors to the school and are kept well informed to developments. The Governing Body has a number of outstanding vacancies. Consequently, their role in providing and supporting the strategic development of the school is limited.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. A regular feature of the management of the school is the open and honest way that standards are evaluated. From such work, challenging yet attainable targets are set. Raising achievement is very much a focal point of the school's work.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Despite uncertainties in the budget owing to the constantly changing numbers in the school roll, great care is taken by the school to align expenditure to the income that it receives. The school provides good 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"> • the caring and family environment the school is seen to promote • the quality of relationships among pupils and adults • the values pupils learn in the school • the high degree of dedication and commitment from all the staff to the school • the quality of teaching • the standard of accommodation which parents feel is very good with the building also seen to be clean, bright and very safe • the standards of discipline and high expectations of behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the degree of information given to parents if their children start at the school at a later point in the academic year; • the range of musical experiences offered to pupils • the amount of information in pupils' end of year reports.

Inspectors fully support the parents' positive comments about the school. The school does have a warm and welcoming environment for all who visit and work in it. Relationships are very positive and there is a high degree of racial harmony at Altmore Infant School. Strong values – both academic and social - are expected and promoted. Inspectors also support the few concerns a small number of parents have of the school. With the high number of pupils who come to the school later in the academic year, information about the day-to-day routines of the school would be of benefit to parents. At present, the range of musical experiences offered to pupils is limited and this affects their progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Evaluation of the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments made by teachers in 1999 indicates that standards in reading at the expected and higher levels (Levels 2 and 3) were below average. In writing, standards were below the average at the expected and higher levels. In mathematics, standards were close to the average at the expected level, but below average at the higher level. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics. Analysis of the assessments made by teachers in science indicates that standards were below average at both the expected and higher levels.
2. When the results of the 1999 tests are compared with those for the preceding three years, they show a steady improvement in all three aspects. The school has focused sharply on raising standards in English, mathematics and science. In 1996, for example, around three in four pupils were attaining the national average in mathematics. This has now risen to nearly nine out of ten pupils. The school also has a very high turnover of pupils. Around one in four pupils in the last cohort of Year 2 pupils, for example, did not start their education at the school. Despite this high turnover of pupils, the school has managed to raise overall standards in the school to more acceptable levels.
3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in English, mathematics and science are at the level of the national expectation. The findings of the inspection differ from the findings of the National Curriculum tests. The difference is explained by the impact that the strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are having in the school and the natural variation in attainment levels of different cohorts of pupils. The school has set challenging but attainable targets to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. In most respects, particularly with respect to mathematics and science, these have been well met: in English, they have not been quite met. The school is aware of the need to raise standards at the higher levels – particularly in pupils' writing. Regular evaluation of the work pupils attain in this suggests that the school is on course to attain its targets.
4. Standards in speaking and listening are well below the national average. In literacy and numeracy, standards are average. The school pays good attention to promoting these skills through other subjects of the curriculum and this has a positive impact on the degree and rate of pupils' learning. Standards in information technology are in line with national expectations. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in art, design and technology, history, geography and physical education are in line with the pupils' ages and abilities. Standards in music are below average for the pupils' ages. With the exception of music, where standards have fallen, the school has made good gains in raising attainment in these subjects since its last inspection.
5. By the age of seven, in English, while most pupils are keen to speak, few of them do so confidently or with sufficient detail. Pupils' skills in listening are better. Nearly all pupils enjoy works of fiction, although their knowledge of the works of famous authors is limited for their age. Standards in reading are average. When writing, pupils construct simple sentences and realise the importance of demarcating these with full stops and capital letters. Standards are average. Overall, considering pupils' low attainment in English when they enter the school, they make good gains in their learning of English as they move from class to class.
6. In mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand the purpose of addition and subtraction and successfully solve mental arithmetic problems involving two-digit numbers. Pupils use mathematical language successfully and solve simple problems involving money. By the age of seven, most pupils are able to gather data and then represent this information in the form of simple data charts and diagrams. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning of mathematical ideas as they move from class to class.

7. In science, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are aware of what is meant by a force and are able to give examples of what constitutes a force. They recognise that many everyday household objects require electricity in order to work but that there are dangers if plugs and circuits are handled inappropriately. The good attention paid by the school to raise standards in literacy has improved the progress made by pupils in recording and presenting their science investigations. Standards in this aspect of their work are average.
8. In information technology, by the age of seven, pupils make sufficient gains in their understanding of the part that computers and other related technology equipment such as tape recorders plays in their everyday learning. Most pupils are able to use a range of software to support their learning. The rate of pupils' learning is satisfactory. In religious education, pupils make too few gains in their understanding of the Christian faith and how this compares to the main ideas in other faiths. The teaching of religious education has too little time for it to be taught effectively. Consequently, pupils' learning in religious education is unsatisfactory.
9. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning in other subjects. Good progress has been made by the school in raising standards in subjects such as design and technology that was judged to be below national expectations at the time of the school's last inspection. Good attention is paid by teachers to ensuring that pupils develop their design and technology skills such as cutting, measuring and sticking materials through other subjects of the curriculum such as mathematics and science. In art, pupils learn about the results of mixing paints and they make satisfactory gains in their appreciation of the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh. In history, pupils learn about famous kings and queens and in geography, pupils gain a secure knowledge in how to use simple maps. Good progress has been made in improving the quality of pupils' work in games as part of physical education. This was judged to be poor in 1996. Progress in music, and hence the gains pupils gain in appreciating and being able to play simple musical instruments, is unsatisfactory.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their learning. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the very well crafted learning plans that are devised by their class teachers and other support staff. While pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by teachers in lessons, the number of support staff in classes is quite small and, in part, hinders pupils' learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The parents' view that pupils are well behaved and have very good attitudes was confirmed during the inspection. The school's success in its aim to value every child contributes greatly to the development of these attributes. These, in turn, have a beneficial effect on the pupils' quality of learning and attainment.
12. Most children under-five settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery or reception class. They enjoy learning and are lively and responsive. They take turns with books and equipment, and use resources sensibly. They listen to others and to music carefully. They are keen to participate by, for instance, relating the tale of 'Rosie's Walk'.
13. These good approaches are further developed at Key Stage 1. Most pupils are eager to learn, enthusiastic and interested. They take care in presenting their work and are keen to talk about it with adults. Many respond to challenging tasks, persevering hard, for example, to obtain the required effect with a pencil in art, and showing pleasure when they succeed. In Year 2 pupils can work independently and maintain concentration without close supervision.
14. Relationships amongst all members of the school community are good. This contributes greatly to its supportive ethos. Key Stage 1 pupils co-operate well in groups and often help each other, for example when working in pairs at a computer. Play times are sociable occasions; pupils of all backgrounds play together harmoniously. Only one incident of bullying was seen during the inspection and there are no exclusions. Through the strong and supportive ethos of the school, pupils learn to respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. A good

example of this was seen during a sharing assembly when pupils listened attentively to others telling them about the Muslim festival of Eid. Pupils are positive about one another's efforts and achievements; for instance, they spontaneously clapped a boy who succeeded in counting in 10's from zero to one hundred for the first time in a numeracy lesson.

15. Pupils respond well to opportunities for their personal development. They willingly take responsibility for such things as returning registers to the office, getting books out or taking a younger pupil to the toilet and perform these duties conscientiously and with great pride. They look after equipment and take care of their own and the school's possessions.
16. The pupils' behaviour is good in classrooms and around the school, and at break and lunch times. They are courteous and considerate to each other and to adults; for example, many older pupils greet visitors with a smile and a pleasant "Good Morning". In lessons pupils put up their hands and wait to answer questions. After breaks and lunch times they queue in an orderly fashion and enter the school quietly. Occasionally, when lessons lack pace or pupils are unclear about what they should be doing, standards of behaviour are less acceptable.
17. The previous inspection reported poor attendance and punctuality. Since then both have improved and the level of unauthorised absences has reduced. Despite this, the overall attendance is still below the local education authority and national averages and a significant minority of pupils are brought a few minutes after the start of the school day at 8.55am and a number even later. Governors are determined to further improve attendance and, as part of a partnership support agreement with the Education Welfare Service, have set a target of 93.8 per cent. Over the last few years, the school has very strictly applied the '10 days leave of absence rule'. Many parents are now co-operating in this respect; far fewer pupils are removed for long holidays during term time. This has significantly contributed to the better overall attendance. Governors are hopeful that inclusion of clauses regarding attendance and punctuality in the newly introduced home-school agreement will help them achieve their goal.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was good or better in just over 60 per cent of lessons with very good teaching evident in 20 per cent of lessons. There is no variation in the quality of teaching in any of the year groups. However, the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen was evident in Year 1. The quality of teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection of the school. At that time, unsatisfactory teaching was found in one in five lessons. Since then, good emphasis has been placed by the school on raising teaching quality. This has been done by a programme of rigorous monitoring and ensuring that the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been effectively implemented.
19. Across the school, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is undertaken effectively. Teachers have a good understanding of the new requirements for each of these aspects. They plan work carefully, ensuring that where possible other subjects of the curriculum are used to teach and promote the pupils' skills. Stories, for example, are used to teach geography and provide a further useful base for developing pupils' literacy skills. In design and technology, pupils make 'clocks' and this helps to ensure that their estimating, measuring and cutting skills are being suitably developed. The teaching of basic information technology skills is generally undertaken effectively. However, some opportunities for the use of information technology in everyday lessons are not always taken by some teachers. The teaching of religious education and music is unsatisfactory. In the main, teachers lack the confidence and in music, the general knowledge

of teaching music effectively. Consequently, pupils do not make sufficient progress in these two subjects.
20. The teaching of children under five is at least good, sometimes very good and never less than satisfactory. In the Nursery, very good attention is paid by teachers and support assistants to ensuring that children learn effectively through the use of structured play. The classroom and

outside areas are carefully organised to support these principles. For example, an imaginative 'Pizza Express' shop has been created by teachers to develop children's early language skills. Here, children can 'order' a pizza to be delivered. Many areas have suitable and high quality learning resources that stimulate and promote the children's early language, numeracy, creative and physical skills. Children's learning is well planned and takes fully into account the guidelines given to schools nationally to plan children's learning. All adults have a good knowledge of the children through the regular daily assessment of the children's progress. This information is effectively used to plan the next steps in their learning.

21. The quality of teaching seen in the Nursery is successfully developed in each of the Reception classes. As children commence their full-time education, teachers are mindful to use the assessment information that is gained when children enter full time education to plan their learning. Very careful note is taken of the precise stages of each child's level of maturity and work matched accordingly. Teachers pay due attention to the fact that many children of Reception age need to learn to use practical equipment and successfully integrate this into their teaching literacy and numeracy. Children, for example, will practise the writing of letters using sponges or paint and toys, games and other equipment successfully developing the children's early ideas of number. Classrooms are bright and attractive. A strong feature of the teaching is the manner by which children are managed. All staff develop warm yet purposeful relationships with the children. This ensures that all children are comfortable in their first weeks of full-time education and this provides a good basis for children's further learning.
22. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and sometimes very good. Common features across all classes are the good attention paid by teachers to the promotion of teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. In most lessons seen, teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and a good knowledge of the pupils they teach. All classrooms are visually stimulating, with walls carrying, for example, 'word banks' or phonics as an aide for pupils in their writing. Due attention is paid also to the promotion of pupils' oral skills, with pupils being given every encouragement to speak clearly and articulately. Lessons are well planned, with lesson plans showing clearly what skills and ideas pupils are expected to learn during the course of a lesson. The final parts of lessons are used effectively to regroup pupils so that the teacher can question to explore the degree and depth of what pupils have learned. From this come clear steps to plan the next steps in their learning. Many lessons are organised to allow pupils to work in groups, which contributes well to aspects of their social development. In the main, pupils are well managed. However, the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was largely attributable to the less than satisfactory management of pupils. Where this happens, teaching does not sufficiently demonstrate the skills necessary to keep pupils motivated and pupils' learning falters.
23. All staff are mindful of the need to successfully integrate pupils with special educational needs into all parts of lessons. In this, they are successful. Careful assessments of pupils with special educational needs ensure that all staff have a good knowledge of the precise stages of each pupil's development. From this comes carefully prepared learning plans that highlight clearly what each pupil should do next in order to make good progress. The quality of these plans is good. Pupils with English as an additional language are also integrated successfully into lessons. Books and other display or learning materials are provided for the children in their own language and this boosts their confidence in using English. Where children's language needs are more severe, teachers prepare learning plans that highlight clearly what steps and teaching are necessary to move the pupils on in their learning.
24. Overall, the quality of teaching of all pupils in the school is such that they make good gains in their learning as they move from class to class.

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

25. The school provides a broad and mainly balanced curriculum. It includes all the relevant subjects of the National Curriculum and meets statutory requirements. However, the school does not meet statutory requirements with regard to the provision of religious education. The curricula for design and technology, information technology, music and physical education have improved since the previous inspection. These subjects have been suitably developed.

The school has successfully implemented the strategies for the literacy hour and the National Numeracy Project. Teachers use these initiatives effectively to maintain and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

26. The school offers children under five a stimulating programme of learning experiences, which provides a good balance between play and more structured work. The curriculum in the Nursery and reception classes considers the needs of children under five. It is based on the recommended areas of learning and gives the children a secure foundation, positive attitudes to learning and good preparation for work in Key Stage 1. A good start has been made in the Reception classes in using the literacy and numeracy strategies.
27. Overall, the curriculum prepares pupils effectively for the next stage of education. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of English language skills, creating a language rich environment. Due respect is given to the pupils' cultural heritage, as well as that of the wider community and all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and opportunities to learn and make progress. The curriculum inculcates tolerance, respect and good behaviour, provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to listen courteously to each other and promotes their understanding of right and wrong.
28. The Code of Practice for pupils who have special educational needs is firmly in place. These pupils receive work that is relevant to their needs and based on good assessment of their knowledge, skills and understanding. They have individual education plans that highlight their needs and set specific targets for improvement. These plans are reviewed termly and information from these reviews is used to plan pupils' work. A clear distinction is made between pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. However, as at the last inspection, only limited support is available for these pupils, but specialist staff make effective use of visual aids, artefacts and story props to enhance learning.
29. Both the literacy hour and the numeracy project are very successful in developing the pupils' basic skills and they have helped to raise standards in English and mathematics. All subjects have clear policies and suitable documentation is used as a basis for planning the subject areas. Teachers plan collaboratively across year groups and this is a strength of the school. It ensures continuity and progress in pupils' learning and gives effective support and guidance to teachers' preparation for lessons. Planning and implementation of the curriculum are monitored by the senior management team and by subject co-ordinators. Pupils' work, which shows the range of the curriculum subjects, is displayed carefully and thoughtfully by the teachers.
30. Although a governor has been identified to monitor literacy and numeracy, the number on the governing body is too few for a separate curriculum committee to be set up.
31. Some effective use is made of community resources to support the curriculum and for the pupils' personal development. For example Year 2 pupils' interest in books and reading skills are greatly enhanced by weekly visits to the local library, and the pupils' social awareness and concern for others are fostered through fund-raising for charities. However, the school does not fully exploit the potential of such links by, for instance, using police and other experts to introduce aspects of personal safety to the children.
32. Little use is made of links with other local schools to enhance pupils' curricular experiences. Comprehensive records are passed on to the main receiving Junior school but there is no joint planning or teacher exchange scheme. Pupils are not provided with opportunities to participate in sporting or cultural events with other schools.
33. The school is effective in promoting pupils' physical, emotional and intellectual development. Pupils are taught to live together in an atmosphere of tolerance, understanding and respect. They are given good opportunities for taking responsibility for class routines, preparing and clearing away equipment very well. Older children in reception take care of younger ones, showing them school routines, such as returning registers. Good provision is made for pupils' health, personal and social education. Circle time gives pupils the chance to talk about

personal needs and to share feelings with one another. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught in accordance with the governors' statement to parents and is part of the science curriculum, meeting statutory requirements and reflecting the cultural and religious values of the community. For example, the current topic in reception deals sensitively with the child's position within the family.

34. The school makes sound provision for the spiritual development of pupils and good opportunities to extend their moral, social and cultural development. The school has clear aims to ensure that there are satisfactory opportunities in all aspects of school life to extend pupils' knowledge and give them insight into values and beliefs. Pupils of all ages are given some time to reflect quietly and to come to understand themselves, the wider world and their place in it. They are taught right from wrong and are encouraged to form good relationships with each other. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of belonging to their community and to value their own culture and traditions. There are some opportunities for them to learn about other cultures.
35. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The pupils show an occasional capacity for reflection, curiosity, awe and wonder in their science, art, literacy lessons and in religious education and school assemblies. They learn about world faiths but have limited knowledge of Christianity. Pupils are given time to express their feelings in their personal and social development lessons. The school celebrates as a community the main festivals from world faiths such as Christmas, Eid, Easter, Guru, Nanak Dev. There are also sharing assemblies weekly when they celebrate their achievements. During assemblies there are opportunities for prayer, consideration of values and beliefs and being reflective about themselves. However, pupils are restless and attention wanders and there is very little supervision at these times because no teachers attend.
36. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school teaches the principles of honesty, truth and justice, being fair, and caring for others. A good range of procedures is in place which ensures that all pupils' moral development is good. For example, pupils are aware of own targets in terms of their behaviour and have some responsibility towards reaching them. They are rewarded with a 'Golden Time' if they work hard and play fairly. Examples of pupils' work on rules for the class and school, show that pupils of all ages and abilities have a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour and the difference between right and wrong. The school has good guidelines for behaviour and teachers have a consistently fair approach. In addition to these strategies there are sharing circles in class to encourage pupils to share worries. There is a peer help group called 'Buddies', where younger pupils are helped by older pupils. These systems, together with an excellent equal opportunities policy and a drugs misuse education policy, are effectively raising moral standards.
37. Provision for pupils' social development is also good. All staff, including non-teaching staff, make a strong contribution to the pupils' good social development. The school develops the self-esteem and confidence of all groups in the community. The staff act as good role models in their behaviour and by how they treat each other and the pupils. Adults talk to pupils in school, influencing them for the better. Through example and through the curriculum, the school consistently reinforces positive attitudes. A few tasks which help the school to run smoothly are undertaken by pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own action and face up to their responsibilities themselves.
38. The school provides good opportunities to celebrate, extend pupils' knowledge and give them experience of their diverse cultural traditions. This is enriched through visits to art galleries, and excursions to support their topic work, for example the Chelsea Physic Garden. Visitors, such as artists and musicians, come into school. Stimulating displays value pupils' own work and celebrating art, writing and poetry all make a good contribution. The school develops an understanding of other cultures through the curriculum, although the children are not familiar with the many traditions associated with Christianity. There are good opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultures and to equip them for growing up in a multi-ethnic society.
39. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Education visits are well linked to curricular objectives and make a valuable contribution to extending pupils' learning. For

examples, pupils have experienced a walk in the Rainforest, through a visit to Chelsea Physic Garden, extending their environmental awareness. Year 2 pupils have the opportunity to attend a book club each week. A recorder group of twenty pupils is beginning to meet at lunchtime. The provision for extra-curricular sport is limited. Boys and girls play football twice weekly, with pupils from the junior school, as part of a community link activity run by the school site manager.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school continues to provide a context in which pupils feel secure, valued and respected. Staff give pupils good pastoral support; they know them well and take appropriate account of individual needs. Caring and consideration pervade the school ethos, causing pupils to feel happy and secure. This is reflected in the confidence with which they approach staff and the positive attitudes they show to their learning and in their play.
41. Parents applaud the school's well-considered and effective procedures for the admission of children to the Nursery and the Reception classes. These arrangements, which allow for the gradual introduction of pupils, ensure that the majority settle readily into the routines and challenges of school life. The transfer of pupils to Key Stage 2 is also done with sensitivity and understanding.
42. The school also makes good provision for the pupils' health, safety and welfare. Child protection arrangements fully comply with the national recommendations. There is a designated person responsible for child protection who undertakes regular training. Staff know about signs and procedures and are quick to inform the liaison officer of any concerns. All are very sensitive to child protection issues. School security has been improved since the last inspection; for instance, CCTV is now in operation and the perimeter fencing has been made higher. The school's comprehensive health and safety policy is generally well applied. There is First Aid cover throughout the school day and a well-equipped medical room where sick or injured children can lie down quietly. Incidents leading to head and 'more serious' injuries are recorded in an accident book and parents informed. However, injuries perceived as less serious are not recorded. Fire exits are clearly marked and unobstructed. Fire extinguishers and alarms are checked regularly. Fire drills are held termly but they are not sufficiently well logged. Physical education equipment is checked annually. The school premises are kept very clean. They are mainly well maintained in a safe condition, although some parts of the playground are pitted and uneven. Classrooms are airy and pupils, except those in mobile classrooms, can work in natural light for most of the day. Buildings and trees provide some shade outside and children are encouraged to wear sun hats in the summer.
43. The school is successful in promoting good behaviour among pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds and previous experience. The development of the pupils' self esteem is central to its behaviour management policy. All staff understand and effectively implement the guidelines in the policy. They make lessons interesting and often fun. They apply discipline firmly but fairly. They have high expectations and consistently praise good work and behaviour. Pupils have been involved in the development of a code of conduct and are clear about what is expected of them. Pupils are very well supervised at break times and are encouraged to engage in constructive play. This ensures that good standards of behaviour are maintained throughout the school day. Strategies for dealing with poor behaviour, laid out in the policy, are also well applied. Ongoing incidents are monitored and the headteacher sees the pupil. If necessary, parents and the Education Welfare Officer are involved. The school's equal opportunities policy makes explicit its intolerance of any form of harassment. Although there is no bullying policy, parents are of the opinion that bullying is rare and any cases are dealt with speedily and effectively.
44. Procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of children under five are good. Initial assessments of pupils' achievements take place within the first seven weeks of entry into the reception class. These assessments are analysed in order to inform the next stage of learning. Additional assessments have been produced by the teachers to further support the children's needs in reading, writing, number and personal and social development.
45. As was found at the last inspection, the school continues to use good procedures for assessing

pupils' work in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1, where specific targets are set for pupils' future learning needs. Targets have not yet been extended to take account of the other core subjects, namely science and information technology, or to support the other subjects of the curriculum. Target setting is having a distinct effect on teaching, in that teachers are making more accurate assessments. This is effectively improving teaching and learning and raising standards in these subjects. The results of National Curriculum tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science are analysed to identify areas for curriculum development.

46. A portfolio of pupils' annotated work has been developed for English. This also contains a small sample of work for mathematics and science, but these areas are currently being developed. Pupils' learning and progress are regularly evaluated through their response to lessons, with those not reaching objectives and those exceeding them identified on teachers' weekly planning sheets. There is an informative marking policy in place that is used well and offers skilful guidance to pupils on how their work can be amended. It is carefully monitored by the headteacher to ensure consistency of practice. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
47. Assessment of attainment and progress of pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory. Individual education plans are provided, achievable targets are set and parents are consulted about the reviews of these plans. A language assessment is made twice yearly, with the emphasis on speaking and listening, for those pupils who have English as an additional language and targets are set as a result of this to challenge these pupils.
48. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are generally sound. Registers are marked according to local education authority guidelines at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Pupils who arrive after registration report first to the reception office and are noted in the late book. Teachers keep an ongoing record of poor attendance or punctuality on a 'Concern' sheet. Unexplained absences are always followed up, though not always on the first day. Registers are checked weekly by the Education Welfare Officer, who contacts the parents of any child whose absence or lateness is a concern. Parents are reminded of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality through the prospectus and the home-school agreement. However, not all teachers discuss this with parents when they bring a child in late. Nor has the school fully exploited all strategies for improving attendance - for instance, by displaying graphs of whole-class attendance's around the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Overall, the school has a sound partnership with parents which is effectively used to enhance the pupils' quality of learning and personal development.
50. Parents are kept well informed about general matters through the prospectus, governors' annual report and headteacher's newsletters. These are all well presented and friendly in tone. However, they, and most other written communications from the school, are available only in English. This means that parents from minority ethnic backgrounds for whom English is not their first language are less able to support their children's education.
51. Parents are very actively encouraged to come into the school. There is a parents' room and daily opportunities to talk with teachers. As a consequence, parents feel very welcome at the school and most wish to participate in its life. Many enjoy attending celebration assemblies with the children and willingly provide food for such occasions. Several contribute by giving 'one off' talks about their own faith or other areas of expertise. For example, a Muslim parent gave the children a most interesting and informative talk about the festival of Eid at a sharing assembly. Other parents help with visits or by making costumes for school plays. Despite this, the school has difficulty in persuading the majority of parents to make a more regular commitment by, for example, standing as a governor or providing ongoing classroom support. This limits the impact parents have on the school in, for instance, the formulation of policies and procedures.
52. There is no parent teacher association but about half the parents contribute to a special school fund. This is used to buy books and other resources and pay for class outings and special treats. Parents also enthusiastically collect tokens and vouchers that enable the school to

obtain extra computer equipment and books.

53. The school employs a sound range of mechanisms for explaining the curriculum to parents. There are brief but clear details in the prospectus; weekly numeracy and literacy plans are posted in classrooms; parents are invited to read relevant policy documents should they wish; they are always welcome to watch the school in progress and gain an insight into teaching and different approaches. Curriculum meetings on such topics as literacy, sex education and the structure of National Curriculum tests are held. The school recently ran a well-received information technology course for parents and plans to do more when funds permit.
54. Many parents say they are happy with the ways they are kept informed of their children's work and progress. The school holds formal meetings each term for this purpose. Parents are encouraged to approach staff at any other time to share concerns about their children's progress. The majority feel able to do so, as they find staff very approachable. Some parents express dissatisfaction with the pupils' written reports. Scrutiny of reports during the inspection found their criticism to be justified. Subject comments including those for mathematics and English are often the same for pupils of different abilities. Individual strengths and weaknesses are not made clear. There is little information about the quality of pupils' progress and what they need to do to improve. The reports do not contain information about attendance.
55. The school very actively encourages parents to work at home on reading and number activities with their children. Many do so effectively with the help of clear guidance notes provided by the school. The effectiveness of this link was made manifest by the enthusiasm with which pupils showed a visitor their book bags.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. Overall, the quality of leadership is good. This is an improvement on the quality of leadership at the time of the school's last inspection, when it was found to be satisfactory. Successive improvements in the National Curriculum test results and improvements in the quality of teaching explain why the judgement concerning leadership is stronger than that made in 1996.
57. A strong feature in the quality of leadership is the strong educational direction offered by the headteacher. Very much a pivotal figure in the school, she has strongly focused much of the school's work on raising standards and making certain staff centre their work on ensuring that all pupils are given every encouragement to fulfil their achievement. A strong team spirit is very much evident and the school's aims and values, that many parents support, are very apparent in much of the school's work. The school values highly the aim to provide all pupils with a warm and secure environment where all pupils are given every encouragement to succeed, regardless of their race, gender or background. The school succeeds very well in this respect and the high degree of racial harmony bears further testament to this.
58. The members of the senior management team ably support the headteacher in the day-to-day management of the school. Together, they have a good overview of the school's strengths and in the areas in which improvements could be further made. This understanding is gained by regular monitoring and evaluating of the teaching in the school and the results of National Curriculum tests and other teacher assessments. From such work come regular targets for improvement which, in mathematics and science, the school has exceeded. However, not enough monitoring and evaluation of teaching is carried out by the subject co-ordinators.
59. The school has made good progress since its last inspection. Effective action has been taken in areas where improvements could be made. The curriculum that should have been in place for information technology is now secure and the quality and range of resources to support teachers in information technology and design and technology have improved greatly in range and quality. Substantial improvements have been made to raising standards pupils attain in English, mathematics and science over the past four years. Running alongside these developments have been improvements in the quality of teaching in many parts of the school. Unsatisfactory teaching accounted for nearly one in five lessons in 1996. At present, there is very little unsatisfactory teaching and a high percentage that is now good or better. Given the

strong team spirit evident in the school and the open and honest manner by which the school regularly evaluates all aspects of its work, there is good capacity to improve even further.

60. The school development plan gives a clear indication of planned further developments. These are appropriate, with criteria for success closely linked to improvements in standards. Despite much uncertainty with regard to information to the school budget, owing to the sharp swings in budget allocations as a result of fluctuating numbers in the school, great care is taken to ensure that planned expenditure is carefully aligned to the income the school receives. The governors receive full information from the school to enable them to support financial management. However, in reality, several governor vacancies have proved very difficult to fill. This results in an excess workload for the remaining governors. Despite this, the school closely follows its financial guidelines to ensure that the best value for money is obtained for the expenditure it incurs. The lack of a full complement of governors makes it difficult for the remaining governors to be fully active in setting and supporting the strategic development of the school. However, with the exception of religious education, for which requirements are not met, the Governing Body fulfil their statutory responsibilities. These include those in respect of special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language.
61. The school employs an adequate number of teachers with appropriate qualifications and experience, and they are suitably deployed to ensure delivery of the planned curriculum with the exception of religious education. The headteacher's non-class teaching post and the release of two members of staff from teaching in the autumn term to assist with admission arrangements contribute to standards and the smooth running of the school. The current level of additional staffing for English as an additional language is not, however, sufficient and the deployment of the teachers is not cost-effective, as support is targeted at two classes at the expense of many pupils in the rest of the school having similar needs. The proposed delegation of funding for pupils with English as an additional language and allocation of two classroom assistants would lead to a more effective deployment of staff. Other support staff are effectively deployed to supervise and support individuals and groups of pupils, some of whom have special educational needs, and this has a positive effect on pupils' attainment. Staff are highly motivated and the way they work together contributes to the raising of standards.
62. All staff have job descriptions, though those for co-ordinators are very general. There are opportunities for teachers to update their skills. Teacher appraisal is not currently in operation, but the school has an effective programme for the professional development of staff which relates to priorities identified in the school development plan and is supported by LEA advisers. Appropriate procedures are also in place for the induction of new members of staff, and one newly qualified teacher is well supported through a mentoring system. These arrangements reflect the school's potential to be an effective provider of initial teacher training.
63. The non-teaching staff and the site and midday supervisors are committed to the care of pupils. The administrative staff are helpful to pupils, staff and visitors. They provide the headteacher and staff with good support. The accommodation is sufficient for the delivery of the curriculum, though the library is relatively small, and its pleasant environment has a positive effect on the standards of education provided. The classroom and corridors are enhanced by attractive displays. The hall and outdoor areas provide adequate facilities, including ample hard surface for physical education and games, though playground markings are slightly worn. The school building is maintained to a high standard of cleanliness.
64. Resources for learning are good, overall, in quantity, quality and range. This is particularly so in the provision for under-fives and for literacy and numeracy. Resources for information and communications technology and design and technology have improved since the last inspection. Resources are used efficiently, with the exception of the library. The fact that all contracts are subject to local education authority monitoring clearly indicates that governors use the best value principles in the management and use of resources. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. There are many strengths about Altmore Infant School. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good and is one of the strong features. Pupils make good gains in their learning in most subject areas. However, to raise standards and improve the quality of learning further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

(1) Improve the quality of teaching in religious education so that it fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by ensuring that:

- the subject has sufficient time to be taught;
- the scheme of work is implemented so that teachers have a better idea of what should be taught
- the planning of the subject is clearly different from the planning for pupils' personal and social development.

(paragraphs ↗ 8, 15, 19, 148, 151, 152)

(2) Ensure that the full governing body plays an active and supportive role in supporting and extending its role in the strategic development of the school.

(paragraphs ↗ 60)

(3) Widen the role of the co-ordinators so that they have a greater understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects of responsibility

(paragraphs ↗ 58, 129, 141)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

In addition to the main issues listed above, the following should be incorporated into the action plan. The school should:

- ensure that the pupils' end of year reports highlight clearly the rate of pupils' progress;
- develop ways to assess pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.

(paragraphs ↗ 54, 45, 107, 124, 129, 151)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

71

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	41	36	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

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	425
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	86

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	50

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	351

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	171
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	157

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	94.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	54	54	108

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Boys	46	45	51
	Girls	39	44	45
	Total	85	89	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (77)	82 (74)	89 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	46	51	50
	Girls	41	45	44
	Total	87	96	94
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (74)	89 (84)	87 (86)
	National	82 (85)	86 (83)	87 (85)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	32
Black – other	10
Indian	11
Pakistani	89
Bangladeshi	43
Chinese	1
White	31
Any other minority ethnic group	33

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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YN – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6.2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	223

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	745 844
Total expenditure	741 842
Expenditure per pupil	2 022
Balance brought forward from previous year	17 829
Balance carried forward to next year	21 831

Results of the survey of parents and carer

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	425
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	94	6	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	28	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	81	19	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	66	25	3	0	6
The teaching is good.	84	13	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	72	16	6	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	13	0	0	9
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	9	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	25	3	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	75	22	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	22	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	22	6	0	12

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by parents.

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

66. The provision for the children under five is good. At the time of the inspection, 100 children were under five. The school admits children into the Nursery classes in the September or January term of the year in which they are three. They attend the Nursery part-time for either a morning or afternoon session. On entry to Nursery, children's attainment is varied but the majority of children have attainments well below national expectations. For most of the children, English is an additional language. The children's first languages include Gujarati, Bengali, German, Serbo Croat, Malayalan, Urdu, and Punjabi. Children with special needs are carefully assessed to establish their future learning needs. There are six members of staff in the Nursery and they operate a 'key worker' system. This is very effective and ensures that all children have equality of opportunity. The children make good progress, particularly in mathematics, although attainment overall is still below average when compared with national standards by the time they leave.
67. The children transfer into the four Reception classes in September or January according to their date of birth. The number of adults to support and guide the children in Reception, although adequate, is not always high enough to ensure that all pupils, especially those with special needs, always have appropriate support. This is because the allocated learning support hours do not automatically transfer with children as they transfer from Nursery to school. This procedure is unhelpful. Children with English as an additional language do not always have appropriate support. However, children make satisfactory progress and are well prepared for the next stage of education. Many are ready to begin level 1 of the National Curriculum by the time they begin Year 1.

Personal and social development

68. The majority of children are eager to come to Nursery although most are quiet and do not talk very much to one another at first. They play well together, although very occasionally there is a need for staff to remind them to share or take turns. They respond to instructions and questions but do not often initiate conversation. The children are shy with visitors at first. The children are content and secure. Most children can sustain concentration appropriately for their age when engaged in something of their own choice, particularly play with water or sand. A group of boys was occupied with vehicles on a road map, comparing the similarities and differences of the cars, for up to thirty minutes. Children of all races play harmoniously together. They move with growing confidence to use all the facilities that are available to them through the 'High Scope' organisation. They can make independent choices about which area of learning they would like to experience. Children give spontaneous and interested responses of wonder, joy or sorrow as they play or react to the events in a story. They tidy up their activities at the end of sessions when requested. They take pride in what they achieve. The children use the toilet facilities appropriately and are learning to fasten their coats, hats and shoes, giving them more personal independence.
69. Children under five in Reception have developed enough confidence to take part in assemblies in the hall and join older children at play in the playground. They are acquiring personal independence, for example, by changing into physical education kit to take part in physical education lessons.
70. The quality of teaching personal and social skills is good. Staff encourage the children to be independent and to take initiative. Teachers plan good opportunities for children to learn to concentrate on a chosen task or to persevere with a teacher directed activity. In Reception, the time allocated to periods of self-initiated learning in the 'plan, do and review' time meets the needs of the children who are under five, giving good opportunities to increase the children's

ability to concentrate and persevere and to develop relationships with and sensitivity towards others.

Language and literacy

71. Nursery children listen with enthusiasm and call out a response with growing appreciation of the rhyme and meaning of language in stories and poetry. Although the children have a limited repertoire of action songs and number rhymes, they sometimes spontaneously sing or say rhymes as they play. Most children need help when sharing a book. They do not know the right word for things and cannot easily talk about characters. They learned words like *mill*, *beehive*, *pond*, *around*, *under*, *over* and *through* when observed looking at 'Rosie's Walk'. There are daily opportunities for the children to look at books. Children listen to tapes in the listening centres and extend their English as they play in the role play areas, such as the café and the post office.
72. In the Reception classes, there is a gradual introduction to the National Literacy Strategy. Children's ability in speaking ranges from those who cannot say more than three or four words in English to those who speak with reasonable fluency and accuracy about curriculum-focused activities. Children know that pictures can tell a story and words have meanings. They know to turn a page from left to right. Teachers encourage all children to take their books home to share with and read to their family, and most do this regularly. Therefore, these children are making sound progress in early reading skills. The school could do more to guide parents with English as an additional language in their role as the main educators of their children at home. Children are developing skills in writing which are appropriate for their age and ability. A few can write their own names and a few can recognise their names. By the time they are five, the majority of the children know the names and sounds of many letters of the alphabet. Many children can match and name colours.
73. The quality of teaching is good. The use of large picture books is particularly successful and gives good opportunities for language development. In addition, staff in all early years classes identify opportunities where they can extend learning and improve children's attainment in speaking, listening and literacy. They use drama to reinforce the sequence of a story. They use non-verbal communication to assist explanations. If they have difficulty in making themselves understood, staff sometimes ask another child who speaks the same language to help to interpret a point. The staff use appropriate resources, for example, puppets and telephones to encourage the children to speak.

Mathematics

74. Most children make satisfactory progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding in this area of learning. Although they do not know the correct mathematical language to describe shape, position, size and quantity, they demonstrate a sound level of understanding in practical ways. The staff are good at maximising learning opportunities which improve language acquisition. Most children can count accurately matching one-to-one up to number 5 by the age of four, increasing this to 10 and above by the time they are five. They can do a variety of matching, sorting, sequencing activities accurately. For example, the children could count totals on a dice and count the corresponding quantity on a matching game. The children are familiar with counting and routinely count and match throughout the day; for example, how many there are in a group or class. The children say counting rhymes with support.
75. The quality of teaching is good. Staff identify many opportunities where they can extend children's learning during the 'plan, do and review' sessions. In the Reception classes, the children also take part in a Numeracy lesson three times a week. These give opportunities for mental mathematics and a structured whole-class time where children learn to focus on a teacher-led activity or to use practical resources specifically designed to promote mathematical skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. Children do not demonstrate an awareness of the features of living things, natural and made objects. Some children in Reception know the names of different kinds of weather and how the weather affects us. For example, they know that you need the wind to fly a kite. Many children can control the mouse, press the space bar and directional arrows to operate a computer program with support. They will operate the tape recorder, although they can be very careless with the tapes. Children choose to use a wide range of equipment and can build small designs with construction kits. Many children, with encouragement, talk about themselves and name their family members. A few can also say where they live.
77. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are satisfactory planned play experiences to develop children's knowledge and understanding about the world. The topic approach used in Reception also helps to stimulate the children to learn more about the world around them. There is limited use of the local environment or the school campus to stimulate learning about the world and to extend language development.

Aesthetic and creative development

78. There is a good range of creative materials available. Many children cut, stick, and fold paper and card. They experience many opportunities to develop creative ideas. For example, some children made patterns using glitter or by cutting out paper. Children pour and sieve water, although there is not a wide enough range of water play equipment to successfully promote science concepts. The children explore the properties of texture, shape and form, using play-dough, clay and using a variety of everyday substances to create a texture. Displays of observational drawing skills show that pupils' development in drawing of themselves is below average for their age. They have used paint to produce pictures and print patterns. Children can play percussion instruments to a satisfactory standard for their age.
79. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching is not always focused enough on developing skills, particularly in Reception classes. All activities give children good experiences but there are not enough activities to enable children to respond to what they feel, smell, and touch; for example, through cooking. More opportunities to engage in observational drawing would improve the children's power of observation.

Physical development

80. In the Nursery, outside play is always part of choice and in addition there is usually an outside play time for twenty minutes for all children. This organisation ensures plenty of opportunities for the children to develop their physical skills. There is enough space for a range of physical activities to be developed both inside and out. Most pupils move with confidence in their enclosed play area. There are appropriate activities such as small climbing frames, sit and ride toys, hoops and skipping ropes. All children improve their co-ordination as they play and move round together. They pedal, steer and stop a tricycle safely. In addition to opportunities to play outside during the 'plan do and review' time, children in reception take part in games, dance and gymnastics lessons. They use space well and are learning to listen carefully and to follow instructions.
81. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The organisation of children in outside activities in the Nursery and reception is good. It meets the needs of the children and is enabling them to develop their physical skills effectively. The outside accommodation is safe, with sound facilities for climbing, and the safe playground surface enables a sound quality of curricular provision to promote physical development.
82. The curriculum for children under five covers the six areas of learning and is based on the 'High Scope' organisation. This involves the children in taking responsibility for their own learning. It makes a good contribution to the intellectual development of all pupils, particularly in speaking and listening. Sound opportunities are provided to promote children's aesthetic and creative development and to extend their knowledge of the world around them. Good opportunities are provided to promote their language and literacy, physical, personal and social

mathematical development. Curricular planning is very good, providing a cohesive curriculum for the under five's throughout the school. The work has an emphasis on learning through purposeful play and exploration, development of English as an additional language and developing positive attitudes.

83. There are very good procedures for assessment. Records of assessment are being assembled in the Nursery. Staff regularly record what they have observed individual children accomplish, and that is entered on the children's records later.
84. Children in Reception are assessed using Key Stage 1 procedures, which, together with their base line assessment results, form the basis of a good range of assessment data. This information is used very well to set individual targets and inform future teaching plans.
85. The good range of resources are very well organised to encourage the children to be independent and to ensure effective teaching of the curriculum. Resources are generally very well cared for.

ENGLISH

86. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was below the national average in reading and writing, but average when compared with similar schools. Results for seven year olds were much better than those in 1998 and have gradually improved over the last four years. Eighty-two per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, starting the National Curriculum with limited English and often very low standards in language and literacy. Currently, standards of attainment in Year 2 are broadly in line with national expectations (Level 2), but below national expectations for the higher level (Level 3). This is because the good teaching and support for higher attaining pupils have not had sufficient time to be effective for those pupils who have English as an additional language, particularly in their understanding beyond what is literal. Since the previous inspection, there has been a vast improvement in standards in English.
87. Inspection findings are that standards in speaking and listening are well below expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Although by the time pupils are seven most begin to show increasing confidence in speaking, many find it difficult to explain their ideas in any detail and they still have a limited vocabulary. Higher-attaining pupils demonstrate satisfactory and sometimes good standards; for example, when talking about their reading books. By the end of the key stage, most pupils listen attentively.
88. Progress across Key Stage 1 is good. Many opportunities are planned to encourage pupils to increase their vocabulary and use of spoken English. In Year 1 all pupils make good progress as they retell the story of "The Gingerbread Man". Year 2 pupils also make good progress as they consider the difference between information and story books, particularly in their study of a science dictionary. Learning support assistants in the classrooms make an effective contribution to the progress of all pupils. They clarify questions, explain new vocabulary and encourage pupils to offer answers.
89. Standards in reading are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Although pupils' skills in decoding the text is sound, many still have a limited vocabulary and this restricts comprehension, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. Average-attaining pupils in Year 2 use phonic skills successfully to work out unfamiliar words such as 'salesman' and have a satisfactory understanding of alphabetical order. For example, they understand that letters beginning with 'p' can be found towards the end of the dictionary. Lower-attaining pupils recognise some words in familiar text and know initial letter sounds. The majority of the pupils are increasing their understanding of library skills through the positive impact of the literacy hour. For example, they explain the meaning of an index and the contents in a book and a higher-attaining pupil understood the word 'glossary'. In one Year 1 class, the teacher emphasised the use of correct vocabulary when differentiating between information, bi-lingual books and stories and pupils made very good progress. Overall, pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory

progress and good progress when group activities are well supported.

90. The combination of a well-structured literacy hour together with good and sometimes very good teaching has a very positive effect on pupils' attainment in writing. The majority of pupils attain the expected standards. They write for a range of different purposes, sequence their ideas appropriately and use simple punctuation. Higher-attaining pupils write more imaginative stories and make good progress in developing punctuation and spelling skills. Progress across the key stage is good, with many pupils at the early stages of independent writing in Year 1. Pupils are taught to follow simple structures and learn to plan their writing, working with the teacher as a class or in a group. Progress in a Year 2 class was very good as pupils were skilfully guided in sequencing the events before writing a story using different forms of transport as a stimulus.
91. The good quality teaching has a significant impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have creatively embraced the principles of the National Literacy Strategy. In marking the pupils' work, teachers make regular comments to encourage and to give points for improvement and ensure that pupils understand what to do next. Individual targets are set half-termly for reading and the targets set for writing are referred to daily by the pupils. This practice is contributing to the good progress pupils are making in the subject. Lessons are interesting and motivate pupils to learn. Almost all teachers speak clearly, providing very good role models of spoken English. Teachers have good subject knowledge, most explain concepts clearly and introduce pupils to relevant technical vocabulary. Group activities are well matched to pupils' needs. Relationships are good and teachers manage behaviour well. Teachers' questioning skills are good, effectively checking understanding, reinforcing learning and yet at the same time extending the pupils' language skills and abilities.
92. The school introduced a literacy hour before the Literacy Strategy began nationally. A scrutiny of pupils' work and of displays shows examples of pupils' written work in all relevant subjects. There are good examples of written work in science, history and the use of stories about journeys to enhance geography. The school library has moved location since the previous inspection because of the growth in pupil numbers. It is small and not well organised and this limits opportunities for independent research. This is a different judgement from the previous inspection when the library was judged to be an attractive, comfortable room.
93. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator. The school has good assessment procedures and pupils' progress is monitored regularly. Test results are analysed carefully to identify areas for improvement. Apart from the shortcomings in the library, resources are well-organised, accessible and in good condition.

MATHEMATICS

94. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attain standards that are close to the national average for pupils of their age. In the 1999 National Curriculum for seven year olds, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was 89 per cent which was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 was 11 per cent, which was below the national average. Taking the four years 1996-1999, standards in mathematics were close to the national average. These levels of attainment are close to those of similar schools. The test results show that standards have improved over the past four years, although in 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level dropped slightly and was below the national average. The school confirms that more pupils with English as an additional language found the structure of the language in the test papers difficult to interpret. Up to a third of the class can change in the term in which the tests are held. In order to overcome these difficulties in future the school has introduced several strategies. These include target setting for individuals, which is proving effective. The performance of girls was below the national average and the performance of boys was close to the national average in the statutory tests. No marked differences between boys and girls' attainments were observed during the inspection. Inspection findings confirm average levels of attainment and the school is on course to maintain them by the end of Year 2.

95. Teacher assessments for the past three years show that very few pupils attained the higher Level 3 in mathematical investigation work. Inspection findings confirm that higher attaining pupils need more opportunities for such work. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well. Teachers are following its structure and it is having a positive effect on what pupils are able to do. Pupils are attentive in the whole-class sessions that involve mental mathematics and some are beginning to explain their thinking. Pupils' number skills are generally sound. By Year 2, most understand repeated addition and successfully calculate tasks involving twos, fives, tens, and the higher attainers have a good understanding of place value, some to a thousand. Some pupils use correct mathematical language. The clear majority can count accurately to 100 and order numbers correctly. They can work out coins of equivalent value. Higher attaining pupils cannot yet translate number stories in words into calculations, work out the answer and describe their thinking. By Year 2, pupils can collect information, use tallying, sort data and enter into a computer database.
96. The Numeracy Strategy is securely in place, with other elements of the mathematics curriculum effectively planned into other subjects. Data handling is a sound element of the curriculum, as seen, for example, in pupils' work to find their favourite fruit or vegetable. Some evidence of shape and space was observed, and it is a part of the planned curriculum. The Numeracy Strategy places emphasis on mental mathematics and the explanation of different strategies used. Some satisfactory examples of problem solving were observed, for example, on interactive displays which ask for numbers that are multiples of five. There are good links with science, art, and design and technology where mathematics skills are used for number and measurement. For example, in art pupils made pictures using two dimensional shapes reinforce the characteristics of shapes
97. Overall, pupils make sound progress in mathematics. Teachers are identifying higher attaining pupils who are capable of greater achievement. The individual target system is enabling some, but not all of them, to accelerate their rate of progress. This process needs to be fully evaluated. Tasks for pupils are usually graded in difficulty according to their abilities. Pupils with special educational needs receive sound support and make satisfactory progress. Some pupils have number skills included in their individual education plans. The Numeracy Strategy is being introduced well to pupils in the Reception classes. Pupils who are already five makes sound progress in their mathematics aided by the effective use of mathematical equipment by teachers to support their progress.
98. All teachers are enthusiastic about teaching mathematics and this promotes good attitudes in pupils to their mathematics work. However, pupils are not always keen, despite the teachers better efforts, to contribute in whole class sessions in the mathematics lessons. Individuals are pleased to be asked to show their work and explain their thinking. When asked to do so they collaborate effectively to complete tasks and generally co-operate well in their groups. Pupils' behaviour is generally good, they work hard and normally sustain concentration on their tasks, especially when working to deadlines.
99. The quality of teaching overall, is good. Almost all lessons are well planned and follow effectively the Numeracy Strategy with a good emphasis on whole-class teaching, mental mathematics and direct teaching of skills. In four out of ten lessons teaching was good or very good and in five out of ten was satisfactory. In one in ten lessons it was unsatisfactory. When teaching was unsatisfactory it was that the degree of pupils' prior attainment was not thoroughly grasped and there was a mismatch between the tasks and their abilities. Computer programs are used effectively to reinforce teaching points in almost all lessons. Teachers' questioning is usually good, with questions that help pupils to understand as well as those that test pupils' knowledge. There is a good emphasis on the use of correct terminology and instructions to pupils for tasks to be completed are clear and understood by them. All teachers expect pupils to work hard and to behave well. Most lessons move along at a satisfactory pace, some at a very good rate, with pupils having deadlines for completion of work and being actively reminded of them. In the good lessons, pupils are expected to use their skills creatively and these are suitably reinforced in plenary sessions when teaching points are made as well as reviewing what has been done. Lessons are usually well planned and have clear objectives. There is no evidence of mathematics homework being regularly set in Year 2.

100. There is a direct link between good assessment and the good progress made by pupils. This includes marking, and specific mathematical targets being set for them. This very good practice is applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils' progress is assessed by using the key objectives of the Numeracy Strategy. However, the standards of presentation that are accepted by different teachers are variable and what one teacher will accept another will not.
101. The co-ordinator is an asset to the school. She has an action plan for mathematics and is very well aware of what needs to be actioned to maintain the sound standards and to improve them. She is a member of the senior management team and has also completed very good detailed schemes of work while on secondment to the Local Authority. These now guide the work of the school. The range and quality of resources are good, well organised and accessible to all teachers.

SCIENCE

102. In the 1999 national teacher assessments, results were broadly in line with national averages. They show that 87 per cent reach Level 2 or above, but a lower number reach the higher Level 3 than is achieved nationally. The assessments show some variation between attainment targets. Standards relating to learning about physical processes meet average expectations. Those concerned with experimental science meet expectations, but are below for the higher Level 3. For study of living processes and materials, standards are below expectations. In comparison with similar schools, performance is in line with the average for the expected Level 2 and below for the higher Level 3. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was below the national average and has improved. Over the four years 1996 to 1999, results in science show a steady increase.
103. Inspection findings are that at the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards are broadly average. In particular, written work has improved since the last inspection. Year 2 pupils can investigate the effect of increasing the angle of a ramp on the speed with which a vehicle travels. The school's strong emphasis on literacy is helping pupils to record more accurately and to explain their experimental findings in writing. Average and above average pupils can record findings in a number of ways. Although below average pupils produce little of their own writing, they draw diagrams that are well annotated by the teacher, showing what the pupil explained verbally. However, their ability to speak formally, using scientific language, is not sufficiently developed.
104. Pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding throughout the school. Year 1 can talk about sweet and bitter tastes and appreciate the benefits of a refrigerator in keeping food cool. They make less consistent gains in practical skills because investigations do not effectively build on earlier knowledge and understanding. In lessons, the majority of pupils make good gains in learning, especially when teachers use language carefully. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 learn to apply their knowledge of forces to cars travelling down the ramp of different slopes. The highest attaining boy accurately records results in a chart for the rest of the team. Pupils who are not yet fully confident in the use of English, learn scientific ideas well, but find it difficult to express themselves clearly, using appropriate scientific vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate gains in knowledge, understanding and skills.
105. Pupils are very interested in lessons, listening attentively and sustaining concentration well. They work well together and want to help one another. They are willing to take turns in groups. Particularly good team-work in one Year 2 class helps boys and girls sustain good collaboration during the task. They engage in good discussion with the teacher about keeping the test fair. They are well organised in preparing and clearing away apparatus.
106. Teaching is good. The school has clearly improved its planning since the last inspection. Teachers plan well together in year groups, using the support of the science co-ordinator when necessary. The scheme of work gives detailed guidance to teachers and this has had a positive effect on raising standards, but it does not yet specify investigation skills, which makes it difficult for teachers to build in sufficient opportunities for pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment.

107. Teachers have good knowledge of the National Curriculum. An improved emphasis on scientific investigation helps pupils to explore scientific ideas for themselves, improving practical skills. Very good links with literacy and numeracy develop pupils' ideas and improve basic skills. Good links between subjects help pupils talk about materials that were used in the past for transport and those that are used now. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally good. When teachers ask them to speak as scientists to the class, they improve standards in the use of scientific language. When questions are carefully structured, pupils develop ideas well, but regular and consistent use is not always made of these techniques. Consequently, assessment of learning is variable. The school has not developed a formal system to measure progress over the pupils' time in school and the quality of assessment in science does not match the very good quality of such work in English and mathematics.
108. Teachers manage pupils well. Positive relationships encourage pupils to try again when they are unsuccessful in a practical task. They organise activities well, offering good variety of tasks and helping pupils to manage their time successfully. They use resources well, using good visual demonstration to support knowledge and understanding. For example, a teacher stretching a plastic snake showed Year 2 pupils the principle of forces. Similarly in Year 1, a wide and attractive range of fruits and vegetables was used to explain the importance of a healthy diet.

ART

109. By the time they leave the school, pupils attain standards that are in line with their ages and abilities. This is the same judgement as that made at the time of the previous inspection of the school.
110. By the age of seven, and by the time they leave the school, pupils are able to mix and apply paint fairly and evenly. They know that by applying water to paint, different shades and tone can be created. Most pupils explain that some colours can be made from mixing others. Pupils' drawing skills are at an appropriate standard with most being able to draw objects with a fair degree of accuracy for their age. However, their perception of how different pencils can be used to create different effects is the weaker element of their drawing attainment. Most pupils are able to give some examples of famous artists and the sorts of techniques they employed in their work to obtain a particular effect - including, for example, the work of Andy Warhol. Standards in three-dimensional work are good. The positive links that are made by teachers with the subject of design and technology have a strong impact on the standards pupils attain in this aspect of their artistic endeavours.
111. As they move from class to class, pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. Year 1 pupils, for instance, practise and consolidate their drawing skills. Some drawing work in Year 2, where pupils have had to complete the other half of a picture that has been cut out of a magazine, show that most pupils develop a keener eye for detail. However, their progress and learning in drawing would be extended with a greater access to a wider range of drawing pencils. In the main, pupils make good use of paper for collage and pattern work. Most pupils work with malleable materials centred around the use of Pleistocene and would be extended if pupils had greater use of different clays. Most pupils make sufficient gains in their understanding of artistic terms such as 'line', 'tone', and 'shade'.
112. Evidence from lessons and from evaluation of pupils' work on display indicates that pupils have good attitudes to the subject. Most work shows that pupils take care over their efforts and try hard to produce art work that fully reflects their abilities. They listen carefully to the teachers' instructions and demonstrations and strive hard to apply what they are being taught into their own work. All pupils treat the school's resources with care and respect. However, at present, the pupils' skills and ability in choosing what materials would be best suited for the work they have to do, are not well developed. This is explained by the lack of emphasis given to this aspect of their learning in the way teachers organise lessons.
113. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory although some good teaching was seen during the inspection,. A particular strength in the teaching lies in the way art is used to aid

understanding in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are given regular scope, for example, to draw historical objects or paint characters from stories they are following during the course of literacy hours. Teachers demonstrate effectively what they expect the pupils to learn and good opportunities are given for pupils to practise and refine their skills. These included, during the inspection, opportunities for Year 1 pupils to draw, from direct observation, the inside of a fruit or vegetable. Such work allowed pupils to appreciate the beauty and wonder of many natural objects that surround the world in which they live. Balancing these strong aspects of teaching are the lack of planned scope for pupils to determine the choice of materials and direction of their learning. Many lessons, while well organised, are in many ways too well organised as many teachers put out all the materials and equipment pupils are to use. This denies pupils the chance to make informed decisions for themselves and thus hinders aspects of their personal development. Assessment of the pupils' attainment is at a very early stage, with evaluation of pupils' learning being primarily in the form of pupils' end-of-year reports. The successful use of information technology in the form of art packages successfully promotes pupils' perception of how art can be created using a wide range of different tools.

114. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The increased attention paid by the school to raising standards in English and mathematics has meant less attention being paid to the development of art since the school's last inspection. Until recently, there has been no co-ordinator for the subject and this has affected further development in the subject. However, the newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject that includes, for example, the implementation of a scheme of work to ensure that the teaching of specific art skills is sufficiently developed as pupils move from class to class. Such proposals have the potential to raise standards. Resources are satisfactory. Pupils' work is sensitively displayed and this adds to the status the subject has in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. It was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection. Work on display supports the judgements made on the standards pupils reach and the progress they make.
116. Design technology has improved since the last inspection. The new scheme of work enables pupils to reach appropriate standards through design and make projects that clearly identify focused tasks. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to evaluate their models, particularly through talking about design. This has an adverse effect on progress.
117. Pupils in Year 1 build successfully on good learning in the early years curriculum. They have models of houses and shops, and finish their products with attractive colours and designs. They place them in appropriate positions on a whole-class map, making good links with geography. In preparing a Caribbean fruit salad, they make very good links with science, appreciating cultural variations in choices of fruits. In Year 2, pupils make good gains in knowledge of the structure of vehicles through very good role-play in a 'repair garage'. They replace damaged wheels, appreciating the importance of good quality work for the customers.
118. Pupils enjoy design and technology. They are imaginative in construction, producing a good range of vehicles. They talk readily with adults about their work, responding positively to the roles they play and working co-operatively.
119. Not enough teaching was seen for the quality of teaching to be judged. Good opportunities for pupils to work imaginatively result in good learning. If pupils are too directed in the use of resources, rather than making their own choices, they find it more difficult to work creatively, as in the making of fruits, in play dough. However, resources have improved since the last inspection and are now sufficient in range and of good quality.

GEOGRAPHY

120. The last inspection report was critical of pupils' attainment, teaching of groups and limited use of information technology. It also highlighted the fact that the monitoring of the geography

curriculum was at an early stage of development. There has since been notable improvement in the subject in that standards have started rising and there is a growing awareness of the need for pupils to be supported while working in groups.

121. The focus on oral work enables the majority of pupils in all ability groups, including those on the special educational needs register and those learning English as an additional language, to make sound progress overall in learning about their locality. Lack of English on the part of some pupils limits their involvement in activities. Younger pupils develop a sense of place and related vocabulary through stories such as 'Rosie's Walk' and 'We are going on a Bear Hunt.' Older pupils develop a sense of direction with focus on appropriate vocabulary. Some of them develop their observational skills through history related activities. Some higher ability pupils programme a 'Roamer' and talk about its operation while developing a sense of direction. There is evidence of pupils' past involvement in some mapping and weather related activities and in contrasting their locality with Scotland and the rainforest.
122. Pupils' positive response to work and good standard of behaviour often contribute to the brisk pace of lessons. They pay attention to their teachers and relate well to one another and to adults. They respond well to opportunities for initiatives such as operating the 'Roamer', if and when they are available.
123. Teaching observed was satisfactory, and sometimes good. Teachers demonstrate sound to good subject knowledge and their effective questioning enhances pupils' participation and ensures their understanding of tasks. When teaching is good, learning objectives are clearly explained, activities are well paced and pupils are encouraged to complete their task. Teaching is generally aimed at the whole class, and opportunities for pupil initiative are rather limited.
124. The intended curriculum is consistent with guidelines currently given to schools nationally. The topic and story approach makes the subject's cross-curricular links fairly strong. Topics such as the rainforest make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Fieldwork, though limited, provides access to the wider environment, as is evident from an account of pupils' visit to Chelsea Physic Garden. Resources are adequate, but there are no formal procedures in place for assessment and the co-ordinator role does little monitoring and evaluation. There is little evidence of information technology being used in the teaching and learning of geography. This indicates limited improvement since the last inspection.

HISTORY

125. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' gain in learning about the past reflects an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities broaden their understanding of basic historical concepts, including that of chronology, as they move through the school.
126. Younger pupils learn about the past through topics such as 'Myself and My Family'. Older pupils develop their concept of chronology by making personal timelines and finding out about British monarchs such as Queen Victoria and the present Queen and her family, with particular focus on their costumes and jewellery. Many pupils identify differences between old and new forms of transport. They have started using pictures and photographs as sources of information about the past, and high attainers can talk about some of the changes with particular reference to vehicle shape, design, performance and safety. Slow learners make appropriate progress by sequencing or drawing pictures and labelling old and new cars. Limited English prevents pupils at early stages of learning English from participating fully in activities, particularly when specialist support is not available. There is no significant difference between boys or girls.
127. Pupils demonstrate a positive, and sometimes good, attitude to activities relating to the past. They are eager to answer questions and contribute to discussion. Many are interested in finding out about different forms of transport and how they have changed over time. They behave well in group as well as whole-class activities. They enjoy good relationships.
128. The quality of teaching observed was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The majority of teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, sound organisation, appropriate

expectations and good management of pupils. In a more effective lesson, well-structured questioning and good quality resources had an impact on pupils' motivation and learning. The same lesson paid particular attention to matching work to the pupils' ability, enabling them to work more productively in a group situation. This represents another area of improvement since the previous inspection.

129. The history curriculum, as displayed in the scheme of work, is broadly based, with activities having an oral focus. The topic approach enables the curriculum to have strong cross-curricular links and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Resources are adequate, and the quality of display around the school enhances pupils' learning. Opportunities for assessment and monitoring are, however, limited, and the role of co-ordinator is under-developed, though the new postholder has already updated the policy.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Pupils attain standards in line with their ages by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils now experience the full range of the curriculum and in this respect standards have improved since the last inspection, but the class rotas show that they do not yet use computers regularly enough as a routine tool to enable them to reach higher levels of attainment. Work on display shows that Year 2 pupils have developed good skills of control in using the art program, 'Dazzle'. Higher attaining pupils have included good detail of shape and variation in colour, showing competent use of the toolbar. They have transferred drawings into a word-processing package in order to annotate their drawings. During the literacy hour, pupils successfully demonstrate their skills of cutting and pasting a picture into a text file. Two girls in Year 2 successfully located a vehicle of their choice, using "Mycropedia". They are familiar with using the index, using the toolbar confidently to scroll forwards and backwards. Average and below average pupils have rather slow use of the keyboard, limiting the standards reached within the lesson.
131. Pupils make satisfactory gains in learning year by year. They use the computer to improve and consolidate skills of numeracy and literacy and spend time each year using graphics to explore colour, shape and pattern. Each pupil is learning to use an individual code number to gain access to work, building good routines in operating the computer. Pupils work co-operatively in pairs or small groups of three. For example, two Year 1 pupils worked effectively together to improve their skills in subtraction. After guessing initially, they learned to use the number line to become more accurate in choosing the correct answer. They supported each other well, giving each other the chance to improve skills in controlling the mouse. Two girls in Year 2 made a joint decision to choose their topic and work productively to complete the task. They found it difficult to print, but with timely intervention from a classroom assistant, they finished the session with a sense of achievement. Time allocated to improving skills during literacy and numeracy hours ensures pupils consolidate basic skills as well as making good gains in skills such as mouse control.
132. Too few whole-class lessons were seen for the quality of teaching to be judged overall, but in the two lessons seen, direct teaching of basic computer skills made a significant impact on learning. For example, a good demonstration showed a whole Year 1 class how to choose alternative ways of constructing sentences, using a word bank. The choice of a good science context contributed very positively to improving scientific vocabulary. Effective teaching makes very good links with literacy and enabled a group of three recall procedures well. Good teaching of how to programme a 'Roamer' in Year 2 was successful in reinforcing pupils' concepts of direction and their numeracy skills in learning angles of rotation. This presented pupils with a good level of challenge to plan and recall a full sequence of instructions.
133. Samples of pupils' work show that teachers are implementing the good quality scheme of work successfully. In each aspect of work completed, it is clear to see how pupils make progress each year. The scheme focuses appropriately on literacy and numeracy, also identifying good opportunities for other areas of the curriculum, such as art, history and geography. Because the implementation of the scheme is recent, not all areas are fully developed. For example, there are no structured opportunities for pupils to use a data handling programme to explain

and analyse results from science investigations.

134. Teachers organise computer stations well, providing clear visual instructions, using large drawings and large, attractive text. The teachers have adopted common approaches and methods, with good guidance from the previous and current co-ordinators. They have not yet fully adopted the guideline of a half hour teaching slot each week, resulting in some inconsistency in standards between classes. Teaching assistants have been given suitable training and this results in them being able to support pupils well.
135. Resources have improved since the last inspection. Each computer has a CD drive attached to a colour printer. The range of software has been updated, enabling pupils to apply skills in other areas of the curriculum. Each classroom has a listening corner, where pupils listen to a good range of story tapes, in English and pupils' other languages. This provides a valuable resource for pupils to improve language and information handling skills and is much enjoyed by groups of pupils in the literacy hour.

MUSIC

136. Standards in music are below those normally achieved by the majority of pupils at a similar age. The pupils enjoy their music lessons. However, they do not improve on prior attainment as they perform, compose or listen to music and they do not make satisfactory progress in all three aspects. In their Key Stage 1 singing lessons pupils sing along to a tape if they know the words. Year 2 pupils listen carefully to identify what is making the noise when listening to a vocal piece. Pupils play percussion instruments carefully and stop and start on the commands of a conductor but they do not attempt to produce rhythmic patterns.
137. The last inspection report described standards in music as average in all aspects except for composing. It also states that there was not enough time spent on music. The allocation of time has improved since then. The school has made changes to ensure that all classes join in with a mixed age singing session. However, this does not provide the older pupils with enough challenge. Each class is now also scheduled to have a short music lesson every week and this is often used to gain experience of composing. However, lessons are not demanding enough, mostly because there is a lack of musical expertise in the school.
138. Overall, the progress of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, is unsatisfactory. Throughout the key stage pupils sing a few songs by heart. They know some tunes and have some sense of rhythm, often knowing a set sequence of actions to each verse. They sing with a sound understanding of pitch to the pre-recorded accompaniment on tape, which some follow well. The songs in their repertoire are often linked to topics that they are studying and they know a few modern religious songs. Year 2 pupils, with support, identify long, short and high or low sounds. The majority of pupils do not know or understand notation although some Year 2 pupils are learning to play the recorder at lunch time.
139. Overall, pupils' response to music is satisfactory. It is sometimes very good, particularly when pupils are in their classroom and the teaching is well focused. Most pupils in Year 2 work well in their class groups collaboratively, composing music together.
140. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is mostly because all lessons are planned by the co-ordinator. Lessons' objectives are achieved but the teachers do not have the expertise to develop, assess or extend the subject. There are missed opportunities for musical appreciation: for example, the school could provide pupils with a good range of music to appreciate in assemblies. Teachers provide opportunities for a few pupils to play percussion instruments such as cymbals, chime bars and bells during the singing assemblies, to follow a rhythm. The mixed year groups and large numbers make it difficult to focus on pupils' skills sufficiently well to improve standards in these lessons.
141. Resources are well organised and in addition to a central collection there are instruments in

classrooms. Instruments from a wide variety of countries are available. The school employs a peripatetic teacher to give further experience in music. The pupils clearly enjoy these times in particular, the opportunity to hear instruments being played. However, these lessons are attended by four classes of different aged pupils and there is little opportunity to assess prior knowledge or to build in new challenges into the lessons.

142. The music co-ordinator has a satisfactory grasp of what is needed to move the school forward in the teaching and learning of music. The good range of lesson plans available are suitable for non-specialist teachers to use and are well presented and used. There are no opportunities to monitor the teaching and as a result there is generally a lack of high expectations with regard to pupils' performance and accomplishment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. The provision in games was identified as poor by the previous inspection. According to the report, pupils made little progress in ball skills, games lessons lacked purpose and there were few competitive games which developed a better use of space. Attention was also drawn to the fact that pupils participated in activities in unsuitable, and even dangerous, clothing.
144. The school has since made considerable improvements in most of these areas. In indoor games, for example, the majority of pupils throughout the school have started developing the skills of balancing, bouncing and striking balls with a bat. In gymnastics, pupils perform different ways of travelling on their hands and feet, both on the floor and while using the apparatus. Younger pupils can perform climbing, sliding and jumping movements, though their spatial awareness is not fully developed. Many older and agile pupils demonstrate the ability to put several movements together in short sequences.
145. Most pupils demonstrate their enjoyment of physical education activities by responding positively and behaving well in lessons. This reflects their sound level of concentration and the quality of their learning, which is good at the top end of the school. Pupils work well in groups while engaged in games or practising different skills on the apparatus. Most take their turn without any fuss and are willing to help with putting the equipment away. Occasionally, progress made by some pupils with special educational needs is limited, but there is no significant difference between boys' and girls' performance.
146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features in Year 2. The majority of teachers show sound planning and organisation in providing a variety of activities. Overall, their use of resources is thoughtful and imaginative, though occasionally some resources are inappropriate for younger pupils. In a good lesson, expectations were fairly high and teacher participation in activities and commentary had an impact on pupils' progress. Indoor games lessons are carefully structured and attention is paid to change of clothes for physical education activities. Teachers enjoy good relationships with their pupils. Warm up activities are not always well structured or sufficiently rigorous, and there is little opportunity for pupils to evaluate one another's performance.
147. The physical education curriculum is broad and provides access to some competitive games such as football and netball. No dance lesson was observed. The subject is adequately resourced, following a recent upgrading of games equipment. The current school development plan includes a review of policy. The new co-ordinator is planning an audit of resources and a dance club, though she has not undertaken adequate monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards that are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. No judgement was given in relation to standards attained by pupils at the time of the school's last inspection owing to the lack of evidence that was available. Evidence from the current inspection suggests that across many classes, too little time is given

to the teaching of religious education and, consequently, pupils do not have sufficient time to explore certain themes in sufficient depth. This reduces the quality of their learning.

149. By the age of seven, when they leave the school, the majority of pupils have too limited a knowledge of the main aspects of the Christian faith as outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. They know that Jesus was a special person, but too few pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the main parts of the Christian calendar and how this explains why Christians remember Christmas or Easter as special events. Pupils' understanding of other faiths and traditions is generally satisfactory. They know, for example, why Guru Nanuk is an important figure. In the main, pupils have a limited perception of concepts such as 'worship' and 'prayer' and have a limited understanding of how aspects of religion affect their daily lives.
150. As they move through the classes, pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make limited gains in their knowledge and understanding of religious education - particularly in relation to the Christian faith. The school pays good attention to ensuring that the pupils celebrate the many faiths and traditions that represent the many varied and cultural backgrounds of pupils in the class. However, in lessons seen, the differences between the teaching of personal and social education sometimes overlaps with religious education lessons. It is not unusual, for example, for 'Circle Time', where pupils are gathered as a class to discuss issues such as 'sharing' or 'feelings', to constitute the religious education lesson. Consequently, pupils receive too little specific teaching about religious education and this adversely affects their progress.
151. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. At present, staff are not confident in teaching aspects of the subject. As mentioned above, the subject is afforded too little status in relation to other subjects of the curriculum. Time for the subject is below minimum recommendations and this makes it difficult to ensure that the requirements comply with those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. In addition, although a scheme of work has been devised to support teachers in the planning of the subject, this has not been implemented. Assessment of the pupils' attainment and progress in the subject is very infrequent and this makes it difficult for teachers to plan precisely the next steps in what pupils are to learn.
152. At present, there are too few resources to enable pupils to examine aspects of other faiths and the importance or the significance such artefacts have for different religious groups. The management of the subject is in a period of transition following the departure of the previous post-holder. At the time of the inspection, management of religious education is being undertaken by the headteacher until a new co-ordinator has been appointed. Much recent work

in the school has been on the drive to raise standards in English and mathematics and this has resulted in developments in other subjects being delayed. However, the newly devised scheme of work offers much practical guidance to teachers on the aspects of religious education that should be taught in lessons. This has the potential to improve the quality of pupils' learning and hence the standards they attain.