

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HAMILTON SCHOOL**

Handsworth, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103600

Headteacher: Nigel Carter

Reporting inspector: Noreen Buckingham  
16722

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> February – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2000

Inspection number: 190701

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:	2 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hamilton Road Handsworth Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B21 8AH
Telephone number:	0121 554 1676
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor C. Lal
Date of previous inspection:	25 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Noreen Buckingham	Registered inspector	English	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Art	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Design and technology	Teaching and learning
		Information and communication technology	Leadership and management
		English as an additional language	Key Issues for action
John Fletcher	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Judith Charlesworth	Team inspector	Music	
		Equality of opportunity	
Margaret Smith	Team inspector	Mathematics	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Geography	
		History	
		Special educational needs	
Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Science	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hamilton School is a day special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. About 30 pupils have an additional speech and language difficulty and approximately 3 pupils are identified as being on the autistic spectrum. The population of the school is changing with pupils presenting a wider range of difficulty. The age range is from 2 to 11 years, although at the time of the inspection there were only 4 pupils under statutory school age. The school is situated in the Handsworth area of central Birmingham, located in a mixed residential, business and industrial centre.

There are currently 75 pupils on the school role who come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and 52 pupils are eligible for free school meals. About 35 are from multi-ethnic backgrounds and approximately 31 come from homes where English is not the first language. These pupils are supported by a specialist English as an Additional Language assistant.

All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and their achievements on entry to the school are below national expectations, including those who are admitted in Key Stage 2. The school has links with two mainstream schools, one of which sends pupils to integrate with Hamilton School and another into which a pupil from Hamilton spends some time. The school has links with its feeder secondary special schools.

The new headteacher was appointed in January 1999. The school was previously inspected in November 1996.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Hamilton School is an improving school. The recently appointed headteacher, supported well by an able deputy head, has given the school a clear educational direction which is shared by the chairman of the governing body. The school makes good use its accommodation and resources and all staff work closely together to support pupils' learning and to ensure a welcoming environment. Pupils show good attitudes towards their work and they are happy in school. Relationships within the school as a whole are very good and this has a positive impact on the opportunities pupils are given in lessons and social times. The school is implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies appropriately and the high emphasis it gives to developing communication skills gives good results. The overall quality of teaching is good and in lessons pupils achieve well in relation to their prior achievements. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Leadership by the headteacher is excellent and gives a clear educational direction to the school. He identifies and uses the expertise of staff well for the benefit of pupils.
- Teaching overall is good.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, especially social and cultural development.
- Relationships within the school are very good. The personal development of pupils is good.
- The literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced well.
- Pupils at the start of Key Stage 1 receive a very good introduction to their start in school.
- Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' education and teamwork within the classroom is a



strength of the school.

- The community ethos within the school is very good.

#### What could be improved

- Governors need to be more actively involved in the work of the school.
- Monitoring of what is taught and how well it is taught is not sufficiently developed.
- Targets on pupils Individual Education Plans because they are not sufficiently specific.
- Assessment procedures which are applied inconsistently and as yet do not inform either teaching or the further development of the curriculum.

*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 has responded positively to most of the key issues raised in the previous inspection but still has a number of aspects to deal with in order to continue to improve and raise standards. The quality of teaching has improved but there still needs to be a sharper focus to identify what is or is not working well especially at Key Stage 2. There are now curriculum coordinators in place who have clear roles and responsibilities. Taught time has been increased and schemes of work have been established. More improvements still need to be made in some subjects and the curriculum is not well balanced nor is it effectively monitored. Further work is required on embedding assessment procedures firmly into daily practice and to make more effective use of assessment findings to inform future work. Whilst individual education plans for all pupils have been introduced staff need more training on writing very specific targets to enable pupils' progress to be more closely monitored. The School Development Plan and financial planning are now very good. The school is in a good position to build on the improvements it has made and the headteacher knows what needs to be done to make it more effective.

### 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	B	B	very good A
reading	C	C	good B
writing	C	C	satisfactory C
mathematics	C	C	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	B	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C	

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

The targets on pupils' individual education plans are too generic to be very useful in monitoring pupils' progress. In lessons pupils learn well. Scrutiny of work shows that pupils are making sound progress over time.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to school, they are happy and responsive in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils know what they have to do to improve if they have been naughty.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and pupils have increasing opportunities to take on responsibility as they move through the school. Relationships within the school are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school and only stay away if there is a good reason, such as illness.

Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. They are a strength of the school and have a significant influence on pupils' achievements and the positive ethos. Pupils like being in school and it is only when activities fail to interest or challenge them that they become distracted and lose concentration. They generally behave well in lessons and around the school. They are pleased to talk to visitors and are polite and courteous. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with similar schools.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching overall is good with 93 percent being satisfactory or better; 65 percent good or better and 24 percent very good or excellent. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is nearly always at least good with only one lesson where it was satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 teaching is at least satisfactory or good with only four lessons in which it was unsatisfactory. Teachers and support staff work very well together. English, maths and science are all taught well at Key Stage 1. However, each of these subjects has a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced well and are taught with imagination in some classes. Personal and social education is an integral part of many lessons. The school tries very hard to meet the needs of a diverse pupil population and pupils learn well in lessons and in some subjects make sound progress over time.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad with a heavy emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, including communication, but it has yet to achieve balance as some subjects are allocated too little time.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This provision is good and pupils receive good support from support assistants and the English as an Additional Language assistant who also acts as a home liaison officer, a role which is much appreciated by parents.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The personal development of pupils' is good and staff provide good role models for pupils. Pupils social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are given many experiences which enhances these aspects of their development. Spiritual and moral development are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision for pupils' educational and personal support is good and procedures for ensuring pupils welfare and protection are also good.

Parents have a very positive view of the school but are limited by how much they can be actively involved. The school arranges meetings for parents but attendance is patchy often because of the distances parents have to travel and the time it takes. A regular newsletter keeps them well informed of school activities. Although broad and relevant the curriculum has yet to achieve balance. There is strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy leaving insufficient time for other subjects. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and appropriate procedures are in place to maintain this.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The overall leadership and management by the headteacher and senior management team is good. All staff work well as a team.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body supports the work of the school and is well informed by the headteacher of activities and initiatives but its role is underdeveloped because it does not actively monitor or evaluate teaching and the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school development plan sets out clear targets allocated to named staff and the school self evaluation form identifies areas which need further development.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources for the benefit of the pupils and is always striving to find ways of improving them, for example, the redevelopment of the play area.

The school has sufficient staff for the number of pupils currently on role. It makes good use of the accommodation and resources at its disposal and has developed a particularly good library resource which, although underused at the moment, has good potential for development. The headteacher, deputy head and senior management team work hard to promote the aims of the school but the governing body, whilst supporting the work of the school, has little active involvement in its development. The school strives to carefully find

ways to improve what it offers pupils and parents and compares itself with other similar institutions. It looks for value for money in purchases and uses specific grants very effectively. The school provides satisfactory value for money,

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school</li><li>• They feel comfortable about approaching school</li><li>• The school expects pupils to work hard</li><li>• The teaching is good</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More information about the curriculum</li><li>• Regular homework</li><li>• More opportunities to get together</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents views about the school and would add that the school tries very hard to enable parents to become involved in the life of the school by offering a number of opportunities for them to come together.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Overall attainment is below national averages. however, achievement is satisfactory when set against prior learning and the changing nature of the pupils currently being admitted. Teacher Assessments currently place pupils' achievements as being Within Level 1 but the schools' teacher assessments in 1998 are below what would be expected in similar schools. The most recent "P" scale assessments (July 1999) also show that pupils are below what could be expected in reading, number and listening. There are plans to use Teacher Assessments, "P" scale assessments and other test statistics to set targets for improvement. In addition the headteacher intends to monitor and set whole school targets for improving attendance and performance targets for senior staff.
2. Targets on pupils' individual education plans are very general and difficult to assess and achieve within a reasonable amount of time but behaviour support plans which are relevant for only a minority of pupils are much more useful and meaningful.
3. Standards in English are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Communication skills are given a high priority and pupils of all ages do their best to make themselves understood. The good use of signing and symbols enables pupils with communication difficulties to express their needs and responses. Most pupils enjoy books but the lack of a whole school approach to reading and the absence of formal tests do not enable the school to assess progress and identify areas of most need. Reading levels, as a whole, are low and need to be improved. However, a few older pupils read well. Progress in writing is sound and many pupils can write legibly by the end of Key Stage 2. Young pupils abilities range from mark making or overwriting to copying and writing short pieces independently. The majority of older pupils take care with their writing and some make good attempts at a cursive script. Most write with well formed letters which are appropriately spaced and make the writing legible.
4. In mathematics pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well and make good progress. In Key Stage 2 pupils achieve at levels commensurate with their ability and make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to sort and recognise numbers up to ten and count by rote to 30. They know some coin values. Singing number rhymes reinforces their knowledge in a fun way. Many understand bigger and smaller than and are able to name a good range of two dimensional shapes. They have a very good foundation on which to build in Key Stage 2 where they work with increasingly larger numbers, can do simple addition and subtraction and use a calculator when in the tuck shop. Other pupils can record their findings on a graph and recognise some times on the clock face.
5. Pupils progress in science is variable in that it is satisfactory and occasionally good in Key Stage 1 but is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have knowledge of living things, such as animals, plants and the human body. They learn about food and basic diet information and have studied the weather and how it affects people. These topics have been considered in more detail in Key Stage 2 but the narrow range of activities restricts their

knowledge and understanding of topics such as light, sound and magnetism and lessens opportunities to make more progress.

6. Personal and social development is good and promoted at every opportunity. Younger pupils sit well together in a group taking turns. They are attentive and well behaved when listening to a story. Language, number and social skills are constantly being reinforced in a very supportive way. Older pupils are able to express their feelings and have opportunities to talk openly about any problems or difficulties they are facing. They are encouraged to support each other and are normally polite and courteous to visitors.

7. In other subjects of the curriculum there is little evidence to make judgements about pupils' progress over time but in lessons pupils are achieving well in line with their abilities. In physical education pupils are making good progress in a range of activities. In Key Stage 1 pupils can move in different ways, how to balance and can handle bats and balls appropriately. They are beginning to know the rules to some minor games and are becoming more confident in the water. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have increasing confidence and have gained more control and accuracy over their movements. Many can swim unaided and have gained some distance badges.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. Children like being at school and in the vast majority of cases show interest in their work and persevere with the tasks set. There is a genuine enthusiasm and sometimes excitement to participate in discussions and activities. In a few lessons where the tasks set were insufficiently challenging, or the pace of the lesson was slow some children were easily distracted and failed to maintain concentration. The majority of children clearly enjoy their life at the school, demonstrate positive attitudes to the school community and to work and show a real pride in their achievements.

9. Children's behaviour in lessons is generally good and a positive aid to the learning process. In a few lessons where attention is not captured or where children are pre occupied with other problems, behaviour can become noisy and disruptive. Pupils understand and respect the behaviour code and respond enthusiastically to reward schemes. Around the school they observe the basic courtesies of politeness and acknowledging others in a very mature way. During the inspection children greeted inspectors politely and were always keen to hold open doors and exchange pleasantries. In the playground at breaks and lunch times children play together amicably, show respect for adult supervisors and it is particularly noticeable that older pupils show a healthy respect for smaller children during games. The school environment, building and property are treated respectfully by pupils who follow health and safety rules carefully. Within its context the school is an orderly community in which children are clearly happy.

10. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good. They are a strength of the school and have a significant influence on the standards achieved. There are many good examples of children supporting each other, working collaboratively, and sharing equipment and materials in lessons. In a number of lessons where children were working in pairs it was very noticeable how each would naturally ensure that the other enjoyed its turn. One pupil in Year three put an arm around and comforted a friend who was a little upset. Interactions with adults in lessons and around the school often include the positive use of humour.

11. Opportunities for children to enhance personal development through taking on responsibilities are satisfactory and increase through the school. There are opportunities to help with daily school routines, to take part in school assemblies, and to represent the school in musical and performing arts productions. The scheme where children from year six spend time with younger children in the school on wet playtimes works very well with the year six pupils taking their responsibilities very seriously. Children's personal, emotional and social development is encouraged well through personal and social education lessons, music therapy, outings to local attractions, residential visits and the positive caring ethos promoted by the school. All children involved showed maturity and good social skills on an outing to the swimming pool and at an initial meeting with children from a mainstream primary school prior to a joint residential visit to the Lake district. From observation all children respond proudly to the challenge of taking on responsibility and to the opportunities provided to contribute to the life of the school community. The school is planning to create more opportunities for children's personal development by establishing a school council.

12. Pupils' attendance is sound and in line with other schools of a similar type across the country. Typically, overall attendance is around 90 percent with no significant difference between different age groups. Absences occur through normal ailments, as a result of pupils' particular medical conditions and through children missing their transport. There is no evidence of truancy at the school. Pupils enjoy school and there are examples of children being upset when they are unable to attend. Punctuality at the start of the day is very traffic dependent but in practice buses and taxis usually arrive on time enabling prompt starts to proceedings. The sound attendance and punctuality contribute positively to pupils' progress and the educational standards achieved.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

13. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and often very good but it is more variable in Key Stage 2 where there are some weaknesses. A particular strength in many lessons is the very good teamwork between teachers and support assistants which provides pupils with a very supportive environment in which to learn. The support for pupils with English as a Second Language is also good and these assistants work unobtrusively, keeping a watchful eye on pupils who may find communication a little difficult. All of this support has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress they make. In addition, the good professional relationships between adults in the classroom provides pupils with good role models for their social and moral development.

14. When teaching is very good or excellent, there is a very positive and lively classroom ethos where pupils are keen to learn. Enthusiasm is generated by the teacher, the pace is brisk and resources are well organised and used. Teaching is excellent when planning, resources and a lively approach involving pupils, ensures that they are interested and eager to learn. Time is used productively in these lessons. Activities are exciting and match the needs and abilities of all pupils. This was especially evident in some literacy sessions when teachers are very imaginative in their approach often making very effective use of voice to discriminate between characters. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and use it to good effect to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of the activity. A music lesson involved very good cross-curricular links and was full of information given to the pupils in an interesting way. In a literacy lesson very good use of praise and encouragement coupled with



an enthusiastic manner laced with humour entranced pupils as they listened to the teacher reading. In these lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of participating and behaviour, ensuring that pupils are actively engaged in learning.

15. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils gives them the confidence to ask questions and the positive help from support assistants also impacts positively to enable pupils to acquire new skills, for example, during an art lesson when pupils experiment with tools and colour to make different patterns. Pupils are managed well and, through the use of a range of teaching strategies, teachers anticipate problems and keep the lesson on course. The good use of praise and encouragement by all staff gives pupils the motivation to improve and give of their best. When planning is good pupils' individual needs are identified and learning objectives set to meet them with some teachers making good reference to individual education plan targets. Resources are allocated appropriately. This ensures that pupils can learn in small steps, sometimes with a good degree of independence, and feel successful which boosts their self esteem.

16. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs only in Key Stage 2 when lessons lacks purpose and tasks are uninteresting. When this happens pupils lose concentration and become distracted and bored. Time is wasted on unnecessary activities. On one occasion teachers' subject knowledge was insecure and this gave confusing messages to pupils. On another, pupils found the tasks too difficult and made no progress. In these instances learning objectives are not clear and pupils fail to consolidate prior knowledge and learn new ideas. In these circumstances they make very limited progress.

17. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced successfully and planning for these lessons follows the accepted format. The school has ample supplies of big books and pupils enjoy the structure of these lessons especially the plenary sessions when they all participate and share their learning.

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

18. The school provides a broad curriculum, with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Statutory requirements are met, but the preference given to English and mathematics has resulted in a lack of balance in the curriculum. This was a policy decision, based on the special needs of the pupils and the need to prioritise. However, the school has plans to address the balance during the next academic year.

19. Lack of rigour in adhering to the timetable, where provision for some subjects is already light, also seriously affects the balance of the curriculum. Some lessons during the inspection, for example, music and religious education, did not take place as planned. In addition, time at the beginning and end of the day is not always used effectively in all classes even though guidelines for using the first half hour are in place and this time is included within the schools' taught time. In the best practice pupils are given quite structured tasks, such as writing, and the time is well used, in other classes a lack of focus in a very relaxed atmosphere does not give pupils the best start to the day.

20. Long and medium term planning of the curriculum is comprehensive, detailed and relevant to the needs of most pupils. However, in some areas of the curriculum, such as science, history and geography, expectations should be higher. Short term planning across both key stages is inconsistent, especially in science, religious education, history and geography, ranging from very good in some areas, to unsatisfactory in others. History and geography in both key stages, and religious education in Key Stage 1, are not taught as

discrete subjects, but incorporated across the curriculum, which has resulted in variable provision, which is not formally monitored. A good example of cross curricular work was

seen in Key Stage 2 where music, design technology, information technology and geography were linked in the study of volcanoes.

21. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced well, with good staff training, and provision of resources. Links have been made with a local primary school and pupils with special needs join Hamilton school pupils for some Literacy and Numeracy sessions. Short term planning in these subjects is good and sometimes very good. The provision for the development of communication skills is good throughout the school and the use of signing and symbols to support communication has improved since the previous inspection. It is very good at the beginning of both key stages, but inconsistent in other areas. However, more staff training is planned and will be provided by a member of staff who is qualified, and very proficient, in Makaton signing.

22. Provision for the development of pupils' personal and social education is good, well planned and co-ordinated. There are a number of opportunities during the day when personal and social education is promoted, for example, at break times, drinks times, lunch time and when the register is taken.

23. Good provision is made for pupils to access the curriculum through the performing arts which has proved very successful, providing enriching experiences for pupils, as well as links with the community. Pupils have taken part in various activities, including the Dance Project with the Birmingham Royal Ballet Company. The Action Research Project, School Improvement Through Performing Arts was externally reviewed and evaluated, and found to provide valuable curriculum enrichment. The publication of a school newspaper enhances the curriculum in many areas. It provides good opportunities for speaking and listening, as reporters, good collaborative working, as editors and good information technology experience with the use of the digital camera, and desk top publishing.

24. Pupils are given the opportunity to participate in residential trips and this year will experience a joint residential with a group from a local mainstream school. The school has taken part in the Classroom in the Park Festival. Pupils benefit from visits to local museums and art galleries, a local farm, and shared experiences of religious festivals with a local primary school. Adequate preparation is made for Year 6 pupils prior to moving to the appropriate secondary school with visits being arranged at which parents can also attend.

25. The school makes satisfactory provision for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The use of symbol and sign language to support both speaking and listening, and reading, is good in some areas, and is improving throughout, as staff become more confident. Symbol use for labels, notices, and translations of Big Books, is very good. Support staff make a significant contribution in this area, giving one to one support where it is needed, and recording individual progress, during group sessions. Provision of resources is appropriate, and includes a number of good, staff made, items. The Special Education Needs Coordinator works very effectively with small groups, or individual pupils, referred by class teachers, who have identified particular problems and where appropriate parents are invited to attend. Matching work to meet individual pupils' needs is clearly identified in most lesson plans and is very good at the beginning of both key stages. The writing and use of individual education plans to inform teaching and the curriculum is inconsistent; many targets are not sufficiently specific and measurable. Similarly, pupils whose first language is not English are given good support in lessons and at other specific times during the week.



26. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their spiritual sense through lessons ranging from science and English to physical education and information technology. Many pupils have a sense of awe and wonder in studying living things, or when visiting a cathedral or Gurdwara. The younger ones, particularly, are thrilled with their achievements in physical education, whether it is gymnastics, swimming or dance. School assemblies have an element of spirituality, but it is not well developed. Prayers and hymns are very brief and they do not include good opportunities for reflection on wider thoughts about life.

27. The assemblies are much better occasions for developing pupils' sense of right and wrong and how they ought to behave and how they should relate to each other. Teachers manage this well through stories and anecdotes. They also take many opportunities throughout the day to reinforce moral values with the pupils, whether in lessons, around the school, in the playgrounds, or on trips to other places talking through the rights and wrongs of situations and not just telling them what to do. All pupils know the school rules which are clear and simple and are reminded of them when the necessity arises.

28. All staff within the school and others who are involved in the wider sense have created a real sense of community. This is built up by very positive relationships among staff and pupils, by well-organised lunchtimes that are good social "family" occasions, by encouraging pupils to work together in groups and pairs in lessons such as dance, maths and English, and playing together in the playgrounds. Many pupils have made sound friendships that cross cultural differences, and this is largely due to the example set by staff, and the encouragement given to pupils by staff. Multi-cultural awareness permeates many activities in the school. Staff and pupils are ethnically diverse and they share their thoughts and beliefs, talk about their religions and their dress and rituals. This sharing takes place particularly when different festivals arise, such as Easter, Diwali or Chinese New Year, and also when different places in the community are visited. Outside visits have included several different places of worship, as well as a local museum, art gallery, farm, nature centre, supermarket and fast-food restaurant. Some pupils have made pen-pal connections with other children in South Africa. Pupils from other schools have visited in order to show their own video of how they are helping the community, including their contribution to the school's resources. The school is also a part of the local community regeneration trust.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

29. The school's provision for pupils' support, welfare and guidance is good and makes a positive contribution to the educational standards achieved. Pupils are happy, feel safe and secure and there is good evidence to show that the vast majority are enjoying and benefiting from the education provided. Teaching and support staff effectively enforce the ethos of the school with the support and help they give to the children. The well being of the pupils is uppermost in the minds of staff at all times. Procedures to deal with Child Protection issues are good and meet statutory requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. The school works effectively with the educational social worker on child protection cases.

30. The school has appropriate procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety. There are half termly evacuation practices and appropriate records of independent fire prevention and electrical equipment inspections. Two staff at the school are trained first aiders and

appropriate first aid supplies are available around the site. The school has clear procedures relating to medicines on site and staff take great care to ensure that children follow their medical regimes. Pupils have support from speech therapists, physiotherapists and a school nurse although none of these personnel are available full time. In lessons observed during the inspection good care was taken to ensure pupils' safety. Careful practice was observed in physical education and in lessons where children were using tools and equipment. Staff and adults on site are vigilant in ensuring children follow safe procedures and practices. No accidents or injuries occurred during the inspection.

31. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are satisfactory but the procedures for monitoring academic progress are inconsistently applied across the school and are unsatisfactory overall. Baseline assessment of pupils, the use of "P scales" and the development of specific targets for improvement within individual education plans should be appropriate to enable effective monitoring of individual's academic progress. Individual education plan targets are often very broad, not measurable and not time related, for example, "try with writing". The inconsistent use of the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress means that the use of assessment information to inform teaching and to support pupil's academic progress is unsatisfactory. An acknowledged priority of the headteacher is the further training for staff on writing targets and using assessment data effectively. The monitoring and recording of personal development is more effective with teachers demonstrating appropriate styles to help individual children with their specific targets.

32. The school has good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting attendance, discipline and good behaviour. Attendance is closely monitored by class teachers on a pupil by pupil basis and overall school attendance is regularly checked by the headteacher and educational social worker. The school actively promotes good attendance and discourages the practice of taking extended holidays in term time to visit relatives on the sub-continent. The new behaviour policy outlines clear expectations for pupils behaviour. Effective procedures for promoting the behaviour code are consistently applied by all adults in the school. Individual behaviour plans are monitored on a daily basis and effectively address the needs of persistently disruptive or disturbed pupils. The school is an orderly community in which the vast majority of children value rewards and commendations. They show pride in their achievements, respect behaviour expectations and are well aware of sanctions. Parents were involved in the drawing up of the new behaviour policy. The school has good procedures in place to deal with bullying and is effective in eliminating all forms of oppressive behaviour. No incidents of bullying or harassment were witnessed during the inspection.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

33. The school enjoys sound links with parents which contribute positively to teaching and learning. The vast majority of parents have very positive views about the school. There is widespread agreement that the school is welcoming and staff are approachable and willing to spend time discussing children's development. Support for the school is passive from a significant proportion of the parent body because of language and cultural difficulties as well as social circumstances. Many live long distances from the school. Recent initiatives by the school including the appointment of a member of staff to be responsible for home school liaison are designed to help to further develop the partnership. One such initiative, a reading workshop was well supported and parents attending claimed to have gained useful information on how they could help their children with reading at home. The quality of

information about the school provided through the prospectus, the Governor's annual report, newsletters and through liaison with escorts is good. The school makes good efforts to ensure written communications are translated into the main languages and provides translators at meetings.

34. Attendance at official parents evenings and at formal annual reviews is satisfactory and parents generally feel suitably informed about pupils' progress and about their targets for improvement. Some parents would like more detailed information on the topics children are studying, a more formal homework programme and specific detail of what children have to do to improve. The school is aware of these requests and is responding by introducing a report format which will give details of what children can do and what they need to do to improve further in all subjects and by initiatives to raise the profile of annual reviews and ensure wider attendance. It also aims to increase its efforts to involve parents in children's learning and development. Targets for improvement conveyed to parents are inconsistent across the school and across subjects but the school is committed to improving individual targets and ensuring they are sufficiently precise to be measurable. Parental help in classrooms is limited during the day. At present the school does not have a formal Parent Association but as a result of recent partnership development initiatives a group of parents now want to establish an Association. Parental involvement has included "Inspire Workshops" for reading and maths, and a parents' information technology training course is planned.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

35. The headteacher has provided excellent leadership during the short time he has been in post by providing a very clear educational direction for the school which is aimed at raising standards. Both he and the chairman of the governing body have a vision for the future development of the school in which they are supported by the deputy head and members of the senior management team. The headteacher is aware of the need to make changes in order to raise the achievements of pupils and has set about this challenge energetically.

36. The overall leadership and management of the school is good. The headteacher and deputy head work well together with both undertaking a teaching commitment. This helps them to informally monitor what is happening in classrooms. In addition, the deputy head undertakes responsibilities of curriculum management and assessment, and the professional development of staff well. The particular skills of some classroom assistants have been identified and used for the benefit of the pupils. For example, information technology and music skills, and signing skills support the development of communication skills for pupils, especially the very youngest.

37. The current school development plan and the school improvement plan set appropriate targets which demonstrate this recognition to move the school forward. Whole school targets have been set up to the year 2003. Involvement of all staff in the formulation of the school development plan gives them some of ownership and a good insight into the future development of the school. Monitoring of the school development plan is done systematically and regularly by the headteacher and his deputy and progress is reported to the governors.

38. The aims of the school are wide ranging and are reflected in its' life and work. There is a good community ethos within the school and every person is valued.



39. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is planned for but not embedded into the every day practice within the school although both the headteacher and the deputy head work with classes on a regular basis no formal systematic monitoring is established. Proforma are available for curriculum coordinators to complete but generally not used well. Governors support the work of the school and receive regular reports from the headteacher but they do not discharge their duties well. For example, their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school needs further development because this would give them good insights into all aspects of the school, such as, monitoring the effectiveness of spending on improving standards.

40. The school applies the principles of “best value” very well in its analysis of how well it is doing in providing an education for its pupils. The school, particularly through the headteacher, very carefully compares itself with other similar institutions to see what they offer. There is a constant challenge within the school to find new and better ways of meeting the needs of pupils, especially in this situation where the nature of the pupils admitted is changing. There is wide consultation with parents, the local education authority, the local community and with other schools about what is needed, what is wanted, and how it might best be provided with the resources available. The will to improve underpins most of the recent initiatives introduced by the headteacher. The senior management team, and especially the headteacher, have a firm control over planning the budget and linking proposed spending with focused plans that are detailed in the school development plan. The school is undertaking a steady and well-planned reduction in its previous large underspend and there are specific areas for development in the short term which will bring the budget surplus to an acceptable level. The school has a realistic series of options in mind for the future, depending on the success of various developments. Until recently, the governing body has had little involvement in the details of financial management in the school. Recently, however, with the establishment of a new finance committee and new members and it is beginning to oversee the strategic financial operation of the school.

41. There is very good management of the day to day finances of the school, involving the headteacher and very capable office staff. All funds are well managed via approved procedures, and a full audit report is due in the near future. The headteacher and finance committee of the governing body keep a close watch over the monthly expenditure and the forecasts of how much money remains for various future projects. Money for specific grants is used appropriately and very effectively in such areas as social inclusion for underprivileged pupils and their families; music therapy; a range of training events for staff, including some long-term courses; equipment for information technology; and school security. The school has also acquired a major grant for refurbishment of the school grounds, and this will be undertaken very soon, early in the new financial year.

42. The school is appropriately staffed with sufficient teaching and support staff to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum and there is stability in the teaching staff. Over the last year new job descriptions for all staff have been negotiated and there is a clear understanding of individual roles and responsibilities. The interaction between support staff and teaching staff is effective, well coordinated and a strength of the school. Administrative support is also very effective.

43. No formal appraisal system exists but an audit of staff’s skills and abilities has been undertaken in the last year. In addition, training and professional development needs have

been identified and incorporated into the school development plan. Preparation for performance management is well advanced. The training and professional development programme for teaching and support staff effectively balances both the school's and individual's needs. Training is provided through a combination of internal and external courses and comprehensive, evaluative records are maintained. The school has trained mentors for both teaching and support staff but needs to assemble a formal induction programme and policy.

44. The school site incorporates hard and soft play areas. Following the imminent work on a dangerous wall and uneven surfaces, the redevelopment of play areas may help the external learning environment for pupils. The main school building is in good condition and offers spacious, well equipped classrooms which are all appropriate to enable the curriculum to be taught. The specialist art room, soft play room, library and kitchen enhance the school's facilities. Internally the school is clean, welcoming and benefits from a rolling redecoration programme. The general appearance of communal areas is enhanced by display much of which is pupil's work. Classrooms have attractive displays celebrating pupils' achievements. Site security is good with all external doors having electronic entry devices and the school is protected by an alarm system.

45. Resources are sound overall and enable effective delivery of the curriculum. In the last two years curriculum coordinators have been able to strengthen their departmental resources with the result that English, physical education, religious education and information technology are well equipped. Further planned expenditure on computers will provide an excellent facility incorporating full Internet access and participation in the National Grid for Learning. There is a lack of specialist tools and equipment in design and technology which is restricting the teaching of the subject. The school effectively supplements its own resources in some curricular areas with artefacts from museums and as a result of the strong relationship with neighbouring schools. The excellent library is well stocked with a good range of appropriate fiction, non-fiction and reference books for pupils of all ages and capabilities.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. In order to build on the improvements already made and to raise standards further the governors and headteacher need to:

- (1) Introduce assessment procedures to determine pupils' academic progress across the curriculum. Ensure that they are applied consistently to effectively inform future teaching and the curriculum.  
(Paragraphs: 31, 60, 77, 82, 87)
- (2) Ensure that targets on pupils' individual education plans are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time related so that each pupil's progress can be monitored effectively. Achieve this by further staff training and regular review.  
(Paragraphs: 25, 31)
- (3) Ensure that governors are more actively involved in the work of the school by undertaking their roles and responsibilities on a more formal basis by:
  - monitoring and evaluating classroom activities
  - monitoring the effectiveness of spending on raising pupils' achievements
  - setting up a curriculum sub-committee to monitor taught time and the curriculum content and to regularly report to the full governing body(Paragraphs: 39, 40)
- (4) Introduce the planned monitoring and evaluation policy as soon as possible in order to establish areas of good practice in teaching and curriculum organisation  
(Paragraphs: 20, 52, 57, 71, 82, 89)

*Most of these issues are included in the school development plan.*

Other issues to be considered:

- The school should develop a whole school approach to the teaching of reading so that it is consistent throughout the school and also adopt the use of an approved reading test to measure progress.  
(Paragraphs: 3, 49)
- The school needs to be more rigorous in planning the timetable to ensure curriculum balance and to teach accordingly.  
(Paragraphs: 18, 19)

## 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	33

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	20	41	28	7	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	75
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	52

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	31

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	2.1

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	9.7

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	18
Bangladeshi	7
Chinese	0
White	39
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***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	4	2
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: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9
Average class size	12

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	280

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	486 093
Total expenditure	518 293
Expenditure per pupil	6 911
Balance brought forward from previous year	85 445
Balance carried forward to next year	53 245

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	75
Number of questionnaires returned	21

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	24	0	5	5
My child is making good progress in school.	47	33	5	5	10
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	33	5	5	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	55	10	5	10
The teaching is good.	70	20	5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	24	5	5	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	20	10	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	38	5	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	58	32	0	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	62	28	0	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	18	10	10	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	30	5	5	10

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents would like more information about their child's particular curriculum.

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

**ENGLISH**

47. There have been satisfactory improvements in English since the previous inspection mainly in the much improved use of signing as an aid to communication. Teaching has also improved and the introduction of the literacy strategy has had a positive impact on the overall teaching and organisation of the English curriculum. In Key Stage 1 pupils are acquiring a range of new skills and learn well in lessons and over time. Similarly in Key Stage 2 scrutiny of work shows that they make satisfactory progress over time and are acquiring some new knowledge in lessons. The most recent analysis of “P” scale assessment (July 1999), which are subjective, shows that pupils are below what would be expected in reading and listening skills.

48. Speaking and listening skills are generally good across the school. The youngest pupils are taught particularly well. Support for learning signs and symbols helps them to improve their understanding and communication. Signing, symbols and the spoken word are often used simultaneously to reinforce a task or instruction and this works well. Some pupils are functioning at a two or three word level in comprehension so this multi-sensory approach is needed. In lessons pupils respond to questions and instructions appropriately. By the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils are quite confident during literacy lessons and are willing to speak to visitors and explain what they are doing. During Key Stage 2 pupils’ verbal skills increase and they discuss topics which interest them, give explanations and express a point of view in a simple debate. By the end of the Key Stage they are speaking with increasing confidence and many hold conversations using simply constructed sentences. Pupils whose first language is not English are given good support and they try very hard to improve their verbal skills.

49. Reading is not well developed and pupils do not make as sufficient progress as they might. The teaching of reading is not consistent throughout the school being mainly taught through the literacy hour. Generally they have insufficient regular opportunities to read even though some classes occasionally use the first half hour for reading practice. Because of the inconsistency in practice pupils are unable to make any significant improvement in their reading. However the use of symbols as a support for reading is good. The school does not have procedures for assessing reading ages and there are variable reading records with no formal reading ages recorded. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy looking at books and being read to. They have favourite stories and higher attaining pupils know that print tells the story although they follow the pictures as well. The literacy hour supports shared reading appropriately and pupils respond well to flash cards to reinforce key words. Some pupils can sequence a story accurately by using pictures and by memory and higher attainers are developing an emerging basic vocabulary. In Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils read fluently and enjoy books, such as Roald Dahl stories and Goosebumps. They read well with some expression. Lower attainers read hesitantly and need adult support but demonstrate that phonic skills are developing and they continue to use the pictures as a clue to the story content. Some older pupils in Key Stage 2 are producing a “Big Book” to read to younger ones and they are working hard on this project.



50. Writing skills are variable but are in line with their abilities and work is well presented. Pupils take an obvious pride in their work. In Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils make good progress over time. They move from using symbols and overwriting to copying and writing short pieces independently, and many do this quite well with assistance from the teacher. This handwriting is legible but inconsistently formed and ranging in size. Lower attaining pupils practise horizontal and vertical lines holding their pencil correctly. They try hard and their emerging writing skills are developing well. Pupils use a range of writing skills and most of them make at least sound progress. Pupils in Key Stage 2 display improved pencil control and some pupils work is well presented with well formed letters of a uniform size which are well spaced. Few pupils can manage a cursive script confidently. Independent writing using appropriate spellings is improving but most pupils are still dependent on adults to provide a model. Many pupils copy sentences which they have dictated to the teacher. There is some evidence of pupils word processing their work. Presentation of some pieces of work at the end of Key Stage 2 indicates low expectations of what pupils could achieve.

51. Teaching overall in English is good and is best in Key Stage 1. When teachers are confident, enthusiastic and have planned the lesson well pupils respond with good listening and concentration and work well in a positive classroom environment. Most lessons contain a good balance of activities where expectations are high and the work is challenging. In these lessons pupils are learning and want to be involved. The use of puppets is popular and engages pupils' interest encouraging them to communicate. Relationships and very good teamwork between adults enable them to provide help where it is most needed and pupils respond positively. In addition, good use of signs and symbols helps pupils to extend their vocabulary and keeps them involved in the lesson. When working in groups pupils help each other. Teacher demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan effectively in the majority of literacy lessons ensuring that in these lessons pupils are learning and making some progress.

52. The newly furnished library is a very good resource but is currently under-used but has good potential for introducing research skills and for encouraging pupils to read. The Home Loan scheme is good and used by many pupils. Coordination of the subject is developing. The subject action plan is clear and detailed showing the future development of the subject. Monitoring of teaching and the organisation of the subject however, is not in place and needs to be addressed. Some teachers make good use of checklists as a means of recording pupils' achievements but this is not consistent throughout the school. Resources for English are good with a large supply of Big Books and the library is well organised with a good range of both fiction and reference books.

## **MATHEMATICS**

53. Teaching and learning is good overall, and has improved since the previous inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and provides a structured approach.

54. In Key Stage 1 pupils make very good progress in lessons where the pace is brisk and there are frequent changes of activity. Good differentiation, excellent knowledge of the children, and very good teaching strategies, ensure that pupils in this key stage enjoy playing with numbers, experience success, and have a firm foundation of understanding on which to build in later key stages. During the Key Stage 1 they are learning to sort, count, recognise numbers and coin values, order numbers and can sing a variety of number songs. By the end

of Key Stage 1 they can order numbers to twenty, give numbers bigger or smaller than a given number, play number games, understanding the rules, and recognise and name colours, and two dimensional shapes.

55. During Key Stage 2 pupils are learning to work with increasingly bigger numbers, number bonds, simple addition and subtraction, two and three dimensional shapes, time and money. By the end of Key Stage 2 more able pupils can use a calculator to add the cost of items in the tuck shop, and give the correct change, they have an understanding of place value, can problem solve, anticipate patterns in numbers, and recognise some times on a clock face. Numeracy is used well in many curriculum areas, in both key stages, for example when young pupils are making fruit salad and in other classes when the register is being taken or when drinks and snacks are being prepared.

56. Teaching is mostly good, and only rarely unsatisfactory when expectations are not high enough. Oral work is good, with well directed questioning showing very good knowledge of the ability of individual pupils. Lessons are planned well, include good differentiation, and very good use is made of group work. Support staff make a good contribution working with groups or supporting individual pupils. Games are used to improve familiarity with numbers and shapes and pupils enter into these with enthusiasm. Interest and concentration of pupils is good in maths where the pace is brisk and there are frequent changes of activity.

57. The co-ordinator received Numeracy training and provided in-service training for all staff which has been effective in helping staff plan. Formal monitoring is not in place, but the co-ordinator offers informal support and advice to colleagues. Resources are satisfactory and are used well. Assessment is recorded on pupils' individual progress charts, and good examples of recording in lessons, by support assistants, was observed during the inspection giving teachers a good indication of what pupils are learning.

## **SCIENCE**

58. The provision for science has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection in Key Stage 1, where pupils' learning and progress are now satisfactory overall. However in Key Stage 2, learning and progress are still unsatisfactory.

59. In lessons, many pupils learn at a rate that is satisfactory overall, and is sometimes good. Over time pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1, but progress is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. They start well in Key Stage 1, and by the end of the key stage have made sound gains in knowledge and understanding about living things such as different kinds of animals and plants; the different parts of plants; the human body and how it works. They have studied the weather and how it affects people and have learned about food, a basic diet and simple cooking procedures. During Key Stage 2, their progress is slower, but by the end of the key stage, pupils have learned more detail about living things, plants, minibeasts and the human body. However, the narrowness of the curriculum in Key Stage 2 results in pupils learning little about some aspects of science, such as different materials and how they behave, or the different forces around us, such as light, electricity, sound and magnetism. Also in Key Stage 2, there is some emphasis on cooking as a science activity and time is lost to "real" scientific tasks. There is also too much use of worksheets in some classes, and this does not allow pupils to develop their investigative skills.

60. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is generally good, and in Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory overall, with some weaknesses. There are strong and weak elements in teaching in both key stages. In best lessons, teachers plan different work for groups of pupils according to their

previous achievements and they use a range of resources well. They work particularly well with the classroom support assistants, and teachers have a good relationship with their pupils. They are firm in their behaviour control, but positive and enthusiastic in their teaching. Some lessons, especially in Key Stage 2, make very good use of computer programs to support the main theme of the lesson. Pupils are responsive in these lessons, and their learning is good. They enjoy their science lessons; they are interested and attentive – some of the younger pupils were quite enthralled when learning about plants and living things. They concentrate well, thinking and making simple observations about what is happening and work well together in pairs and groups. On other occasions several factors make pupils' progress slower than it could be. Some teachers lack appropriate subject knowledge which means that lessons lack a clear scientific focus. There were mistakes in some information given to pupils and another lesson was almost purely art, and not science. Clear opportunities to encourage pupils to predict and experiment were missed. One lesson started very late and a few lessons are taught at a slow pace, with low expectations of pupils' effort. In such lessons, pupils lose concentration and do not put a lot of effort into their discussions or their written work, and are easily satisfied failing to learn as well as they should. Teachers do not observe, assess and record what pupils are learning, or how well they are learning so that they have no way of knowing if pupils are making sufficient progress and cannot plan their future lessons accordingly. This leads to teachers sometimes have low expectations of what pupils can do in lessons

61. There is a good scheme of work in place for science. It is detailed and covers all of the required elements from the National Curriculum scheme. Unfortunately, teachers do not always follow it in practice. A narrow range of topics is taught because the coordinator is not fully aware of what is being taught. Whilst the resources for science are adequate, they could be improved by a well-planned and coordinated development of the subject as a whole.

## **ART / DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

62. These two subjects appear together on class timetables and are seen as inter-related subjects. During the week of the inspection mostly art was observed with a little food technology in Key Stage 1. Overall pupils make good progress in art in both key stages and achieve well within their own abilities. The coordinator recognises that the emphasis is on art but pupils have worked with junk materials to make models and with clay. There has been some improvements in art since the previous inspection and there is now a specialist art base with a good range of materials. However, little improvement has been made in design and technology in that it continues to be underdeveloped and under resourced.

63. Young pupils in Key Stage 1 are achieving well in learning how colours change when mixed with another and use different pieces of equipment to create patterns. Others finger paint to create images of fish scales as part of a mobile they are constructing. In food technology they make fruit salad and can name common fruits, such as, "apple", "orange" and "grapes" but need help with "kiwi fruit" and "mango". They know that fruit needs washing and peeling and with varying degrees of success and with some help, they complete the task. Language and number skills are being developed as they work.

64. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are given challenging tasks when faced with polystyrene tiles with which to make impressed patterns and they try very hard to succeed. Working carefully and with concentration pupils create their patterns. They use rollers to produce a print. Others

in Year 6 are working on the theme of “ Monsters” using a range of media and an element of design and technology is included as they change and modify their designs before finally selecting appropriate materials. Most are able to explain their design and the end product will look like. When tasks are uninteresting and do not have an appropriate level

of challenge pupils achieve very little. There is little artistic relevance to the task and pupils art or design skills are not being developed.

65. Pupils like these subjects and work hard. They try to do their best and are very proud of their work. Many can work with a good degree of independence only asking for help when not sure of a colour or a technique. Verbal and practical prompts from adults keeps pupils focused and helps them to improve their models. They are developing new skills and are supported by the good subject knowledge of staff.

66. Only a small element of teaching is unsatisfactory and in Key Stage 1 it is always at least good. Lessons are well planned, team work is very good and this results in pupils being busily engaged and interested. Staff are reinforcing literacy and numeracy skills at every opportunity, especially in a lesson when pupils are making fruit salad. In an art lesson pupils are encouraged to experiment with colours which is extending their knowledge and understanding of colour. At Key Stage 2 there are some very good elements but also some unsatisfactory teaching in Year 4 when the lesson lacks pace and adults do most of the work for the pupils so that little learning is taking place.

67. The same teacher coordinates both subjects and has devised appropriate policies and long term plans. She supports staff with ideas for art and this is evident in the good range of pupils' work which is displayed around the school. However, there is a lack of confidence amongst staff in teaching design and technology. Whilst work is not formally assessed a folder of good work is maintained as a record of work done and staff are encouraged to make use of pupils' work to enhance the learning environment. Resources for art are good but there is a lack of appropriate resources, both in quantity and quality, for design and technology. Pupils have opportunities for food technology, in a designated room, but not other areas of the subject though long term planning includes appropriate elements and identifies cross curricular opportunities.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

68. Geography and history are not taught as discrete subjects. In Key Stage 1, they are incorporated into the curriculum through discussion of the immediate past, looking at weather and the seasons, homes both here and in other countries.

69. In Key Stage 2 both subjects are underdeveloped although the co-ordinator has plans in place to cover the attainment targets in a cross curricular way within core subjects, physical education and art. However little evidence was seen, in lessons, lesson plans, or scrutiny of work, which suggested pupils are receiving more than a superficial taste of these subjects, at a level below their capabilities.

70. One good example of cross curricular teaching of geography in Key Stage 2, was seen during the inspection, involving music, design technology, and information technology. Pupils showed interest and enthusiasm, and made good progress.

71. Monitoring, which is informal at present, needs to be much more rigorous to make certain that plans are consistently implemented, teachers have appropriately high expectations and to ensure progress through the key stages.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

72. Information and communication technology is not taught as a discrete subject and insufficient use of information and communication technology was observed during the inspection to make judgements about teaching. Information and communication technology is not securely established within the curriculum, however, the school makes good use of the information and communication technology skills of a classroom assistant who is involved in supporting pupils in specific lessons. There was some evidence in pupils' work of word processing in Key Stage 2 but insufficient to make an overall judgement about pupils' progress. There has been little improvement in information and communication technology since the previous inspection but the current action plan for the subject identifies increased spending including Internet access and participation in the National Grid for Learning.

73. Young pupils in Key Stage 1 use the mouse to click and drag across the screen and the most confident pupils learned to use an extra click to release and are very good at using the mouse. One pupil, after putting Teddy's clothes in the bin, followed instructions and played again showing a good level of concentration. Whilst only the higher attaining pupils are making satisfactory progress others are still at the cause and effect level.

74. In Key Stage 2 pupils use information and communication technology during a range of lessons such as music, when using a microphone and tape recorder, geography, to locate volcanoes and some can also select different colours from a paint programme using a mouse. Some pupils can enter text and the majority are confident and use the computers with care.

75. The support assistant also works with a group of pupils to produce a school newsheet, "Hamilton News". This group is changed with each edition thus spreading information and communication technology skills more widely across the school. They learn how to use a digital camera and a dictation machine to interview school personnel in order to compose small pieces for the newsheet.

76. The coordinator has produced a detailed action plan for the future development of information and communication technology and funding has been identified for the purchase of new hardware and software. Much thought has been given to the selection of machines which will meet the needs of the pupils and the school. Long term planning is detailed and shows progression through the school.

## **MUSIC**

77. There is insufficient evidence to judge how well pupils achieve in music. It is inappropriate to make judgements about their standards in comparison to expectations for their age, and there are no records of what pupils achieve in music or of how much progress they have made.

78. Pupils listen to music carefully with increasing discrimination as they move through the school. Younger pupils at Key Stage 1 identify loud and quiet sounds made on percussion instruments, and can name many of them such as cymbals, tambourine and triangle. They are beginning to understand the association between the sound of an instrument and a visual image, such as a drum for the giant's footsteps in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils listen critically and can identify instruments in a piece of orchestral music.

They understand that instruments fall into different categories, such as brass, string and wind and that they are made of different materials. Younger pupils play to accompanying music, responding to the beat, whilst older pupils in Key Stage 2 are starting to compose pieces inspired by their topic work, in this case on volcanoes. Pupils select instruments to make given sounds, and some are learning to collaborate to combine their playing in musical arrangements. They are beginning to understand the purpose of notation. By the end of Key Stage 2, with some help, pupils can draw the images they envisage in response to complex music. Pupils throughout the school enjoy singing.

79. Music lessons were not observed in all classes, but teaching in those seen was good overall and one lesson was excellent. In the most effective lessons, planning is very good with clear aims and learning outcomes. This helps the teacher remain focused on the purpose of the lesson, and allows the support assistants to work to exactly the same end. As a result, pupils learn what was intended and make maximum progress. The teamwork between staff is very good. They all have a part to play, and the strengths of the assistants, for example in guitar playing or speaking in a pupil's home language, are used to the full. This makes lessons interesting and exciting and as a result, pupils fully understand what is happening and are keen to work, listen and learn. Effective teachers use resources very well, such as pre-recorded music, instruments, books, puppets and technology. This variety keeps pupils interested and their behaviour is very good which helps them concentrate. It also helps them see the "big picture" of their lesson, and how subjects link together rather than stay as separate entities. Teachers have very high expectations of the pupils to behave, work hard and conform; this sets a productive atmosphere in the class and pupils rise to their expectations.

80. In less effective teaching, insufficient time is given to careful listening. Pupils listen, but sometimes are not sure what they are listening for, and do not have an opportunity to listen again with the help of some prompts and suggestions from the teacher. This limits the development of their interpretative skills.

81. Music is valued in the school. Pupils' musical, creative and personal development is well supported by performances and extra curricular activities such as visiting performers. Sessions run by a musically talented support assistant for some more advanced pupils are very valuable. They promote pupils' musical skills very well, whilst also supporting the curriculum. Music therapy makes a good contribution by helping pupils understand that music is a form of communication and stems from their emotions, but neither of these sessions is available to all pupils.

82. The curriculum, however, is not yet fully effective. Although a good scheme of work has been written and all classes have it to use as a basis for their lesson planning, this does not always happen and the quality of additional planning is variable. There is no system to ensure that the long term plans are achieved, and that the curriculum has been fully covered. Timetabled lessons do not always take place, or are re-scheduled to different times. This is not monitored, and so pupils' entitlement to their music lessons and to making progress in the subject is not always secure. The weekly half-hour whole-school singing session is enjoyable for the pupils, but does not make sufficient demands on them and does not contribute to their progress. The same songs are sung, by their request, which does not increase their repertoire sufficiently, and can not meet the needs of all pupils ranging in age between four and eleven years. There is no assessment in music. Although some performances are taped, this is not systematic enough to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. There are no written records



and the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding can not be tracked as they move through the school. Assessment information can not be used to inform planning. There is no monitoring of teaching or learning, and this aspect of the co-ordinator's role is unsatisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

83. There has been a good improvement in physical education since the last report in that a very good and detailed scheme of work is in place throughout the school, with many example lesson plans provided, teaching is now good overall and lesson planning is now well-differentiated for individuals; in some cases, the differentiation is very good, and the challenge to individual pupils is very good. Resources are now good, where previously they were satisfactory.

84. In each key stage, pupils make good progress in a range of activities that include dance, gymnastics, swimming, a variety of games, athletics and adventurous outdoor activities which include a week's residential stay for the older pupils. In the residential week, pupils have opportunities to go caving, climbing and canoeing; they can have a go at archery, an obstacle course, and looking at farm animals. They gain basic skills in Key Stage 1, learning how to move in time to music, how to balance and to move in different ways. They start to play games together, learning how to handle bats and balls and other small equipment and they begin to learn the rules to some games. They gain confidence in water, and the higher achievers learn to swim unaided. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have gained confidence and more control over their movements and different ways of balancing. Some pupils show good skills in balancing, as well as good body strength and suppleness. They have learned to use a range of small equipment such as balls, quoits and hoops with increasing skill and accuracy in games and in practice sessions. They can mainly swim unaided, and some have won good distance awards for their swimming. Lower attaining pupils are confident in the water and enjoy their sessions in the pool.

85. Teachers plan their lessons very well and base them on both the scheme of work and on their own good subject knowledge. Activities, resources and the way they make best use of their support staff are very well organised. They have good and positive relationships with pupils, and demand much of them during lessons. This leads to a good rate of learning in lessons, and to good long-term progress in all aspects of the syllabus. Pupils generally respond to the challenges in lessons with enthusiasm and good efforts. One lesson went on for too long with no change of activity, and pupils did well to remain on task so diligently. On occasions such as this, pupils can become too talkative, do not pay full attention to what they are being told to do, and may argue among themselves. Teachers' attempts to gain full attention are not always completely successful. These are a small minority of occasions, however, and most teaching is good or very good, and no lessons were unsatisfactory during the inspection. Teachers praise and congratulate their pupils very well, encouraging greater efforts, and more pride in what pupils are achieving. A combination of this enthusiastic and positive teaching, with sufficient subject knowledge to be flexible and challenging, makes for good progress throughout the school.

86. There is excellent leadership of this subject. As well as the many improvements already made, the subject coordinator has many positive plans for the further development of the subject, and some of these are already taking place. They include the further training of staff, extension of the sample lesson plans, building up the resources even more, and creating a much improved outside environment in which to stretch pupils in the physical education. There are also clear plans to rectify the lack of monitoring of the quality of teaching in lessons, and the lack of any consistent assessment of how well pupils are progressing in their physical skills. This subject is a strength of the school.



## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

87. There has only been a little improvement in religious education since the previous inspection. On the positive side, there is now a good scheme of work in place, the planning for the subject is sound; and there are good resources which are well organised. The subject is not secure within the current timetable and there is insufficient evidence to make judgement about what pupils know, understand and can do or their progress over time.

88. Too few lessons were seen to judge the quality of teaching at either key stage. Religious education is sometimes taught as a module in a particular term only; or they did not last for the required length of time; or they started very late; or did not take place at all; or were said to be part of an assembly. Combined with an analysis of the work produced by pupils, photographs and other records, it is evident that pupils are not being given sufficient opportunities to learn about religious education in either key stage. The assemblies do not contribute well to pupils' knowledge about religions and links with specific religions, or religion generally, are often lacking. There is often a brief non-denominational prayer, but this is insufficient to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus for religious education, particularly in lower Key Stage 1, where religious education does not appear on the timetable.

89. Through both key stages, pupils do gain some good understanding of the festivals of different religions and cultures as they arise each year, and they have visited local places of worship for different religions. It is clear that they enjoy these experiences, have gained much from them, and are very respectful of each other's religions in the main. A scheme of work is in place, and it complies well with the agreed syllabus, but teachers do not adhere to it in a consistent way. The subject is not monitored and few records are kept of pupils' progress in religious education.