

INSPECTION REPORT

Frank Barnes School

Camden

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100091

Headteacher: Karen Simpson

Reporting inspector: Anne J Hayward
16417

Dates of inspection: 10-13 January 2000

Inspection number: 189859

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Harley Road Swiss Cottage London
Postcode:	NW3 3BN
Telephone number:	0171-586 4665
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Michael Woolcott
Date of previous inspection:	22 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Anne J Hayward	Registered inspector	Art; Design and technology; Physical education	How high are standards; How well are pupils taught; Leadership and management.
Mike McCarthy	Lay inspector		How does the school work in partnership with its parents; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Lily Evans	Team inspector	English, British Sign Language (BSL); History; Geography; Religious education; Areas of learning for children under five; Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.
Paddy Hall	Team inspector	Mathematics; Science; Information technology; English as an additional language.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Frank Barnes School is a sign bilingual primary school for deaf children situated in the London Borough of Camden. The school caters for children who are severely to profoundly deaf aged between 2-11 years. There are currently 38 children on roll who come from authorities across the Greater London area. Pupils have a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and 50% of pupils are from families where English is an additional language. 58% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 31% of children have additional special educational needs, including learning difficulties.

The school is organised into 7 classes across the Foundation stage and Key Stage I and II. 82% of the teaching staff are qualified teachers of the deaf. All staff are bilingual in the sense that they are users of both BSL and English and are committed to acquiring high level BSL skills.

Frank Barnes is committed to developing its sign bilingual practice in order to maximise the educational achievements of its pupils. The school has high expectations of its pupils and aims for them to achieve national levels of attainment in National Curriculum Assessments. The school replicates models of mainstream practice to ensure that expectations, knowledge and practice remain in line with national requirements. The Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum, together with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, form the basis for the educational provision. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated to meet individual need.

The status, role and contribution of deaf people in the education of the children is recognised. BSL and English are valued equally. For the majority of the children, BSL is their preferred and dominant language and it is used to access the curriculum and to support social, emotional and cognitive development. English is taught as a second language using BSL. The aim is for the children to achieve fluency in BSL and written English while the expectation for spoken English necessarily varies for individual children.

The focus of the school's development is to:

- 'continue to raise achievements across the national curriculum,
- develop our BSL curriculum and assessment procedures,
- work collaboratively with mainstream primary schools,
- provide greater opportunities for integration and inclusion,
- contribute to national and international developments in sign bilingual education,
- promote increased parental and community involvement within the school.'

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Frank Barnes is a very effective school. It achieves the highest standards possible in most of its work. Pupils are very keen and enjoy coming to school and work very hard in lessons. They behave very well in school and on visits in the local community. They achieve high standards in British Sign Language and communicate effectively with each other. The quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the school. Teachers provide a stimulating environment in which pupils learn and achieve as much as they can. Teachers challenge pupils and set high standards in class. Relationships in the school are excellent. Staff work very well as a team and the support staff and therapists contribute to the very good achievements made by the pupils. There are good arrangements made to care for pupils' welfare and safety and the school has very strong partnerships with parents and outside agencies. The leadership and management of the school is very good and constantly looks for ways in which it can improve and strives for the highest standards possible. It has made good improvement since the last inspection and has sustained high standards. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is a strength of the school. The support staff and therapists are an excellent team and have high expectations.
- Excellent relationships in the school. Pupils' personal development is excellent.
- The very good use and high standard of signing enable the pupils to make very good achievements in language and communication.
- The curriculum for language, communication and the teaching of English is very good.
- Pupils achieve very well in all areas of the curriculum.
- There is a clear strategic direction for the school and the management is very good and a strength.
- Religious education and art are strengths of the school.
- The attitudes, behaviour and attendance of the pupils are very good.

What could be improved

- In mathematics and science there is a lack of practical activities and investigations.
- The use of information technology across the school
- More opportunities for integration for pupils into mainstream schools.
- The role of the governing body in monitoring the work of the school
- Further develop the assessment in the foundation subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in October 1996. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure more breadth and the inclusion of design technology. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very effectively. Pupils' progress is tracked with more accuracy. The staff development policy and procedures are now very good. The governing body is more informed about financial matters. Teaching has improved. Standards have improved particularly at Key Stage 1. There has been very good progress of pupils in British Sign Language. There have been slow improvements in the development of information technology.

STANDARDS

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

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

** IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.*

The school has made substantial improvements in the national test results for Key Stage 1 in 1999. This has been the direct result of the effect of the language and communication policy and the good use of BSL, which has enabled the pupils to achieve and have confidence in their ability. It has also provided a clearer focus for teaching.

The national test results for Key Stage 2 in 1998 were lower than the previous year due to a small percentage of pupils having additional learning needs and also those who had arrived relatively late to the school from other settings. However the results for 1999 have shown an improvement. There are many factors effecting these results, only small groups of pupils take national tests and there are significant numbers of pupils with additional special educational needs.

Pupils' standard of work is good. Pupils take great pride in presentation particularly in their written work. Standards in BSL are very good and have a positive effect on the standards and achievements in all areas of the curriculum where pupils achieve very well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and show very positive attitudes towards all subjects and activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the school is very good. Pupils behave with courtesy and mutual respect and an atmosphere of orderliness and friendship was much in evidence.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent. The quality of relationships improves directly with the increased confidence in communication skills as they move through the school.
Attendance	Very good.

Pupils show very positive attitudes to school and their work which has a significant impact on the very good standards that they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very 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.

Teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching was good or better in 91% of the lessons seen. Of those lessons, 50% were very good and 9% were excellent. Teachers have a high level of communication skills in BSL, their general subject knowledge is good and very good in the provision for children under five, there are high expectations of pupils which creates an excellent ethos for learning. Subject expertise needs to be developed in information technology and the use of assessment in the foundation subjects. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education, it is good in science. The skills of literacy and communication are very well taught across the school and teachers and support staff have a consistent approach, which enables the pupils to achieve high standards in their work.

The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well and has very good provision for pupils who have English as an additional language. Teachers handle difficult behaviour well. Pupils show interest and concentration while at school, they communicate very well and through the very good teaching acquire skills and knowledge, which enable them to make very good progress across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of good quality; for children under five it is very good with an excellent family numeracy programme. The school works very effectively in partnership with parents.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is very good with a highly skilled teacher supporting specific pupils as required.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent opportunities for personal and social development, deaf studies provides very good role model for pupils and the provision for understanding the richness and diversity of cultures is very good
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a good level of support for pupils from adults, assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and personal needs is good. Training in child protection procedures and risk assessments of specialist teaching areas require updating.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher sets a very clear strategic direction for the school and is a very effective manager. The senior management team are excellent role models for staff by promoting very good teaching throughout the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body meets on a regular basis and provides good support to the school. The monitoring of aspects of the schools work remains underdeveloped.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are excellent monitoring systems in place to ensure that standards are maintained. The Senior Management Team supported by the Local Education Authority regularly review performance targets.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used very effectively, accommodation is of good quality, overall resources are good, very good in English but poor in history. Staffing is very good. There is a good range of specialists supporting the school.

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 standards achieved by pupils.• The school is continually developing novel ideas for helping pupils learn.• Team working is very effective. Staff are very positive and enthusiastic.• Welcoming environment and they involve parents very well for example in signing classes and numeracy project.• Empowering pupils to be independent and self-confident.• Behaviour is excellent.• The home school book. Parents are pleased with the standard of homework.• The pupils had benefited enormously from the bilingual teaching and philosophy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The availability of data in order that parents can compare the performance of this school with similar schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against age related national expectations or averages. The report does however give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements, annual reviews and individual education plans as well as lesson observations. The complex nature of pupils' difficulties means that there is a wide spread of skills and abilities within each year group. However there are examples of higher attaining pupils attaining at national standards in aspects of English, mathematics, art and physical education.
2. The school has shown improvements in Key Stage 1 national tests over the past three years. Currently standards in writing are above national expectations while reading and mathematics are below. The significant improvements since the last inspection have been influenced by the successful implementation of the literacy and communication policy and the whole school philosophy with regard to the implementation of British Sign Language which has provided a clearer focus for teaching. Pupils through BSL have also been able to communicate more effectively at an earlier stage. The national test results in Key Stage 2 have shown more variability over the past three years and pupils do not attain at national standards. However the results are improving and the school has set targets to reach national expectations in the next two years. The variability in the Key Stage 2 results are due to small cohorts of pupils taking the assessments, pupils entering the school at a late stage with no foundation in BSL on which to build their knowledge and understanding and the significant numbers of pupils with additional special educational needs.
3. In the early years children make very good progress and achieve high standards. Children start nursery with little or no communication skills and by the time they are five have developed very good communication skills in British Sign Language and are able to express themselves and talk about their experiences to others. They watch and respond to stories and write greetings in clearly recognisable letters. In mathematics they sing signed counting rhymes and understand and use language to describe full, more and less. They are inquisitive about the world around them and are beginning to understand about electricity and the textures of different materials. Children are very agile and enjoy physical activity many have good co-ordination. Children use a good range of creative materials such as paint, dough, sponges and crayons.
4. Achievement in English by pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is very good for all pupils including those with additional special needs. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are becoming more fluent in BSL and are finger spelling the alphabet. They are reading simple texts in sign and enjoy taking books home. Pupils can write simple poems and are building up new words daily. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are fluent signers, are reading well at their own level in BSL and finger spelling. Pupils can talk about their preferences in reading and some pupils have built up a very good sight vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils are writing in paragraphs and can write family news and produce very detailed descriptions of stories and characters in plays.
5. In mathematics standards of achievement are good and very good in some classes particularly the under fives and in Year 5. Younger pupils have a good sense that numbers have value and by the end of key stage 1 pupils can use rulers to measure classroom objects. They can add and double simple numbers and can handle money. By the end of Key stage 2 they multiply large numbers by 10 and occasionally spot and rectify mistakes independently.
6. Standards of achievement in science are good and higher attaining pupils attain just below national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are learning to observe and make recordings, pupils sort common materials and begin to identify some of their similarities and differences. Pupils make rapid progress by the end of Key Stage 2 and can discuss the changing states of liquids and gases.

7. In art, pupils attain at national standards and make very good progress across the key stages. In Key Stage 1 pupils can draw fruit using pastels. They develop very good observational skills copying a range of artists. In Year 1 pupils interpreted a Victorian winter's scene and produced their own work showing children having fun ice skating and playing football. By the end of Key Stage 2 there is evidence of pupils experimenting with oils and watercolours painting landscape scenes. Pupils' observational skills are excellent as pupils draw portraits of themselves based on paintings by Leonard da Vinci, Picasso and Dali.
8. In design technology higher attaining pupils attain national standards. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the difference between a lever and sliders, they know and understand the key words such as pull and push, open, close up and down. They can build simple objects out of construction kits. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can identify and classify different taste and textures and put their results onto a graph. Through the careful planning of staff and the matching of the activity to individual needs pupils make very good progress. They learn to think for themselves and solve simple problems.
9. In geography by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils begin to have an understanding of mapping skills through using and interpreting maps of their own class and the school layout. In Key stage 2, they learn to use and interpret 2 and 4 figure map references. In Key Stage 2, pupils with additional special needs have opportunities to revise and renew their understanding of mapping skills if it is found that they have forgotten. By the end of Key Stage 2, they use map keys, and represent and interpret weather data graphically using information technology.
10. In history by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils handle and discuss different types of toys and compare them with toys from the past. They see toys from the past in the museum and come to understand change over time. Pupils by the end of Key Stage 2, develop an understanding of chronology by gaining knowledge and understanding of peoples who invaded this country in the past.
11. Achievement and attainment in information technology is unsatisfactory at present across the subject and the key stages, as the curriculum is in the early stages of implementation. There has been slow progress in this area since the last inspection. However in those aspects now being taught early progress is good. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are being introduced to 'Word'. They can log on, and use precise mouse control to open files and menus, and to select text before changing fonts and display sizes. The most able can save and print files independently and can demonstrate the full sequence they have been guided through.
12. Pupils across the school make very good progress in physical education and attain at national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils create their own dance in preparation for a performance; pupils know the difference between high and low movements and can freeze in different shapes. Pupils remember previous performances and are able to reflect on their work and plan to create more complex movements. In swimming pupils are confident in the water and the higher attaining pupils can swim 10 yards under water, swim under and over a rope and are starting to swim using front crawl. Lower attaining pupils can lift their feet off the bottom and put their heads under water without being frightened. Pupils achieve very well in local competitions and win trophies for football and athletics.
13. Religious education is a strength of the school and meets statutory requirements. Pupils make very good progress and achieve well. In lessons and assemblies valuable contributions are made towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The whole school staff are involved in the delivery of the curriculum when they are asked to explain about their own religious beliefs.
14. Pupils make very good progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils with additional needs and who have English as a second language make very good progress and have full access to the curriculum. The quality of support given by therapists and specialised staff has a direct impact on the good progress made. Pupils make very good progress in their personal, social and health education programme. They communicate well, work very well as a team or on an individual basis. They behave well on visits and act responsibly at lunchtimes. However, pupils would benefit from greater opportunities to integrate with their hearing peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils in all key stages and phases are clearly happy to be coming to school and share news with each other and with staff. When the school day starts they show very good attitudes to learning. The considerable achievement of the nursery and reception classes is the progress in personal and social skills, and in communication which enables them to take on the curriculum with confidence. Although some pupils have challenging behaviour and the potential to be very frustrated, the very good standards of behaviour seen in lessons, in the playground, and in during lunchtime in the dining hall are a credit to them, and to the staff. The school has had no incidents or exclusion in almost two years, and very few serious behavioural have been problems recorded. No bullying or oppressive behaviour of any sort was observed during the week of the inspection.
16. Pupils show very positive attitudes towards all subjects and activities of the school. They enjoy the predictions in science, and the opportunities to build circuits and observe the effects of increased resistance. They pay very close attention and show lots of pleasure in being told stories by highly skilled staff.
17. Pupils are very good at accepting and responding to the role models provided by hearing and deaf staff. They learn to reflect on their own behaviour and modify and improve on their own contribution to the overall ethos of the school. Relationships begin their development with staff in the early years and extend rapidly to include other children. By the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 they are very good and, contribute very substantially to the quality of the learning environment. The quality of relationships improves directly with increased confidence in communication skills and the certainty of pupils that they will be understood.
18. Self-esteem is very good as the result of the quality of teaching and the support offered by other staff. Deaf studies introduces pupils to positive images of deafness in support of growing bilingual skills. Without losing their personal competitiveness many pupils show real respect for pupils from all backgrounds and ranges of abilities. Turn taking is good. Pupils readily undertake responsibilities offered to them, for example taking their responsibilities as members of the school council seriously
19. Levels of attendance are very good and unauthorised absence is low.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the school. Teaching was good or better in 91% of lessons seen. Out of those, 50% were very good and 9% of lessons were excellent. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection. Teaching is very good in English, communication, Literacy, numeracy, mathematics, art, design technology, physical education, information technology and deaf studies. It is good in history, religious education, geography and science. The teaching of British Sign Language and personal and social skills is very good across the school. Teaching is very good for children under five. On occasions throughout the school there is excellent teaching particularly in Year 5 and in the nursery and reception groups.
21. Teachers' overall knowledge of pupils' needs and of subjects overall is very good. This is particularly evident in the teaching of English and literacy skills across the school and in mathematics in year 5 and numeracy in the early years. The use of outside specialists in dance, art and physical education have supported the very good achievements in these subjects. All staff have very good signing skills and their knowledge of effective communication contributes to the very good achievements pupils make across the subjects but particularly in personal and social development. Teachers have very good knowledge of the literacy and numeracy strategy which has been successfully implemented in the school. Staff have a lack of subject expertise in information technology.
22. Teachers' planning is very good and enables pupils to make progress and become more confident. Pupils with additional special needs and those who have English as an additional language are well planned for and activities meet their needs and abilities. Pupils who require speech and language therapy have excellent support from the therapists who plan together with staff specific programmes. The Live English sessions effectively support those pupils who have some hearing. The support staff provide excellent role models for pupils and plan alongside the teaching and therapy staff. Their

involvement in the delivery of stories and story time encourages pupils' lively interest, concentration and enquiring minds as well as promoting excellent signing skills.

23. Staff create an excellent ethos for learning with lively displays in the well organised classrooms. Teachers have good pace to their lessons, high expectations of academic work and of behaviour. Pupils are always encouraged to do their best and as a result show interest and concentrate well in lessons. In mathematics and science there is insufficient emphasis on investigation and practical skills which impacts on pupils' achievements in these areas. The questioning skills of staff are excellent; they pose searching questions and give pupils time to answer to the best of their ability. This supports ongoing assessment in classes. The use of assessment in the foundation courses by staff is less effective and requires further development.
24. Homework is used very well across the school by all staff. It is very good for children under five where parents take an active part in the numeracy strategy and across the school in the support of reading. The strong emphasis that the school places on their links with parents and the signing classes which are provided for them encourage this very good link with homework.

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

25. The curriculum is of good quality and meets statutory requirements. For children under five the curriculum provides very good diversity and quality of opportunities and has an excellent Family Numeracy Programme. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broad but there is a slight imbalance towards English which takes over one third of the curriculum time.
26. The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection. Design technology is now in place and there is a greater range of opportunities for pupils, particularly in physical education and art.
27. The curriculum for the nursery provides appropriate emphasis throughout, on the development of language across the areas of learning and the Family Numeracy programme successfully involves parents in their children's learning. There is very good provision for personal, social and health education, a highlight of which is Deaf Studies. Pupils learn to communicate as effectively as they can, using BSL and then English as the second language. This bilingual approach to teaching the curriculum is a significant strength. The writing programme is especially successful in providing a structure for writing. The religious education programme successfully meets the needs of the school multiethnic population and links with the community promote good relations and impact positively on pupils' learning.
28. Information and communication technology (ICT) is in a developmental stage and has yet to make a significant impact on pupils' learning across the curriculum. There is insufficient emphasis on developing basic research and practical skills in mathematics and science. Although the achievement of pupils is high and the quality of work produced is good, attainment in the foundation subjects is adversely affected by a lack of timetable time. In design and technology, history and geography there is reduced National Curriculum coverage and pupils' opportunities to consolidate learning are insufficient. A number of the policies and schemes of work are currently being updated.
29. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to make progress in personal and social development and have clear ideas of right and wrong. The whole staff, both hearing and deaf, are role models for the children who develop good self-esteem, and independence skills. They are encouraged to express views and play an active part through school council. From the nursery upwards, mealtimes are used to teach social skills informally and at these times pupils show respect, independence, helpfulness, concern for, and interest in others. Pupils are taught social skills and practise them throughout the school day. They are encouraged to listen to views, discuss and empathize with others. The school has a common approach to dealing with behaviour problems and pupils have to face up to dealing with their wrong doings. Staff are very skilled at teaching pupils socially acceptable behaviour.
30. In assemblies, registration, mealtimes, and lessons there are opportunities for pupils to experience moments of reflection. For example, a child showed the rest of the school how the Qu'rn must be

handled and placed with reverence on its special stand. There are moments of suspense and anticipation in dramatically signed stories, in drama performances, and on first seeing a fine art work.

31. Provision for understanding the richness and diversity of cultures is very good. Both staff and pupils are from a diverse mix of cultures and all work together with respect for each other and different values and beliefs. When there are religious festivals staff who practise a particular religion are used to talk about it. During the special week to celebrate world religions, people join the school from the community. In English, history, geography, art and religious education lessons pupils develop a shared understanding of the values and beliefs of others, for example during the festival of Eid. The religious education programme has an appropriate balance of world religions, which reflects the diverse cultural backgrounds of the pupils. In Deaf Studies and through deaf role models there are very good opportunities for pupils to assimilate deaf culture.
32. The school has committed a great deal of time and energy to staff training for the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy: both the very good quality of teaching and national test results reflect this.
33. The school provides booster clubs prior to National Tests to support pupils' learning. There are also opportunities to play football at lunch times but after school clubs are not possible because pupils are transported by taxis and buses to a wide area. Whenever possible pupils compete against other schools for the deaf in sport fixtures and participate in drama festivals. Pupils lack opportunities to integrate in mainstream schools with their hearing peers. At the moment the school is beginning to make links with local schools with a view to starting a programme.
34. The sign bilingual approach which the school offers ensures that all pupils can have easy communication. Pupils who have useful residual hearing or who have had a cochlear implant programme have increasing opportunities to listen and use speech through individual programmes with speech and language therapists.
35. The school has very good links with the local, national and international community. There are visits to local shops, restaurants and banks, and visits from other schools and units for deaf pupils, e.g. on deaf awareness day when eight schools attended. There are visits to and from deaf people who talk about their lives, and deaf arts groups give signed performances. The children work with the local schools arts project and learn about photography at the National Gallery from a deaf person and experience artists in residence at the school. Associated with teacher exchanges to Finland, Holland, Belgium and Norway, classes have linked videos and videophone links. There are special events like Book Week when the school welcomes authors and others to join in the school celebration of books.
36. Parents are made very welcome at the school and very well supported before and during entry of their child to the school. While the parent has a child at school there are many opportunities to come to visit and weekly BSL classes are held to which anyone with an interest in the school can attend, e.g. parents group, bus escorts and drivers. The school has active links with the local environmental protection groups.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The standard of care and support the school provides for its pupils is good. There are excellent relationships between pupils and all staff which is an important factor in promoting the excellent personal development and academic progress. There is an atmosphere of care and trust.
38. The practice of child protection and the care that is taken of pupils' health and safety are good. The appropriate policies have been adopted. However, the procedures are in need of updating to ensure that all staff benefit from induction and current training. General risk assessments are undertaken of the whole site on an annual basis, but these now require supplementation by risk assessments of specific areas such as physical education, science and technology teaching spaces. There is a very good level of support for all pupils in and around the school and during playtimes, resulting in a relaxed atmosphere based on trust and confidence. Pupils enjoy school and are able to achieve very well.

39. Pupils benefit from the excellent early assessment and support of an appropriate range of specialist agencies and services which contribute both to their general welfare, and specifically to their ability to make personal and educational progress. Evidence of the impact of their work is seen in the many reports that support annual reviews, and in the new targets that are set. Considerable care is taken with hearing aids and implants, speech and occupational therapy.
40. The school policy is that all pupils use their hearing aids each day. Pupils have very good audiological support to facilitate use of residual hearing. All children under five have weekly auditory targets, and daily listening skills practice. Throughout the school all classes have a Live English session once a week in which children use their hearing aids and practise listening to speech, following lip patterns and vocalising.
41. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good with regular meetings held with the educational welfare officer. Registers are audited by the headteacher. The punctuality of pupils is good and the transport arrangements have improved considerably since the last inspection. The school has in place a clear behaviour policy. The promotion of good behaviour underpins the school's ethos and all staff work together to ensure its successful implementation. A formal bullying policy sets out the schools expectations. Relationships are excellent between staff and pupils. Pupils behave with courtesy and mutual respect and an atmosphere of orderliness and friendship was much in evidence during the inspection.
42. Annual reviews are a thorough and effective process for guiding pupils and their parents, understanding the abilities present and the support needed to realise them as fully as possible. Where pupils have additional social or behavioural needs, individual plans of support are carefully constructed and put in place.
43. The procedures for and use of assessment are good. The procedures for and use of assessment in the nursery, and in English including BSL is of a very high standard. In science and mathematics the procedures for and use of assessment is good, but it is not yet fully developed in all other subjects. The school has a clear vision and policy for assessment which 'recognises that teachers' assessment practice is central to effective teaching and learning.'
44. Teachers' files provide very good documentary evidence of assessment in practice. Portfolios of regularly collected and annotated work are effective in tracking the progress of pupils in subjects across the curriculum. In foundation subjects where the opportunities are less the documentation is reduced. In the nursery recording of achievement is ongoing, and the nursery team including the therapists play an active part in recording pupils' progress.
45. The school has improved a great deal since the last inspection in setting up assessment procedures and practices which are clearly outlined in the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy. All statutory tests are taken by pupils and in addition they also set statutory targets for Year 5 pupils for English, maths and science at the end of Year 6. The school now sets effective individual education targets at the Annual Review. The targets concentrate on communication and personal and social development. The annual report at the end of year reports on all National Curriculum subjects giving National Curriculum levels for the core and history, geography and information technology. Information from national tests is used to set targets for improvement in English.
46. Across the school the marking of pupils' work is positive and constructive. The school now has developed shared learning intentions so those children are clear about the purpose and focus of their learning. They are trained to evaluate their own learning also which gives useful information to the teacher about the pupils' perspective on learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. There is strong parental satisfaction within the school, based on secure understanding and regular involvement with its work that fosters very good relationships between staff and parents. The parents' meeting and their response to the questionnaire indicates a high level of satisfaction with the way the school cares for and educates their children. There was strong support for the school's bilingual

approach. Parents viewed the staff as courageous in pursuing this approach, which, in their opinion, had benefited their children immensely. This perspective was further endorsed by a number of parents who saw the school at the leading edge in developing new ideas for helping pupils learn and understand.

48. The staff are seen by parents as a committed team dedicated to the task of educating and caring for their children and providing a welcoming environment for both pupils and parents. Parents associated the increased confidence and self-esteem of their children to the strategy of role modelling. The positive attitudes, calmness and confidence of the staff strongly influence the behaviour, values and self-awareness of the pupils and give them a sense of purpose and resolve. They see the school as an extended family with the parents as an integral part. There was close consultation on all matters, welfare and academic, and the staff were approachable and helpful. They found the home/school book, that keeps them informed of a range of matters concerning their children, a really useful method of keeping in contact with teachers and of monitoring the progress of their children.
49. The school has a good range of productive and consistent links with parents that help pupils learn. These links begin prior to a child being admitted to the school with a tour of the school for prospective parents and an overview of what the school offers. In instances where a place at the school has been accepted parents will be offered signing classes before their child attends. 'Signing' is seen as an essential element in achieving and maintaining high academic and behavioural standards. The school provides many opportunities for parents to learn this skill as a way of developing the social and learning needs of their children. The school arranges weekly signing classes, instruction for parents with nursery age pupils and home visits to ethnic minority families to teach both signing and deaf awareness issues. The headteacher uses the Annual Review of pupils' performance and other events to reinforce to parents the importance of acquiring signing skills. Numeracy classes are also offered to parents. These have been very successful in helping parents assist their children with their homework and understanding the longer-term strategy of the mathematics curriculum.
50. The school provides strong support for parents during the transfer process to secondary school. A booklet produced by the school sets out the process and practical assistance is offered by the staff in accompanying parents on visits to secondary schools and liaison with a pupil's own local education authority to ensure they meet the provision required within the agreed time-scale. A home/school agreement drafted with parents and pupils input, sets out the expectations of the school concerning them and the school's duty of care towards them.
51. The school involves parents in its planning and target setting as much as possible. Home/school notebooks are used to maintain a regular dialogue: sometimes simply a note of a personal nature, at others more detailed explanations of homework projects with suggestions of how a parent might assist their child complete it. Parents of nursery pupils attend a 'parent group' each week whilst 'drop in' mornings are organised for those with children aged under two years. Many instances of valuable parental support in the nursery were observed during the inspection. Parents are also involved through membership of the governing body whose input to the management and strategy of the school is recognised as substantial and meaningful. The school sees parental involvement in the education of their children as fundamental to the achievement of the higher standards that it has set itself.
52. The information given to parents through written reports and annual reviews is of very good quality. They give a clear indication of what pupils need to do to improve their progress and what parents can do to help. Individual Education Plans are very good and effective procedures are in place to inform parents of the school's special needs policy and how it applies to their children. Individual needs in connection with care of equipment, special communication requirements, or appointments with specialist agencies and services such as Cochlear Implant Rehabilitation Teams, audiology services and social services departments outside of the school, are co-ordinated by teachers and specialists within the school who provide information, advice and assistance to parents. All parents who responded to the questionnaire and those who attended the parents' meeting felt that they were very well informed about their children's progress. Overall, the information provided to parents about pupils' progress is very good.

53. Parents are very satisfied with the level of homework their children have to do. The close consultation through direct contact, reports, letters or the home/school book enables them to effectively assist their children and make a positive contribution to their learning. Homework is mainly focused on reading, spelling, mathematics and geography together with mutual signing practice. The numeracy and signing classes that the school offers enable parents to give appropriate guidance to their children. Additionally, the home visiting scheme gives staff the opportunity to train parents in signing thus helping them discover the joy of communicating fluently with their children. The school regards the contribution that parents make to children's learning as essential in its efforts to maintain the present high academic standards and the drive towards even better results.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher sets a very clear strategic direction for the school and its work. There is a strong commitment to high standards and a firm philosophy to promote British Sign Language as the pupils' first language. There is a very good and thorough system of meetings involving senior managers and all staff at varying levels including therapists and those outside agencies supporting the school. Communication in the school is very good and the staff work very effectively as a team. Challenging targets are set for senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators which are regularly reviewed by the headteacher and outlined in the school development plan. The headteacher and deputy are excellent role models for staff, promoting very good teaching in their assembly time and in the literacy hour, which the deputy takes on a rolling programme throughout the school.
55. The school development plan is a very effective document setting out clear aims for the school and focus for development. It is regularly updated and targets, costings and achievements are shared with the governors and the local education authority advisory service. The school fulfils all its aims very well; this is supported by parents, governors and staff.
56. The headteacher has established excellent monitoring arrangements within the school. Lessons are regularly observed and targets set for staff. This has had a direct impact on the high proportion of very good teaching. The chair of governors has set the headteacher comprehensive targets to meet and regularly reviews her performance. The school sets itself clear targets for improvement in literacy, numeracy, the performance of pupils from ethnic minority groups and attendance. The minutes of meetings throughout the school show that these targets are regularly reviewed and evaluated. The local education authority advisory service effectively reviews and evaluates the work of the school on an annual basis which supports the headteacher and senior managers in setting new targets for development. The school applies the principles of best value within the constraints of a lack of national benchmarking data.
57. Arrangements for the professional development of teaching and support staff are good and pertinent to individual needs and those of the school's development plans. A wide range of appropriate courses, provided by both internal and external training, ensures that staff feel valued and remain focused on the main aims of the school. An annual professional development review for staff takes place at which performance, training needs and personal concerns are discussed and recorded. These reviews are seen as pivotal to effective staff development and meeting pupils' learning targets. Overall, the arrangements for the induction and development of new staff are good.
58. The governing body meets on a regular basis and receives informative reports from the headteacher. They are fully aware of the priorities in the school to fulfil statutory responsibilities and work very effectively with senior management towards priorities and improvements. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in the understanding by governors of financial arrangements. They have attended training courses and receive regular updates from the bursar. Greater attention needs to be paid to their role in evaluating the work of the school. Currently there are no governors who have specific tasks to evaluate aspects of the school's work, this is a weakness in their role.
59. The bursar works very closely with the senior management team to ensure that monies are clearly directed to the priorities of the school. Regular meetings are held by the bursar with curriculum co-ordinators to ensure that monies are spent appropriately and regular reports are shared with the headteacher. Teaching and support staff work very well together and are well deployed in the

classrooms. Support staff play a key role in the very good achievements that the pupils make. Additional funds have been allocated for the literacy and numeracy strategy which have led to improvements in resources and training. European monies awarded through the Comenius project have enabled senior staff to visit other countries and share and bring back good practice.

60. The number, qualifications and experience of both teaching and support staff is very good. A highly competent and well-motivated team work together to implement the school's objectives in providing a standard of education comparable to good mainstream schools and in developing a positive deaf culture. Morale is high. The educational support staff appreciate their inclusion in the effective delivery of the curriculum and their level of expertise makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The skills and experience provided by other multidisciplinary professional staff, both attached to the school and visiting, are valued for the significant contribution they make to pupils' learning and general well being.
61. Overall, the school's learning resources are satisfactory. Resources are insufficient in information and communication technology and history. In geography, mathematics, science, art, design technology and music they are satisfactory whilst in physical education they are good and in English very good. There is a very high ratio of good quality books per pupil located in a comfortable and appropriately appointed library that is well used by the pupils. There are good resources available to teach English as a foreign language to pupils from ethnic minorities as required.
62. The accommodation is good. The classrooms and general areas are in goods decorative condition and have imaginative displays of pupils' work generously located within them. The outside of the building and grounds are well maintained and free from graffiti and litter. The overall standard is good and reflects well on the efforts of the Premises Manager who, through good liaison with the staff and regular physical inspections, safeguards the pleasing appearance and atmosphere of the school. The accommodation is ample and allows for good learning opportunities and access to resources and is well arranged for the effective delivery of the curriculum and to meet the special needs of the pupils.
63. The building provides a safe and secure environment that is treated with care by the pupils. The headteacher and governors have maintained a commitment to regular renovation to ensure it remains a welcoming setting for both staff and pupils. The outdoor recreational areas are part of a shared site and lack imaginative facilities but are, nevertheless, clean and well cared for. Overall the use and maintenance of the accommodation make a significant contribution to the positive ethos of the school and encourages learning and personal development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the lack of practical activities and investigations in mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring that teachers' plans and the curriculum development plans covers these aspects;
 - auditing current resources to ensure that targets can be resourced;
 - establishing monitoring systems in order that good practice can be shared.

(See paragraphs 86, 90, 92, 94.)
- Improve the effective use of information communication technology across the school by:
 - incorporating information communication technology into subject lesson planning;
 - further developing the training programme for staff;
 - implementing the current policy.

(See paragraphs 108, 109, 111.)
- Opportunities for integration with pupils in mainstream schools should be increased by:
 - identifying groups of pupils and individuals who could benefit from these links;
 - focussing on developing specific links with primary schools;
 - identifying time for staff to visit and establish links.

(See paragraph 33.)
- Extend the monitoring role of the governing body by:

- identifying governors to link with the Literacy and Numeracy initiatives;
- identifying aspects of the work of the school where governors have interests.

(See paragraph 58.)

- Further develop the assessment strategies in the foundation subjects.
(See paragraphs 43, 97, 100, 107, 111, 119.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

54

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

41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	50	32	9	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

No of pupils

Number of pupils on the school's roll

38

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

22

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

15

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

1

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

5

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

School data

4

Unauthorised absence

%

School data

0.4

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	3	2	5

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	2	2	2
	Girls	0	1	0
	Total	2	3	2
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67	100	67
	National			

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	2	2	2
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	2	2	2
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67	67	67
	National			

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	3	2	5

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	1	1
	Girls	1	2	2
	Total	2	3	3
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	40	60	60
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	0	1	1
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	2	3	3
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	40	60	60
	National			

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	0
White	12
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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: Y[] – Y[]**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.8
Average class size	5.4

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	365.75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	632,118
Total expenditure	667,137
Expenditure per pupil	15,050
Balance brought forward from previous year	104,878
Balance carried forward to next year	69,859

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	38
Number of questionnaires returned	13

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	92	8			
My child is making good progress in school.	69	31			
Behaviour in the school is good.	77	23			
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	46			8
The teaching is good.	77	15			8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	23			
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	15			8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	15			8
The school works closely with parents.	85	15			
The school is well led and managed.	77	23			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	23			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	31			8

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

64. The achievements of children under five are very good. They start with little or no communication skills and many from homes where English is not the first language. Their progress in developing communication skills in British Sign Language is very good, and they make good or very good progress across all other areas of learning. By the time they enter the main school, most children have developed their skills and understanding well and are ready to work within the National Curriculum. There is a very good, broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that children cover all aspects of the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Assessment and recording procedures are excellent, ongoing and thorough. Children have individual targets for all areas of learning, which provide baseline information, which accompanies them into the main school.
65. Children behave very well in the nursery and reception classes. Younger pupils learn to use the toilet, to wash before their meal and to eat using cutlery. They share snack food in the group and take turns to do so. In group activities they take turns, share equipment, and play purposefully with other children. They know about taking turns in washing up and do so independently.
66. Children make very good progress in language and literacy. They communicate their own needs to familiar adults at early stages and gradually develop enough language to talk about their experiences and listen and contribute to the experiences of others. They begin to make clear signs with improving and more accurate handshapes. By the time they are ready to join Key Stage 1 they recognise most of the alphabet from finger spelling and write those letters. They name the letters of their names and write their own names correctly. They have a small vocabulary of sight words and can recognise BSL graphics. They watch and respond to stories and sequence a known story. They write greetings, copied from the teacher in clearly recognisable letters.
67. In mathematics, under fives work together with their parents and staff each week in the highly successful Family Numeracy Project. This is an excellent initiative which helps parents to develop confidence in their children's achievements, and enables them to work successfully with their children at home. The nursery children sing signed counting songs. They understand and use language to describe full, more, less. They use prepositions to describe an object's position. In the reception group they recognise and use the signs for full/ empty, big, middle and small. They understand the sign for 'add' and sign one more than a given number.
68. There are good procedures for introducing children to daily routines which support their knowledge and understanding of the world. In the nursery, they begin to understand the way to the dining room, the kitchen and have a sense of where they are. They go for short walks around the school playground and along the road, learning about dangers and places to play. They are beginning to understand about electricity, and to know that electricity can be dangerous. They celebrate major festivals and dress up in the clothes for Eid. They grow plants and use simple tools and materials to fashion models from a range of materials. They begin to understand that food changes in texture and form and they test materials for strength.
69. The physical development of the children is very good. Most are very agile; they run, climb, jump, and skip with good co-ordination and enjoyment. They throw, catch and bounce a ball with increasing skill and accuracy. They follow instructions carefully and link simple movements and stop and start with different cues. They copy lines and patterns, thread beads, use a pegboard and cut with scissors independently. They enjoy dancing to music when on the sound box.
70. Children enjoy art and make very good progress in their creative development. They successfully use a good range of mediums such as crayons, paint, dough, plasticene, brushes, sponges and hands in printing. They enjoy singing each day with some children signing and others using voice and sign. They enjoy using percussion instruments.

71. The quality of teaching is very good. The teacher, support staff and speech and language therapist are a very good team who support the children and each other fully. Everyone has responsibility for recording children's achievements throughout the day and all are fully knowledgeable about the children and their learning targets. Work is well prepared in advance and the co-ordinator and team meet weekly for planning and review meetings, and have brainstorming sessions to plan topic work.
72. The accommodation is excellent, areas for learning are well set out within the classroom which includes a soft playroom, kitchen and changing area. There are very good opportunities outside, such as a safe play area, large and small toys, climbing frame and slide as well as a garden area. Children's work is well displayed and there are very good resources which are stimulating to the children and easily accessed by staff.

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

73. British Sign Language is successfully taught and used as the first language of the school. The school philosophy is to provide a very good quality bilingual education for its pupils with British Sign Language (BSL) as the pupils' first language and English as their second language. The school has high expectations of pupils and is committed to providing a very good standard of signing in and around school. BSL is currently managed by a deaf instructor and the deaf team, who have developed the BSL assessment profile. This is a very useful working document currently about to enter its third draft as it is refined and developed. Members of the deaf team are on the Language and Communication Working Party which aims to review English in the school. Within the school pupils have a number of starting points. A few pupils come from families for whom BSL is the preferred language and they sign prior to entry to school. A significant number come from families for whom English is an additional language. A growing number of pupils have cochlear implants, and therefore the potential to develop useful residual hearing.
74. All staff have a minimum of CADC Stage 1 and have weekly lessons led by a highly skilled deaf instructor. This ensures opportunities for improvement in the skills of staff. In most lessons, signing instructors support staff and pupils. Their high level of skills have a positive effect on pupils and staff alike. Several of the teaching and support staff are deaf themselves and have BSL as their preferred language. Classes are on offer for staff after school each week to improve their signing skills and the school plans to offer a National Vocational Qualification in the near future. One evening a week, parents and interested persons, such as the school bus drivers and escorts, have the opportunity to attend BSL lessons to develop, practise and improve their skills. This class is currently attended by only two parents and three others. The mix of hearing and deaf teachers, speech and language therapists, support staff and BSL instructors provides a powerful range of strengths with a shared commitment to successfully fulfilling the aims of the school.
75. The BSL developmental assessment programme which incorporates Deaf Studies is used to track pupils' progress in BSL communication. On entry to the nursery, children often have little or no communication skills. They are immediately in a language rich BSL environment where BSL graphics are displayed alongside English vocabulary, and pupils soon begin to develop BSL skills. New parents are invited into school to be videoed for a communication assessment with their child. This information is used by parents and staff to raise awareness and where appropriate improve speaking and listening skills. Parents speak highly of the support they are offered. By reception, pupils are developing some fluency within a limited range of vocabulary, with some individuals more fluent and clearer signers than others.
76. As pupils progress through school they continue to build up their BSL communication in speaking and listening, and reading.

ENGLISH

77. Achievement in lessons and over time is very good in the nursery and good at Key Stages 1 and 2 for all children including those with additional special needs. The findings of this inspection and the results of statutory tests show that although overall attainment is below national expectations, there has been an improvement in standards over the last three years. This is despite fluctuations attributed to the

variability of small cohorts of pupils. At Key Stage 1 last year, the school met national expectations in writing with all pupils achieving Level 2. Standards achieved in half of the lessons seen were at nationally expected levels. During the inspection, standards of attainment in lessons in Years 3/4 were consistently judged to be at national levels.

78. From entry to the nursery, the children, including those with English as a second language, make excellent progress in acquiring language, reading and writing skills. They reach standards close to national expectations. This is a remarkable achievement and an endorsement of the methods currently employed by the school in teaching pupils.
79. The staff have had very good training in the literacy strategy and it is taught well. Planning is detailed with clear learning objectives for lessons and personal targets for each pupil. Lessons are evaluated and pupils assessed, progress toward targets recorded and used to plan the next lesson. Text level work is very successful and pupils become skilled at identifying parts of speech such as pronouns. In Years 3/4 pupils can relate back in the text to the subject of the pronouns. This work links into pupils' individual word files, which are introduced at Year 1. Pupils store words for their writing, colour coded for each part of speech and at an early stage are introduced to the concepts of 'doing' words etc. Pupils are encouraged in emergent writing from the beginning and have spelling sheets and targets to learn, often for homework, which are well used. In Year 3, pupils are introduced to scaffold sheets, which cleverly assist them to move from BSL writing structure to English. Pupils with additional special needs are given appropriate texts and extra support in their learning.
80. By the age of five, pupils are below national standards in terms of National Curriculum speaking and listening but are making very good progress. They concentrate well, have a good basic working vocabulary in BSL. This enables them to discuss news and enjoy stories, which are often told by deaf adults in all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, they are becoming more fluent in BSL, their sign shapes and expressions are more defined, and they are finger spelling the alphabet. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are fluent signers, are reading well at their own level in BSL and finger spelling. In a new initiative, all pupils have weekly 'Live English' sessions when they make good progress in their listening and speaking skills in English language. The population of the school is changing and it is recognised that there are now more children with the potential to develop useful hearing because they have had cochlear implants. Implanted pupils also have an ongoing therapy programme with speech and language therapists. Pupils with additional special needs are given extra support in class to reinforce learning and to assist them in communicating more effectively.
81. From the nursery through each class, the school promotes reading through a language rich environment of BSL graphics, letters and words. Before they are five years old, they have built up a good sign vocabulary of words and names, and are at the pre-reading stage in BSL, talking about pictures in books. By the age of seven, they are reading simple texts in sign, and are asking when they do not know the word. Pupils who prefer to read orally are building a good sight vocabulary. All children take home books to read to parents who correspond using the home school notebook. In directed reading sessions, pupils read at least three times a week in school to an adult on a one to one basis. By the age of 11, pupils are tackling more advanced texts and are using a range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Pupils with useful hearing do not have phonetic strategies at present. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are familiar with authors, know about contents, indexes, and how to find books in the school library. They talk about their preferences in reading. All the children enjoy reading and in Key Stage 2 talk about their preferences. The school reading scheme and additional books which children are encouraged to borrow from the school library are colour-coded
82. By the age of five, pupils write their names, and form recognisable letters, sometimes with clear spacing of words. They enjoy drawing and dictating their words to the teacher, later copying the story underneath before going on to record simple stories in BSL. By the age of 7, pupils are beginning to use the scaffold frame in the transition from BSL to writing in English. They are writing poems such as 'Happiness is...' and writing from their own experiences. Pupils with additional needs have extra support and encouragement to write. Word files are much in evidence and new words are added daily along with pictures or sign graphics if appropriate. By the age of 11, the most able pupils are writing in paragraphs, using a limited range of conjunctions, punctuating direct speech and making some effective use of adjectives and adverbs. Pupils have opportunities to write in a very good range of styles for the

level of their writing skills. In Year 3 /4 pupils make up their own riddles, write family news and produce descriptions of their favourite story book characters, such as 'Batman', 'Cinderella' and 'Snow-white'. Pupils in Year 5 write about their selected parts of 'George's Marvellous Medicine' and Year 6 they write poetry expressing their thoughts, study the characters in "Alice Through the Looking Glass". There are few examples of pieces of extended writing.

83. Since the last inspection there has been an overall improvement in national test results. There have been significant developments in tracking and measuring signing language acquisition through BSL Developmental Assessment. The school now has a very good reading and writing developmental framework, which systematically maps each pupil's development, progress and achievements in reading and writing. The school now sets targets for national test results and provides booster classes in the evenings before they are taken. Since the last inspection all pupils have individual education plan targets in Language and communication, BSL, reading and writing.
84. The quality of teaching in English was good or better in 85% of lessons seen, with very good or excellent teaching in 45% of lessons. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. All teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, teach the basic skills thoroughly and use assessment fully in planning evaluating, assessing and recording children's work. Individual targets are integral to lesson planning and marking is positive and supportive. Homework is routinely set. Where teaching was particularly successful, the pace was right, there were high expectations of the children and questions, which challenged the children to think and express their own ideas. Classroom support assistants and speech and language therapists work and plan as a team with teachers and have a positive effect on pupils' learning. In a few lessons of the literacy hour, teaching was less successful because the pace was too slow, the text was over difficult and the time spent on it was excessive.
85. The subject manager gives an excellent quality of leadership. She manages a skilled and dedicated team, monitors, evaluates, and innovates in this area of the curriculum she recognises needs and leads developments such as the language and communication group. Complementary to this, the BSL instructor and the teacher responsible for deaf studies and BSL assessment work hard to ensure high quality signing skills from teachers, support staff, parents and pupils. They are also responsible for creating the BSL Assessment programme. The library is well appointed, has good quality and quantity of resources and is user friendly for the children. The development of information and communication technology skills of pupils is just beginning and is underused in the school.

MATHEMATICS

86. Standards of achievement in lessons and over time are good, and very good in some classes, particularly the under fives, and in Year 5. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Results from national tests are uneven over the last three years but are based on very small numbers, and are just below national expectations for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The introduction of the National Numeracy strategy throughout the school, the family numeracy project for children under five, and the strength of teaching, enables the school to make steady progress towards its targets. Given the communication difficulties pupils have to overcome, and the proportion of pupils with additional needs this represents a commendable result. However there is too little evidence of pupils' ability to use mathematical skills in practical applications.
87. Standards of numeracy are generally satisfactory, and are good in the early years and in Year 5 where teaching is exceptionally strong. Younger pupils have a good sense that numbers have value, they see patterns and sequences in numbers, recognising and signing numbers to ten. They can sequence and match three bears to the appropriate chairs, beds and bowls of porridge. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can use rulers to measure classroom objects in centimetres. They order numbers to 100, and recognise odd and even number patterns and use them to help with addition and subtraction. They can add numbers to 10 and write numbers to 50. The idea of doubling numbers is appearing. Most can recognise time to quarters of an hour. They handle money, recognise angles and shapes.
88. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have made very good progress. They are able to handle larger numbers up to a hundred and to recognise thousands. They multiply large numbers by 10, and occasionally by 100. They enjoy number chains to 128. More able pupils can explain the sequences of actions by which

they solved problems, and occasionally spot and rectify mistakes independently. Pupils recognise and match a good range of shapes and discuss their characteristics, but lack the skills necessary to distinguish between, say hexagons and octagons with confidence.

89. The teaching of mathematics is a strength, and has benefited from the methodology and management introduced with the National Numeracy Strategy. It is exceptionally good within the Family Literacy Project, and in Year 5 where exceptional clarity of intended outcomes, imaginative planning and very high expectations contribute to very good results in lessons. It is good or very good elsewhere. The signing skills of staff teams are having a very positive impact on the development of mathematical language in pupils.
90. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced and is benefiting from the recent introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. The policy documents are planned for immediate review to take account of these recent developments. An exciting Family Numeracy project has also been recently introduced for pupils in the nursery and the Reception year. This provides opportunities for parents to become directly involved in the vocabulary and methods being used to develop early numeracy skills, in order to support children at home. In all lessons seen there are opportunities to develop mathematical language, improve mental mathematics agility and confidence, and to undertake investigations. Fewer opportunities were seen to apply mathematics learnt in unfamiliar or practical situations. A formal assessment system other than that provided by annual reviews has yet to be established although there is good use of annotated samples of work being used to build portfolios that support assessment and subsequent planning. Numeracy targets are set and reviewed within all individual education plans.
91. There is no substantive subject co-ordinator and the headteacher is fulfilling this role. The local education authority specialist staff and the introduction of the National Numeracy Project are both contributing to a strategy that is maintaining the momentum of development during these difficult circumstances.

SCIENCE

92. Standards of attainment based on assessment, national tests and lessons seen during the inspection are just below national expectations at the end of both key stages. This represents good achievement overall. Pupils are developing a good awareness of themselves and the world around them, for example when discussing the impacts of foods on their bodies. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are learning to observe and make recordings concerning a field trip set up to explore the local environment. In the task of creating electrical circuits, and noticing changes, but their understanding of cause and effect is less secure. Diagrams and labelling are clear and well presented although there is insufficient evidence of the use of information technology to present findings and extend narrative. This together with the limited evidence of extended writing skills is limiting progress and achievement. Overall the skills and scientific language associated with independent experimentation and investigation are not sufficiently well developed to realise pupils' full potential. Pupils sort common materials and begin to identify some of their similarities and differences. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have developed the communication skills necessary to handle more complex ideas and discuss the changing states of liquids and gases. Pupils make rapid progress
93. Teaching is generally good, and occasionally very good. Lessons are inventive and interesting, and the quality of teamwork is good. While lessons seen often used a good range of resources, some teachers lacked sufficient scientific understanding and confidence in investigations and experiments to produce the best results. There is insufficient use of information technology and this is also linked to staff skills and confidence. There is very good use of routine teacher assessment through question and answer in lessons in both key stages. Expert signing by support staff has a very significant impact on the ability of pupils to discriminate between concepts such as 'shiny' and 'glass', and between 'transparent' and 'opaque'.
94. The science curriculum meets statutory requirements, and has breadth through a rolling programme which leads to medium term plans. Opportunities for investigative science exist but are less consistently available. Good opportunities are provided in some classes to consider environmental issues. Assessment procedures have not yet been fully established, although individual pieces of work are kept

to develop portfolios of work, and are well annotated. There is energetic leadership resulting in good documentation but the pace of development has given way to the needs of the national literacy and numeracy requirements and needs a clearer identification of what is to be developed and by when, in the school development plan.

ART

95. Art is a strength of the school and many pupils attain at national standards. The standards of achievement throughout the school are very good. Children under five understand and can match colours and are beginning to know the difference between textures. Very good display shows children making collages out of string, wool and cardboard. In Key Stage 1 pupils can draw fruit using pastels. They develop very good observational skills copying a range of artists. In Year 1 pupils interpreted a Victorian winter's scene and produced their own work showing children having fun ice skating and playing football. They can share their own ideas with each other and are starting to appraise their work. The very good questioning skills of the teachers encourages pupils to reflect on their work with confidence.
96. In Key Stage 2 pupils are introduced to a range of artists including visiting artists to the school. There is evidence of pupils experimenting with oils and watercolours painting landscape scenes. Pupils' observational skills are excellent as they draw portraits of themselves based on paintings by Leonard da Vinci, Picasso and Dali. Pupils acquire knowledge of different artists through visits to exhibitions and researching through books and using a variety of artefacts such as masks from other countries. Pupils study Chinese and Egyptian art and can draw and paint Chinese willow patterns and design pieces of work using hieroglyphics. They understand the different cultures and the impact that this has on art.
97. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use resources well, which creates interest and excitement in the pupils. Teachers and support staff encourage pupils to observe details of paintings and to be accurate with their work. Pupils' work is often used as examples of good practice and pupils are encouraged to appraise their own and each other's work. The school has excellent displays around the corridors, classrooms and entrances which promotes art as a subject and encourages interest. Pupils are eager to learn and make very good progress. Assessment is at an early stage and the co-ordinator has plans to address this.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Pupils attain at national standards across the school. This is very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well particularly in reception and at Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the difference between a lever and sliders, they know and understand the key words such as pull and push, open, close up and down. They can build simple objects out of construction kits. Higher attaining pupils make objects that slide and are able to draw and discuss their work. Younger pupils can make and design box figures using cardboard, can design a bed out of a range of junk materials. They can plan and draw their finished product. In discussion, pupils have an understanding of balance and what they have to do in order for a model to be balanced. Good questioning by teachers and support staff elicit very good responses from the pupils who are encouraged to reflect on their work.
99. In Key Stage 2 pupils construct model houses out of a variety of materials. In textiles pupils make caterpillars, spiders and butterflies out of felt and sewn onto hessian. Pupils know how to do simple embroidery. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can identify and classify different taste and textures and put their results onto a graph. Through the careful planning of staff and the matching of the activity to individual needs pupils make very good progress. They learn to think for themselves and solve simple problems. They work independently and in groups and have very positive attitudes to learning.
100. The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers and support staff have good subject knowledge and there is a wide variety of activities and resources in the modules which stimulate pupils' interests and encourage learning.

Teachers constantly encourage pupils to think for themselves and have their own ideas and views. The teaching and support staff work very well as a team. Assessment and recording of skills is still in the early stages of development.

GEOGRAPHY

101. The achievements of pupils in geography are good and an improvement since the last inspection. The evidence for this is drawn from one lesson in Key Stage 2 observed during the inspection, scrutiny of work, wall displays, teachers' planning and discussion. Pupils become aware of their local environment and of the importance of looking after the environment. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils begin to have an understanding of mapping skills through using and interpreting maps of their own class and the school layout. In Key Stage 2, they learn to use and interpret two and four figure map references. In Key Stage 2, pupils with additional special needs have opportunities to revise and renew their understanding of mapping skills if it is found that they have forgotten. By the end of Key Stage 2, they use map keys, and represent and interpret weather data graphically using information technology. The work they have produced on wall display throughout the school, and in topic books is of a high standard. Pupils take pride in their work and write neatly.
102. In the successful lesson observed, teacher's planning detailed clear learning objectives and expected outcomes for individual pupils. Classroom support assistants were well deployed to support teaching and ensured that resources are at hand and encouraged and supported pupils' learning. Visual aids were plentiful and illustrated the teaching point so that pupils' understanding was ensured. Skilful questioning challenged pupils to reason, discuss and test their solutions. Pupils relished learning, concentrated closely, and were eager to discuss or offer suggestions. From placing objects on a large-scale map they were pleased to discover for themselves appropriate solutions and show respect for as well as offer help to others in the group.
103. The recent introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has reduced time spent on the subject. A modular reduced curriculum has been introduced. The co-ordinator has a detailed curriculum development plan for the subject to improve storage, use of resources, and rewrite the policy and scheme of work. The new pond and wildlife area together with links with local environment groups provide a valuable learning resource for the school.

HISTORY

104. Pupils' achievements in history are good. They develop knowledge and understanding of the past within the limited range of modules at both key stages. The standard of work they produce is of a high quality.
105. In Key Stage 1 they handle and discuss different types of toys and compare them with toys from the past. They see toys from the past in the museum and come to understand change over time. Pupils in Key Stage 2, develop an understanding of chronology by gaining knowledge and understanding of peoples who invaded this country in the past. They have some knowledge of World War II, and use family witnesses to talk about their lives from the time when they were born. They record the information on a timeline of the decades of the 20th century leading up to the end of the millennium.
106. During the inspection, two good quality lessons were seen, one from each of the key stages. Additional information is drawn from portfolio examples of work and very attractive, high quality wall displays, and examples of literacy linked to work in history. A particularly successful feature of lessons is an investigative questioning approach, which challenges children to make observations and interpretations of the evidence of pictures and objects before them. Pupils are deeply interested in what the teacher has to say, especially when talking of the teacher's own childhood experiences. Teachers ensure first hand experiences for the children through planning of visits to museums and other relevant places linked to each module of work.
107. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A review of the scheme of work and policy is planned. The co-ordinator recognises that resources for history are unsatisfactory at present and is currently involved in improving storage of and access to resources. Assessment is not well used in history and the

planning and recording of lesson objectives is not related to attainment targets. However attainment in end of year reports is assessed in relation to National Curriculum attainment targets.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

108. Achievement and attainment in information technology is unsatisfactory at present across the subject and the key stages, as the curriculum on offer is in the early stages of implementation. There has been slow progress in this area since the last inspection. However in those aspects now being taught early progress is good. Pupils develop good mouse control in the nursery and reception groups, and are able to select, drag and drop objects in chosen positions, matching medium sized beds to 'mother bear' and linking Goldilocks with the broken chair. They are thrilled with the printed results. Too little evidence was seen during the inspection to support judgements in Key Stage 1.
109. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are being introduced to 'Word'. They can log on, and use precise mouse control to open files and menus, and to select text before changing fonts and display sizes. The most able can save and print files independently and can demonstrate the full sequence they have been guided through. There is insufficient evidence of attainment in other aspects of information technology, or of its planned use to support other curriculum areas.
110. Skilled teaching is seen in the early years and in Key Stage 2 but the school has given priority in its development plan to provide further teacher in-service training to support that recently provided very effectively for support staff. Support staff are seen making a very useful contribution to achievement in some lessons. The School Bursar is joint co-ordinator with a teacher, and is taking an active and well-received role in supporting staff. This very strong and energetic joint leadership has recently been established and is already having a powerful impact. Good documentation has been developed to support the introduction of Internet access.
111. The subject curriculum is in outline form, and its implementation is currently unsatisfactory. Resources are unsatisfactory. Funded plans to substantially increase the availability of hardware and software and a programme of staff development are underway in order to rectify the situation. Much of the work that is undertaken is concerned with basic mouse control and keyboard skills. Very occasional examples of data handling are seen. No monitoring or assessment system is in place. Very good guidance documents have been established to support the planned introduction of the Internet.

MUSIC

112. No music lessons were observed during the week of the inspection because of the curriculum programme. However, videos of previous school performances were viewed which showed pupils clearly enjoying signed singing and playing instruments. Signed singing is integrated into the early years programme in which the pupils take part and practice their signing skills through signed rhymes.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson of dance and one swimming lesson. Discussions were held with the co-ordinator and the headteacher, photographs were viewed and curriculum plans scrutinised which enable judgements regarding attainment and achievements to be made. Pupils across the school make very good progress in physical education and attain at national expectations. They create their own dances in preparation for a performance; pupils know the difference between high and low movements and can freeze in different shapes. Pupils remember previous performances and are able to reflect on their work and plan to create more complex movements. In swimming pupils are confident in the water and the higher attaining pupils can swim 10 yards under water, swim under and over a rope and are starting to swim using front crawl. Lower attaining pupils can lift their feet off the bottom and put their heads under water without being frightened.
114. Pupils achieve very well in local competitions and win trophies for football and athletics. On visits to the local sports centre pupils have opportunities to play a range of sports including rock climbing in which they reach national expectations. In all activities pupils are eager to learn and work very well as a team. They show real enjoyment and fun.

115. The quality of teaching is very good. Outside specialists are brought in to teach dance and swimming is taken by an experienced instructor. These staff have made a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and the range of opportunities offered to the pupils. Teaching and support staff are used very effectively and work well as a team. Planning is very detailed and builds on pupils' previous experiences. Staff have high expectations.
116. The curriculum is well planned with a very good range of visits which introduce pupils to sports not routinely available in schools. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection in the range of activities available. This is particularly significant since the schools outside provision for physical education is restricted by a lack of space.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. The school holds a world religions day when people are invited from outside school. Pupils are focused and interested in the subject because of its relevance to their lives and the way it is presented. The local Agreed Syllabus provides a good balance of learning about and world religions thus promoting equality of opportunity. It fosters mutual respect and highlights common bonds. During the course of the inspection two lessons were observed. Additional evidence comes from assemblies, wall displays, pupil portfolios, programmes and plans of work, and the Agreed Syllabus.
118. In lessons and in assembly, discussion is encouraged and enjoyed by all. Pupils share their understanding and experiences of Eid, and know why holy books and artefacts are special. They discuss the reasons for celebrations and the traditions which surround them, and can relate to the practices in other religions. They enjoy opportunities to dress themselves and dolls in the special clothes for Eid. All pupils show reverence and understanding of the importance of holy artefacts. In Key Stage 2, they discover and realise that skin colour is no indication of religious beliefs.
119. Management and resourcing of the subject is good. The policy document is clear and comprehensive. Assessment is at present informal and not routinely recorded. The coordinator monitors timetabled hours on religious education effectively.