

INSPECTION REPORT

STEBON PRIMARY SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100922

Head teacher: Paramjeet Sehmi

Reporting inspector: David Marshall
27681

Dates of inspection: 18th – 22nd June 2001

Inspection number: 191110

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Burdett Estate
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Anne Evans

Date of previous inspection: 13th – 17th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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27681	David Marshall	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs	How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' personal development and attendance
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	History Geography Foundation Stage English as an additional language	
4430	Richard Eaton	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
29989	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	Mathematics Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20948	John Linstead	Team inspector	English Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stebon Primary is a larger than average, two-form entry school, with 456 pupils on roll. There is a nursery which can take a maximum of 60 pupils. The school was opened in 1953 and is a two-storey building, which is currently being refurbished. They have recently formed an information and communication technology suite. The school has its own learner swimming pool. The large majority of pupils are of Bangladeshi origin. 434 pupils have English as an additional language and 243 are at an early stage of language acquisition, which is very high when compared to national figures. Sixty per cent of pupils receive free school meals, which is also very high. There are 90 pupils on the school's special educational needs register, which is well above the national average, and five pupils have statements of educational need. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average. There is a larger than average number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual time of admission. There have been two temporary exclusions in the last academic year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Stebon Primary is a very good school. The quality of teaching is good overall. Many lessons are very good whilst the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is now very low. Annual test results show pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving well above average in English and above the average in mathematics when compared with pupils in similar schools. Those pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and with high attainment are taught well with appropriately challenging activities. The quality of the head teacher's leadership and management skills is very good. The head teacher, governors and all staff work together well, and the very good community links they have secured create a very positive ethos in the school that now provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils do well in national tests by the time they leave school when compared with results from similar schools.
- The leadership and management provided by the head teacher and key staff are very good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good and so pupils make a good start to their education.
- The governing body is very well involved and makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They get on well with each other and there is a high degree of racial harmony.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is good; these pupils have access to the full curriculum and make good progress.
- Staff accurately assess pupils' achievement and use the information effectively to ensure the best progress.

What could be improved

- The consistency of teachers' marking of pupils' work.
- The overall support for pupils with English as an additional language in order to guarantee equal access to the curriculum and opportunity for progress for all.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress overall since the time of the last inspection in January 1997. The head, governors and staff have worked hard to maintain the many good features noted at that time, as well as moving forward on the key issues in the report. Every subject now has a scheme of work anchored securely in the National Curriculum programmes of study. The quality and use of assessment to keep track of individual pupils' progress and make all lessons appropriate is now good. The development of a teaching and learning policy, as required by the last report, has been a factor in raising the level of satisfactory teaching throughout the school. Pupils' attainment in art, information and communication technology and history has risen steadily. Although the school has taken many further steps to improve attendance, the level overall is still below the national

average. All money being received by the school is now being used well and any financial carryover is planned and related to identified priorities.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	C	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E*	D	D	B	
Science	E*	C	E	C	

By the time the pupils leave school the standards they achieve in English are average, in mathematics below average and in science well below average when compared with the national test results. However, in comparison with pupils from similar schools their results are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. In the last four years the school's improvements in all core subjects of the curriculum have followed the upward national trend. In the most recent national tests and assessments for pupils aged seven, standards were well below average in all subjects when compared nationally. However, they were above average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics when compared with results from similar schools. The fact that many pupils come into the school with English as an additional language and, therefore, with low skills in reading and speaking and listening, affects their ability to focus on the tasks that are expected of them. Taking this into account, along with the low attainment of pupils when starting school, the large number of pupils with special educational needs, and the high number of pupils coming and going from the school, these results show the school is successful in meeting its agreed targets for improvement. Standards seen during the inspection were generally average in English, mathematics and science and improving as pupils make good progress. This greater progress stems in part from the school's successful response to national strategies but also because assessment procedures are used effectively and teachers match tasks more closely to pupils' needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to work and enjoy coming to school. They are happy, enthusiastic, and keen to participate in lessons and activities. Interest and concentration in lessons show a steady improvement as pupils get older and more mature.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupil's behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils play and work together well. Pupils are very friendly, polite and keen to please. They are very eager to chat to adults and are proud of their achievements.
Attendance	Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and are below national averages. However, there has been a considerable improvement since the last inspection. This improvement is due to the very good measures taken by the school to monitor and promote regular attendance.

Pupils' good attitudes to their work, very good behaviour, good relationships and improving levels of attendance make a good contribution to their achievements.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	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 overall quality of teaching is good and meets the needs of all pupils. During the inspection, 96 per cent of lessons observed were at least satisfactory and 62 per cent were good or better. Teaching was unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons. This is a big improvement on the position noted at the time of the last inspection, when 17 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. In this inspection, the teaching of children under five was consistently good, and often very good. The quality of co-operation and understanding between all adults in this area was outstanding. Although some of the teachers in Key Stage 1 are inexperienced, they are now providing soundly and often well for the pupils in their classes. The management of pupils is a strength of teaching throughout the school. Teachers use a good variety of methods to maintain pupils' interest and the pace of learning. Teachers' use of ongoing assessment is generally good and as a result they plan appropriate tasks on the basis of what pupils know and understand, and this enhances their learning opportunities and the progress they make. However, the marking of pupils' books is inconsistent. Teachers have made a positive response to the National Literacy Strategy, and the teaching of English, especially the basic skills, is effective. The skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are emphasised well in all lessons and pupils make good progress as a result. The teaching of numeracy skills is also good. Mental mathematics tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and make a lively start to all lessons. The school's support staff make a very considerable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is effective and ensures that they achieve good standards in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities and activities and all statutory requirements are met. All pupils have equal access to the learning activities and other opportunities provided by the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. The targets on pupils' individual education plans are appropriate, reviewed regularly and enable pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good overall. Quality of learning is good and most pupils make good progress over their time in school, due to well-organised in-class, group and individual support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a significant strength of the school. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection are very good. There are good procedures to improve pupils' behaviour and personal development. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are very good and play an important part in the raising of standards, especially in English and mathematics. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.

The school has a good partnership with parents, which has a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school has worked hard to maintain this good relationship since the previous inspection. This is a caring school that provides a safe and caring environment for its pupils. The way that all adults look after pupils in order to meet their needs, and always provide an appropriate curriculum, is very effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides very good leadership, leads by example and gives a very clear direction to the work of the school. The deputy head, and other staff as co-ordinators, work closely with the head to develop the curriculum and improve pupils' standards
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors' involvement in the management of the school is good, and they discharge their statutory responsibilities well. They carefully monitor the school's finances and this is having a very positive effect.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is frequent monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the head teacher, key staff and governors. This has had a positive impact on the school's development and improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The school's priorities are supported through effective financial planning, and they use their budget and all other specific grants effectively and now provide good value for money.

All staff are deployed well and cover the requirements of the National Curriculum very well. Resources for learning are good overall and used effectively to enable all pupils to make progress. The accommodation of the school is good and sufficient to deliver all aspects of the National Curriculum. The head and senior admin. officer take care to acquire value for money in all purchases.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The teaching is good. • The head and teachers are welcoming and approachable. • Their children make good progress. • The children's behaviour is good and the school is helping them to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and use of homework.

The evidence from the inspection confirms the overall positive views of the parents. The inspection team does not agree with some parents about the homework their children are given. The tasks given as homework are linked with the work being covered in lessons, parents are well informed so they can help, and pupils' progress is enhanced as a result.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children's attainment on entry to the nursery is very low in all areas of learning. It is particularly poor in language and communication. This is confirmed by initial assessments conducted at the start of the reception year. Most children are learning to speak English as an additional language and a few have speech difficulties. By the time they are due to start the National Curriculum in Year 1, the majority of children achieve well and attain early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, as well as creative and physical development. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, children do not reach the expected standards. The percentage of children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is much higher than the national average. These young children receive good support to enhance their progress in both nursery and reception classes.
2. Results of the national tests in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 show attainment is well below the national average for all schools in both reading and writing. When compared with schools of a similar context, attainment is average in writing but above average in reading. At the higher levels, attainment was below the national average in reading but above in writing and well above that achieved in similar schools for both reading and writing. Over the past four years, attainment in reading and writing has remained well below the national average although improving in 2000. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English in the national tests is in line with the national average but well above that of schools in a similar context. At the higher levels attainment is above the national average for all schools and in line with that of similar schools. Over the past four years attainment has risen steadily in line with the national picture and with girls achieving a little better than boys. When pupils' achievements are compared to their prior attainment in Key Stage 1, these are in line with that expected from all schools and well above that of similar schools.
3. Standards have risen significantly in reading and writing at Key Stage 1, and the levels of attainment seen during the inspection are around the national average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents good progress as the majority of pupils enter the school with well below average skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average in both key stages. Their confidence grows as they move through the school so that, in Year 6 for example, pupils readily act out scenes from books they are studying. Many pupils are reluctant to speak out in discussion sessions because they lack the vocabulary, so teachers do their best to make sure that they have as much chance to do so as the more confident ones. They are more forthcoming however when asked to discuss things with their partners. This is a common device employed by teachers to encourage less confident pupils to talk with more confident friends.
4. Reading attainment is in line with national expectations throughout the school. Although this broadly reflects the findings of the previous report, improvements have been made which have broadened the range of reading strategies pupils use, raised the profile of literature and enhanced pupils' understanding and enjoyment of books. Most notable in these improvements are the school's successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and provision of improved reading material. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' awareness of the styles of different authors and to foster a greater interest in how characters and plots are produced. At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils understand what they have read, can talk about the plot, identify characters, predict what might happen next and read with reasonable fluency. These younger pupils are able to name favourite authors and the books they have read. For example, the works of Jill Murphy and Roald Dahl are among their favourites. At the

end of Key Stage 2, pupils are more critical about what they read. For example, they are able to contrast different books by the same author and give supported reasons why one is preferred to another. Good use is made in both key stages of multiple copies of the same book enabling groups of pupils to read, study and discuss these texts together.

5. By the time they leave the school, three quarters of pupils are achieving standards in writing that are in line with the national average. This represents good progress from the low starting point most pupils have on joining the school. Pupils in the youngest classes use common words in simple sentences to retell a favourite story or describe characters such as a fearsome dragon. By the end of Key Stage 1 their ability has developed well and many achieve standards that are in line with what could be expected for their age. Most pupils use punctuation appropriately and have a good stock of common words they spell correctly. Pupils in both key stages are able to write from the point of view of a character in a book. This is developed well as pupils move through the school. Pupils have been well taught and understand the 'mechanics' of writing but are not yet applying their knowledge in other areas of the curriculum. Although some pupils write neatly and legibly, standards of presentation and handwriting remain low as reported in the last inspection.
6. The results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2000 show the school's performance in mathematics was well below average in comparison with the national average and below average in comparison with similar schools. The results of tests for eleven year olds in 2000 show that standards were below average when compared to all schools; however, when compared to similar schools they were above average. Since 1998 the trend of the results shows a steady improvement. The pupils enter the school with below average attainment in mathematics, a very large proportion of the pupils have English as an additional language and there is a significant level of mobility of pupils in and out of the school through both key stages. Overall, the work seen during the inspection shows that the pupils' attainment is average at the end of both key stages and the pupils achieve well.
7. By the time they are seven the pupils have a good understanding of place value, most are able to multiply by 2, 5 and 10 and some can divide by the same numbers. The pupils work out halves and doubles of two-digit numbers. They recognise two-dimensional shapes and can identify the properties that each one has. They tell the time using half and quarter past the hour. As the pupils move through Key Stage 2 they are able to work out problems to do with weight, time and temperature, and they use negative numbers with confidence. The pupils learn to collect data and use it to construct and interpret pictograms where each unit represents 2 or 5 items. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils can multiply and divide numbers with decimals. They can calculate equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. The older pupils learn to use percentages to work out discounts on sale items. They know the names and properties of different sorts of triangles such as isosceles and scalene. The most able can plot co-ordinates using all four quadrants. They are beginning to understand and use ratios in calculations. The pupils can find and justify probabilities in simple situations and calculate the mean, mode and median of groups of numbers. The pupils can measure the perimeter of shapes, and some can apply a formula to calculate the perimeter and area of regular shapes. Year 6 pupils know how to use brackets and are able to work out mentally and speedily the algebraic value of numbers.
8. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in science are in line with what is expected for pupils at the end of each key stage when they are seven and eleven years old. Their written work is less good, partly because so many pupils have difficulties with English, and partly because they work untidily in books. Both handwriting and drawing for diagrams are below average. Many find difficult setting down their ideas or writing about what they have done and found out. This leads the recording of well-understood work to be below average. It is also a reason for National Curriculum test results in recent years being below the national average. This is true for higher attaining pupils as well as for those who find the work harder. For example, Year 6 pupils are working on flowers, naming the parts and finding out what each part does. This is

work at an appropriate level for eleven year old pupils and they understand it. The recording, however, does not reflect that understanding.

9. Similarly Year 2 pupils do their experiment with ramps and cars and know that the gradient of the ramp will affect how far the car will travel. They also know that all the other parts of the experiment, such as the texture of the ramp and the ground on which the car will run, must be the same for the test to be fair. Their worksheets are not neatly presented and do not show how well almost all of them have grasped the work. Pupils in all classes understand the idea of a fair test well and they have a good understanding of the National Curriculum's first attainment target of scientific enquiry.
10. Inspection evidence showed that levels of attainment in information and communication technology are average at the end of both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils use a computer mouse competently to load programs and to draw using a number of functions connected with different art packages. They also use word-processing programs to write simple stories and make labels for classroom displays. Key Stage 2 pupils access the Internet and store data in word-processing programs and databases.
11. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and religious education standards achieved by pupils at the end of both key stages are in line with what could be expected for their age. In some aspects of physical education standards are also in line with expectations. However, in geography and pupils' development in ball skills in games, achievement is below that expected and pupils make less progress than in other subjects.
12. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages are making good progress, and they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and against the targets set for them in their individual education programmes. Of the 90 pupils on the register of concern, five have statements of educational need. Work for all pupils on the register matches targets set in individual education plans, and their progress is reviewed rigorously and measured against these goals regularly. Good support from learning support assistants enables pupils to complete tasks successfully.
13. The attainment and progress of learning of pupils from different ethnic minority communities and those with English as an additional language are consistent with those of the school as a whole. They make good progress and achieve standards that are appropriate for their ability. Those who enter the school with weaker English skills often receive support appropriate to their needs and with such support make good progress overall. The level of support, however, is not consistent and a few pupils make less progress as a result.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' good attitudes to their work, good behaviour, good relationships and improving levels of attendance make a good contribution to their achievements. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and attendance levels have improved. In Year 1, unsatisfactory attitudes in some lessons, and lower levels of attendance than in the rest of the school, occasionally limit pupils' progress. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are happy, enthusiastic, and keen to participate in lessons and activities. Interest and concentration in lessons show a steady improvement as pupils get older and mature. For example, in a Year 4 design and technology lessons, the pupils' very keen interest and enthusiasm for making money containers contributed greatly to them learning well about fastening techniques.
15. Pupil's behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is very good. The generally consistent approach to behaviour management by all staff ensures that any incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour do not disturb lessons or cause disruption in the playground. A small number of pupils tend to be aggressive in the playground but there is no evidence of bullying or any sexist or racist behaviour. Only two temporary exclusions and no permanent exclusions have occurred since the previous inspection. This is a clear indication

of the success of the school's behaviour policy and the positive attitude taken to include all pupils. Pupils know the school rules and are developing a good awareness of the importance of good behaviour and the effect of their actions in others. Pupils are very friendly, polite and keen to please. They are very eager to chat to adults and are proud of their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language mix well with their peers and are keen to participate fully in activities and school events. They are motivated, keen to learn and enjoy the attention given to them when they are supported in their learning.

16. Relationships are good. Pupils play and work together well. For example, in a Year 5 art lesson, very good co-operation enhanced work on making a tapestry; in particular one pupil threaded a needle for two others who could not manage to do it, and others shared scissors so that none had to wait long. All this was unprompted by the teacher.
17. Pupils' personal development is good and they are developing a strong awareness of citizenship. They undertake a wide range of duties and responsibilities eagerly and willingly; for example, the youngest pupils return registers promptly to the office, and Year 2 pupils supervise the equipment box in the playground. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils from Years 3 to 6 to enhance their personal development. Pupils take the lead in introducing assemblies, and have regular meetings to discuss issues such as playground activities, a tuck shop, school uniform and drinking water in classrooms. Pupils are gaining a beneficial experience of debating issues, representing the views of others, consultation and feeding back decisions. This is having a positive effect on their self-esteem, confidence and awareness of the needs of others. In assemblies pupils reflect well on issues and show a genuine appreciation of the efforts of others, especially when looking at others work in 'sharing' assemblies. When given opportunities, pupils show their initiative well; for example, a Year 6 pupil pours out water for others at lunchtime and hands beakers around without being told to.
18. Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and at 93 per cent overall are below national averages. However, this represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection where the overall rates were 90 per cent. This improvement is due to the very good measures taken by the school to monitor and promote regular attendance. In particular, efforts made to reduce the number of pupils taking extended holidays in term time has been successful; for example, teachers spell out in reports to parents the detrimental effect on their children's progress of taking extended breaks. The main reasons for absences are high levels of sickness and authorised absences that are condoned by parents; for example, not sending children to school because mum has a headache is frequently recorded in registers. The highest absence rate occurs in Year 1. Steps made to impress on parents the importance of setting good habits early in children's education have had a positive effect on improving rates in the reception class this year. The improved attitude to attendance by pupils makes a significant contribution towards their good attitudes to school and achievements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. There is a significant number of lessons that are very good in different classes. The teaching was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons observed and in 62 per cent it was good or better. Seventeen per cent of the lessons observed were very good or better. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only four per cent of lessons seen. This is a significant improvement over the inspection in 1997 when 17 per cent were unsatisfactory. The overall good quality of teaching has enabled pupils to make good progress throughout the school.
20. The previous inspection report in 1997 identified the need for the head teacher and staff to consider collectively how pupils learn best, and to develop a wider range of teaching strategies to match their findings. In addition they were asked to develop individual teachers' subject knowledge. They have very successfully addressed these issues. For instance, the school's teaching and learning policy is a good guide for them all and ensures a consistent approach to

all lessons. Teachers know their pupils well, and assessments using informal strategies to gauge pupils' understanding are apparent in all lessons. These are now consistently used across the school and help to ensure progression for all pupils at the quickest pace on a day-to-day basis in all subjects. Marking is not always effective and some teachers do not use the school's own agreed marking policy and strategies. Homework is used appropriately and effectively to support pupils' learning as they progress through the school.

21. All teachers are very aware of the differing needs of pupils. Work within classes matches the needs of all pupils well. Pupils of high prior attainment, as well as those with special educational needs, are well catered for with appropriate activities. This was evident in a number of lessons in different parts of the school. For instance, in a Year 6 art and design lesson, the teacher had made an assessment of every pupil's thumbnail sketch in order to guide them onto the next stage of their drawing. In a Year 3 science lesson on classification, the teacher had prepared a number of different pictures and key diagrams to enable pupils to respond at their own level but still be involved in the main exercise. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson the learning objectives for the different groups were clearly displayed on their desks so that they could all work immediately at their own appropriate level.
22. The good teaching in the nursery and reception classes is based on care and consistency of approach. Planning is thorough and identifies what pupils are to learn to achieve the early learning goals. Groups of pupils of differing prior attainments begin their work on the National Curriculum at the appropriate time due to the careful use of assessment. The range of activities is invariably good and pupils are always on task and appropriately challenged. The way that the teachers, nursery nurses and assistants work together so closely and are able to split the classes so effectively into appropriate groups does much to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
23. The sound teaching at Key Stage 1 reflects teachers' sound subject knowledge across the curriculum despite the fact that three of the four teachers are inexperienced. The head teacher, deputy head and mentor have monitored the progress of the two newly qualified teachers in this Key Stage and ensured that they provide appropriately for their classes. Planning is successful and pupils are always learning at an appropriate level, despite their very wide range of prior attainments. Pupils of all abilities are now given good support that results in their good progress. Classroom organisation is good and all activities selected are appropriate to the identified learning objectives in the plans.
24. The good teaching at Key Stage 2 is also characterised by good subject knowledge, understanding, and clear planning. Teachers make valuable links at this stage between different subjects that produce cross-curricular activities that are particularly valuable. There is a strong emphasis on investigative work at the top of the school that leads to independence and the overall good personal development of all pupils. The relationships between older pupils and their teachers are particularly outstanding. This leads to a relaxed and supportive atmosphere in which pupils are able to try without worrying about not succeeding at first. The level of confidence they show is testament to how successful the teachers are in developing these relationships.
25. Throughout the school, teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils, and class discussions are always lively and challenging. Questions are well focused and designed to bring all pupils into the discussions. This helps all pupils to make quick progress towards particular learning objectives. Teachers use a good range of methods and groupings that are well matched to the lesson's purpose. The quality of whole-class teaching in the literacy, numeracy, humanities and personal and social education sessions is very good. Teachers lead these discussions well and introduce new ideas with care and clarity. For example, in a personal, social and health education lesson in Year 4, the teacher very effectively drew out responses from all pupils with gentle, but insistent, questioning on what was "special" for them. Pupils were made to think about responses in this and earlier lessons and build on what they already knew and understood. The responses generated were surprisingly detailed

and very mature.

26. All teachers set a good example to pupils of how they should behave and respond to others. Teachers use praise well to modify behaviour and reward good work. Instructions given to pupils are very clear, and teachers listen carefully to pupils' replies and questions, and show they value them all. Teachers manage pupils very effectively. This was particularly evident in the reception and nursery classes where pupils are often carefully organised for different subjects and make good progress in their social development too as a result.
27. Teaching support for the pupils with special educational needs is provided in a variety of ways with well-trained learning support assistants and in-class help targeted through the adults' good knowledge of individual pupils' needs. The special needs teaching is good. Tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and lessons move at an appropriate pace. A good feature of this support is the close link made with the work that other pupils in the class are doing.
28. The quality of teaching of the staff supported by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) staff is never less than satisfactory, and often good. It is characterised by teachers' regard to pupils' stage of learning English. The teachers working with pupils are aware of the full range of language needs of the identified pupils and plan effectively with clear learning objectives and well-matched tasks making good use of interesting and stimulating resources for young learners. Mainstream staff take full responsibility for supporting pupils within classrooms, guided by the EMAG team. There are a number of bilingual staff including a bilingual instructor.
29. The EMAG staff play an active role in planning jointly with the class teacher when giving in-class support. EMAG teachers set individual targets to support the pupils on initial stages. Good ongoing verbal feedback on progress is given to the class teacher. Currently no written reports are produced at the end of year. Both EMAG staff and the class teachers maintain careful records of pupils' progress. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well planned, particularly with regard to vocabulary and language component of curriculum content. The EMAG bilingual teachers and assistants are generally well deployed during literacy and numeracy hours to make best use of time for targeted pupils. However, they do not always work efficiently with clear language focus for pupils' learning or exploit the language potential of everyday activities with pupils by making use of their own specialised expertise to enhance pupils' learning of English. This means the support given to pupils varies and, therefore, some make much better progress than others do. There is an effective partnership between the class teacher and EMAG and special needs staff, in planning, target setting and sharing expertise. Where there are EMAG staff, they make good use of pupils' first language to support their acquisition of English. Good attention is given to supporting pupils' home languages within the whole school.

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

30. The school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities and activities; this includes good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and all statutory requirements are met. All pupils have equal access to the learning activities and other opportunities provided by the school. The school is giving a high priority to developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills by making good use of the opportunities provided by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This is having a good impact on the progress of the pupils in literacy and in numeracy.
31. A key issue from the last inspection was to 'ensure that planning is anchored more securely to the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and developed into schemes of work'. This has been well addressed in English and mathematics. Teachers are using the national Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for planning the work and this contributes to the good

achievement seen in these areas. In science, the school has adopted the guidelines for planning developed by Bedfordshire Local Education Authority, whilst in the foundation subjects, the national guidelines are being used to plan the work. The school has arranged the topics to be covered in an overview plan of work to be covered in each term by every year group. These outline plans are expanded into more detailed arrangements for each subject area. This enables new teachers to the school to see clearly what they should teach the pupils in their classes.

32. The collaborative planning between each pair of teachers who teach the same year group helps to ensure that the activities planned are varied, and make appropriate use of individual, group, whole-class and practical activities. As a result, there are good opportunities for the pupils to make the good progress seen. The teachers' short-term plans for what they will teach and how, are checked on a regular basis by the head teacher and by the curriculum teams. The school is now working towards a review at the end of the school year to make sure that they have fully matched the national guidelines to the needs of the school.
33. The school has put in place guidance for teachers on what should be taught in each year group for pupils' personal, social and health education. This includes suitable arrangements for sex education, and for the pupils to learn about the use and misuse of drugs. The school has included topics on healthy eating and the care of teeth. In a lesson seen during the inspection, the teacher made imaginative use of a 'special box' with a mirror inside. This allowed the pupils to look at themselves and consider their own appearance. They were given good opportunities to think about moral and social issues such as racism and sexism.
34. As the pupils move through the school they are expected to take more responsibility for organising themselves and their work; for example in a mathematics topic they decide whether or not to use calculators to produce their finished work. The older pupils have good opportunities to show care for the younger ones, and to demonstrate positive attitudes to school and learning. Throughout the year, the pupils take part in activities to raise money for charities such as Red Nose Day. They talk about the school council and can explain how their ideas to improve school life are valued and their opinions taken account of.
35. There are good extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils including netball, cricket, football, chess and creative arts clubs. All the pupils aged seven and eleven come to the clubs held after school to work on improving their basic literacy and numeracy skills before the national end of key stage tests take place in the summer term and this has a good effect on their standards of attainment. The reading club is also a popular after-school session.
36. The very good range of educational visits has a positive and constructive effect on the pupils' learning; for example, the pupils in Year 6 attended a production of Macbeth: this expanded their knowledge of the use of language in a dramatic setting. A number of Year 5 pupils were able to experience a live performance of orchestral music when they went to a concert of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Year 4 pupils visited the Regent's Park Mosque, extending their understanding of Islam as a major world religion.
37. The curriculum opportunities for all the pupils are enriched and enhanced by visitors to the school. These include local clergy, friends of the school, governors and artists. Together with the very good use of the teachers' talents, and those of the many other adults who work in the school, they provide learning experiences that contribute to the good personal development of pupils as individuals and members of the community.
38. The school has good links with the community and this make a very effective contribution to the pupils' learning. The school has good partnerships with a number of community groups. With the local residents association, HARCA, complementary activities are planned; such as the summer holiday play schemes when the school's swimming pool is used for lessons for parents and children. The school's hard playground area is available for young people in the area out of school hours. Educational visits and many links with arts groups are made which

foster the pupils' understanding of the wider community, as with the Year 6 pupils' work on producing their own newspaper following a visit to the News Education Trust. Companies at Canary Wharf have donated a generous amount of money for books which the school has used to enhance the library facilities.

39. A very valuable learning experience has been the 'Magic Me' project where Year 6 pupils visited a local retirement home where they worked together with much older members of the local community. The joint art project promoted the mutual understanding of the other age group; the older people were able to share their memories as they forged good relationships with the younger people. Together they created colourful banners expressing these new friendships that are now proudly displayed in the school and the home. These experiences contribute to the good personal development of the pupils and further their understanding of their local society and world in which they live.
40. The school makes sure that good arrangements are in place for the youngest children to come into school and for when they transfer from the Foundation Stage into Year 1. Good arrangements are also made to assist the smooth transfer of the pupils to the secondary schools by regular visits, joint activities and liaison with teachers from the schools. The school is making very effective use of a collaborative 'algebra bridge' project organised by the local education authority. Pupils follow the first ten lessons of the course in Stebon Primary School and will complete the second ten lessons when they start at secondary school in September.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a significant strength of the school. As at the time of the previous inspection, the atmosphere is extremely positive; the community is a calm one and there is a strong sense of respect for people and property. In assemblies, in religious education lessons and, most importantly, across all aspects of the school's life, there are strong elements of care, of opportunities for pupils to experience awe and wonder, and of teachers and pupils being aware of each other's needs and opinions. In the Year 3 religious education lesson for example, the head teacher was careful to explain that we should all respect the flag of another religion as she talked to pupils about Sikhism. Respect and care are hallmarks of the school.
42. Assemblies are well thought out, almost always recognise a deity and always give pupils the time to clarify their thoughts about what they have seen and heard. At the end of the splendid singing assemblies, for example, where pupils had been very excited, time was made for quiet reflection before they left the hall. In assemblies there is open approach to prayer – entirely appropriate in a school with so many different religions. Amidst much good display around the building, spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of the school's life feature prominently. There is a 'thought for the week' linked to work across several subjects.
43. Many pupils come from families which follow one of several faiths, strictly in many cases. This gives pupils a strong background knowledge and helps the school in its attempts to help their spiritual development. The beauty of music and of the world around them is emphasised. The school has created gardens around the building in an attempt to heighten pupils' awareness, and these have been very successful.
44. The school's provision for moral education is very good. The behaviour policy is rooted in firm moral principles. All classes have a code of conduct agreed by all pupils and refined by the school council. The wording of this changes through the school so that it makes good sense to pupils of every age.
45. During playtimes two pupils from each class in Key Stage 2 wear a yellow hat so that they can be easily identified and able to help lonely pupils or those new to the school. New pupils are always introduced to the school in assembly. In the Early Years' classes there is one (key) person responsible for each child. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils help in these classes and generally around the school at lunchtime. There are many opportunities for them to exercise responsibility. The school has improved this area of provision since the previous inspection.

46. Provision for cultural development is also very strong. During the inspection pupils, under the guidance of a teacher from the Children's Music Workshop, put the finishing touches to a performance based on the opera Rigoletto. The music curriculum leader takes small groups of pupils to concerts at the Barbican concert hall. The school gives much importance to music and the arts in general. Provision for pupils' own culture is also very good. Because the school contains people from many parts of the world, this leads its multicultural provision to be strong but this is also deliberately planned. The music policy document, for example, states that the approach will not be entirely 'Eurocentric'. Pupils celebrate festivals, both religious and secular, from all over the world. Pictures by many famous artists, both in the European tradition and from further afield, are displayed around the building and provide stimulation for pupils' own art work.
47. The school includes all its pupils in all its activities. Boys and girls, those who find the work easy and those who do not, and those of all nationalities take part in all the school offers. The diversity of origin of its pupils is seen as a cause for celebration. Noticeably, the version of the large map of the world in the dining hall is Peeters' projection. In the entrance hall there is a picture of a fingerprint in black ink on a white background with the caption 'Black or white'. From images like these the school effectively teaches that all pupils, regardless of nationality or background, will be treated equally. They are very successful in their efforts.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are very good overall and play an important part in the raising of standards, especially in English and mathematics. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when these procedures were found to be 'unsuccessful'. There are still some areas for further development in the foundation subjects where the aims for lessons are less clear and teachers' assessments more subjective. Pupils' progress in mathematics, English and science is carefully tracked against National Curriculum levels using non-statutory national tests, other standardised tests and teacher assessments. Written work in all year groups is regularly scrutinised by groups of teachers and assessed against national criteria. Records are updated 'formally' each half term and teachers have clear and precise data about the standards pupils are achieving.
49. Good use is made of assessment data to plan work. Teachers produce class and year group lists and descriptions. This helps them to arrange groups in English and mathematics and to set targets for classes, groups and individual pupils. Careful analysis is made of pupils' results in statutory and non-statutory standardised tests. Strengths and weaknesses are identified, enabling the school to take appropriate action to improve the quality of pupils' learning. This includes, for example, the forming of 'catch up' classes in literature in Year 2. Appropriate work is directed at targeted pupils and results in higher levels of attainment. Group targets are precise and prominently displayed in classes. For example, in science, group targets include, 'to know the function of the heart and how it pumps blood round the body.' Pupils also have individual targets and work is mostly carefully matched to these.
50. Assessment is used less effectively in other curriculum areas where medium-term plans do not always specify what is to be learned or how attainment can be measured. Teachers' written marking is generally poor although there are examples of some teachers making good use of discussing work with pupils. The school's marking policy is unnecessarily complicated and few teachers follow its directives. Few developmental points are made to help pupils improve next time and there are many examples of poorly written and ungrammatical comments. These provide a poor example of handwriting and presentation when pupils' standards in these two areas are also poor.
51. The school provides a very high standard of care for its pupils, which allows them to feel secure and valued. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The

head teacher, ably supported by her deputy, has taken a very positive lead in this area because of the high turnover of teaching staff. Their knowledge of all the pupils and their backgrounds is a key factor in the high quality of care provided by the school. The individual attention given to pupils and their problems and the close monitoring of their personal development contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school life and benefits their achievements. The school is clean, tidy and very secure. Health and safety procedures, including a very thorough assessment of all areas of risk, are very effective. Fire precautions and first aid arrangements are very good. Child protection arrangements are very good. The head teacher, as the designated person, has very good knowledge of the procedures and takes very good measures to ensure all staff are aware of potential issues, especially given the high turnover of staff.

52. The school has a very good positive behaviour policy. The consistent application of this policy by the great majority of staff contributes towards pupils' good attitudes in lessons and very good behaviour. The use of praise and the very good use of rewards are major factors in the success of this policy. Good behaviour at lunchtimes and in the playground is encouraged well by all staff, who are all well trained and provide good supervision, and by the good size of the playground and good range of activities provided. Procedures to promote good behaviour, including the discouragement of bullying, racist or sexist behaviour, are very effective. In particular, literature, available to pupils and parents, and displays around the school provide very good information and advice.
53. Very good monitoring and promotion of attendance has led to an improvement in overall attendance levels since the previous inspection. Reminders to parents at every opportunity have been very effective in reducing the level of extended holidays taken in term time. The use of rewards and certificates constantly remind pupils about the importance of regular, prompt attendance. Very effective registration and monitoring arrangements give the head teacher, governors and the Education Social Worker very good information to measure and pick up trends or to pursue individual cases. The measures taken to impress on new parents the importance of attendance, for example by arranging afternoons with the Educational Social Worker, are having a positive impact on attendance levels in the reception classes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has a good partnership with parents, which has a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school has worked hard to maintain this good relationship since the previous inspection.
55. Seventeen per cent of parents replied to the pre-inspection questionnaires, and about twelve per cent attended the parents' meeting. The great majority of these parents were very positive in their views about the school. They felt that their children achieve well at the school, behaviour is good, the school is approachable and they are well informed about their children's progress, and that they are expected to work hard. Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views of the school.
56. A small number of parents expressed concern at the number of changes of teachers for certain classes, that they had not heard the results of consultations over school uniform, the level of supervision at playtimes and progress in Year 1. Inspection evidence shows that overall progress is good in spite of the number of changes, and low levels of attendance and standards of both behaviour and teaching limit progress in Year 1. The head teacher intends to inform parents of the outcome of the parental consultations on school uniform once the school council has been consulted. Supervision in the playground is adequate.
57. The school provides good information to parents, and takes good care to provide translations or translators when necessary. The governors' annual report and the school prospectus are attractively presented and informative. Parents' annual reports give parents good information on their children's attainment and progress; targets for development are included and reasons

for lack of progress are explained very well. For example, comments relating to a child whose progress had been limited by parents taking him on an extended holiday are very effective in showing the parents the importance of regular attendance.

58. Parents are given good encouragement to be involved in their children's education and the majority respond well to this encouragement. Coffee sessions in the Early Years Unit and the toy library are especially effective in promoting the school/parental partnerships at an early stage. Parents give support through a high level of attendance at consultation evenings, support of the home-school agreement and homework policy, and helping in the classroom, especially in the Early Years Unit and Key Stage 1. A small minority of parents do not support their children's education, especially in relation to the issue of regular attendance.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership and management of the school is very good overall. The leadership of the head teacher is of a very high quality. She is a calm and effective leader with a very high level of professional knowledge and expertise that is clearly reflected in all aspects of her work. It is very hard to imagine any circumstances under which she would not be able to bring her calm approach to effecting the necessary changes. She has a clear vision of the direction that she expects the school to take to ensure the best possible education for all pupils. An outstanding feature of her leadership and vision is evidenced by the way in which the school has been developed to be a focus for the community. The large entrance hall of the school, with the music and displays of many cultures, provides a very welcoming aspect. Parents know that, at all times, they will be received with care and consideration to discuss matters of importance to them or to seek help when they are in need.
60. The head teacher is fully supported and complemented by an extremely capable deputy who is a teacher of high quality in her own right. The deputy matches the head teacher in her enthusiasm for promoting the highest levels of education and care for both pupils and their parents. Both have a clear understanding of their roles as senior members of the school. The way in which she was able to move from Year 6 to Year 2 last year to offer greater support and guidance based on an identified need was exemplary. This aspect of her work more than fulfils the requirement of her job description that she acts as a model of good practice for the rest of the school.
61. This strong leadership structure is now being strengthened further by the good work carried out by the curriculum teams. As a result of working together, all co-ordinators are now clear about the roles that they fulfil and they do this very well with varying degrees of effectiveness, depending upon the length of time that they have held their specific responsibilities. The way that this structure is enabling teachers to develop into leaders in their own right is outstanding.
62. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, as is the progress they make. The head teacher is currently acting as co-ordinator for special educational needs and is bringing her considerable skills to the task of promoting their education to the best effect. Effective systems for tracking the progress of pupils on the school's special needs register have been implemented. The individual education plans are detailed and sensible. The targets set for individual pupils are appropriate and take them forward in realistic steps that they all understand. The reviews of statements are handled well and the relationships with parents are good.
63. The quality of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and the taking of effective action is very good. The whole staff has contributed to discussions on effective teaching and helped to write the teaching and learning policy. The positive results of this combined approach were clearly observed during the inspection. The head teacher monitors and evaluates each teacher in action at least once per year. The introduction of new staff to the school, including newly qualified teachers, is also good. The newly qualified teachers have been monitored regularly to ensure that they develop in a positive way. They receive regular

guidance and targets are set to help them grow in confidence and skills. To this end, they are provided with appropriate opportunities to observe other colleagues in action and so learn from the good teaching practice of others.

64. The governing body is led by an experienced chairperson and fully supports the actions that the head teacher is taking to move the school forward. They are effectively fulfilling all of their responsibilities, which they take seriously. They play an important and effective role in shaping the direction of the school. Various standard committees meet on a regular basis to ensure that the management of the school is effective. These include a curriculum committee that has a close liaison with the school so that it is kept fully informed of what is happening in each subject.
65. Most governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well because of their close involvement with what is happening. The governing body has a clear strategy for checking on the progress that is being made. For example, it works closely with the head teacher to set targets for her to achieve and monitors the progress that is being made on a regular basis. This is a strong aspect of their involvement with the school.
66. The school's improvement plan is very good. It covers a period of three years through a general overview, with the current year broken down into detail. This deals with all relevant aspects of planning and action and relates various priorities accurately to the costs involved and to the budget implications. Where possible all teachers are involved with the development of this plan and the members of the senior management team take specific responsibilities for developing their parts of it. The head teacher and governors ensure that specific success criteria are included in the plan so that regular evaluation of its progress occurs to ensure that the school's targets are met.
67. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress with improvements in all areas of concern. The curriculum is now well balanced and supported by policies and schemes of work for all subjects that are either completely updated, re-written or clearly earmarked as part of a planned development programme, as with policies for religious education and art. Assessment has been impressively improved. Procedures and action now relate clearly to pupils' learning targets. Learning objectives are clearly defined for every subject and for pupils of all abilities in the core subjects, and planning for this is good at all levels. Assessment procedures for the foundation subjects are at various stages of development. The curriculum provision for reading, information and communication technology and history has been successfully improved in order to support pupils' attainment in these subjects. The development of resources and the provision of appropriate training have been the main reasons for the positive development of this key issue. The school has developed a soundly based financial plan linked to efficient procedures for monitoring the budget. Clear costings, related to the budget and the long-term plan, are in place and the progress of expenditure is closely monitored. Both the head teacher and the governing body have an extremely clear understanding and insight of what needs to be done to improve the school further.
68. The school manages its finances effectively. The day-to-day functions of the office are carried out professionally by the office team and the senior admin. officer ensures that all matters relating to income and expenditure are dealt with efficiently. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes. The school has clear guidelines, which they use well, to gain the best possible value in all their purchases.
69. The school has sufficient suitably qualified teachers to meet the needs of pupils in relation to the National Curriculum and religious education. The school also has substantial help through the EMAG provision of both teachers and assistants. Some class teachers use this additional help well. Others, however, need to give some thought to their use in order that the extra help may be of maximum value for pupils with limited English skills and in the work of the whole class. There is a good programme of induction for new members of staff and a supply teacher

during the week of the inspection considered that she had ample help to continue the pupils' programme of work.

70. The school is well resourced. For most subjects and for pupils with special educational needs, the school has good resources. In both libraries, although relatively few in number, books are new and of high quality. For both science and religious education for example, there are some attractive books. In physical education, the school lacks some quite basic equipment although it does have its own swimming pool. In mathematics Key Stage 1 is better equipped than Key Stage 2. The school has a large computer suite with over 20 good new machines. The Early Years area is well equipped.
71. The school accommodation is good. It has enhanced what could be an unattractive building with imaginative displays inside and extensive outside refurbishment. There is rather limited outdoor play space and the school has no field. Some classrooms are small and become very hot in warm weather, and this occasionally affects pupils' ability to concentrate. Accommodation limits provision for physical education, but all other subjects have adequate space. There are two small libraries, a swimming pool, a handsome entrance hall and a separate dining hall. This allows the main hall to be used as a teaching space. There is also a music room where the school's good collection of instruments can be well stored and used. Typical of the school's innovation is the conversion of the schoolkeeper's house into a fine 'Resource House'.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. Stebon primary school is now a very good place in which to learn. The weaknesses identified by the inspection, and listed below, are far outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan and build on the improvements already achieved. In order to raise the overall standards of pupils' attainment and ensure equal access to the National Curriculum, the governors, head teacher and staff should jointly:
 - (a) Consider the school's present marking policy with a view to rewriting it to make it simpler and easier for teachers to carry out. This should then be implemented systematically in order to make sure all pupils know what they do well, and what they must do to improve further, especially in the recording and presentation of their work. (Paragraph numbers 20,49,90,102,109).
 - (b) Many pupils with English as an additional language receive good additional support and make good progress. The school must work to make sure that this provision, received by some pupils, is available to all those who need it. This will guarantee access to the whole curriculum for all pupils in all classes and an equal opportunity for progress for them all. (Paragraph numbers 13 and 28).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	14	45	33	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	59	397
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	271

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	74

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	434

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	50
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	47

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	27	25	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	16	19
	Girls	17	18	16
	Total	35	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (59)	65(63)	67(73)
	National	83(82)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	15	17	16
	Total	33	35	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (63)	67 (63)	65 (75)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	29	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	8
	Girls	24	20	23
	Total	33	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (65)	65 (58)	72 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	8
	Girls	24	19	23
	Total	33	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (49)	63 (63)	72 (72)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	22
Black – other	9
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	400
Chinese	2
White	15
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	317

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	1331299
Total expenditure	1205815
Expenditure per pupil	2926
Balance brought forward from previous year	125484
Balance carried forward to next year	265624

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	425
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	9	3	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	69	24	3	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	24	1	4	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	59	23	4	7	7
The teaching is good.	66	22	3	3	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	23	4	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	22	0	1	9
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	20	3	4	1
The school works closely with parents.	51	34	3	3	9
The school is well led and managed.	59	22	4	1	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	27	5	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	31	3	7	16

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

73. There is a single intake for children in the nursery in the September following their third birthday. All children attend full time in two separate nursery classes and most stay for lunch. They are admitted to the two reception classes at the start of the school year following their fourth birthday. At the time of inspection, eight children in the reception classes were under five. The school has organised its provision for the Foundation Stage within an Early Years Unit. Each of the four classes in the unit is staffed with a full-time teacher and a nursery nurse as well as two extra classroom assistants. Additionally, a teacher who works four and a half days per week, provides effective support to all learners of English as an additional language in both indoor and outdoor activities.
74. Most children's attainment on entry to the nursery is very low in all areas of learning. It is particularly poor in language and communication. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted at the start of the reception year. Most children are learning to speak English as an additional language and a few have speech difficulties. Teaching is consistently good in all areas of learning. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of children achieve well and attain early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, as well as creative and physical development. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, children do not reach the expected standards. These findings are not consistent with the previous inspection report of mainly satisfactory standards. This is mainly due to the change in school's intake over the years. The percentage of children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is much higher than the national average. These young children receive good support to enhance their progress in both nursery and reception classes.
75. The Early Year's curriculum provides experiences that are relevant, imaginative and enjoyable, for example, creative work such as collage, painting or making biscuits. The planning broadly reflects all areas of learning and is appropriately linked to the advancement of children's skills, knowledge and understanding. In the reception classes, it is extended to embrace and link with the work children will encounter in Key Stage 1, in the literacy and numeracy strategies. The classes are divided into upper and lower sets and move to different classrooms for the whole-class input by the teachers. Children go back to their own classrooms for independent group activities. Both nursery and reception teachers plan effectively to provide a stimulating range of activities with clear aims for all children to achieve. Teachers in the Early Years Unit plan together effectively. Their short-term planning makes the learning objectives clear for all areas of learning with a balance of teacher-directed and self-initiated activities. There are consistent procedures for assessing children on a day-to-day basis in order to check and record their ongoing progress and to plan for their specific learning needs.
76. The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The staff generally plan to provide a suitable range of activities with clear intentions. They know how young children learn and extend their responses sensitively. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are appropriate and the tasks generally match children's level of functioning and skill. Homework in the form of borrowing books is used particularly well to enhance children's progress. The staff work effectively as a team and support one another well.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. Children enter the nursery with very low personal, social and emotional skills. They are skilfully encouraged to develop their confidence and the ability to sit quietly and concentrate. This is seen in the nursery where regular opportunities to participate in activities give children the opportunity to listen to others and start to take turns at speaking in a familiar group, for

example when sharing a book. Children listen quietly, show respect for equipment, share and take turns fairly. They settle down quickly and feel both happy and secure at school. In reception classes during whole-class activities and discussion, they are always encouraged to put their hands up and wait to be asked, for example when answering questions about the story, 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Children are helped to form good relationships with others through many good opportunities to work as part of a group independently or with an adult.

78. By the time they leave the reception classes, children are satisfactorily achieving the early learning goals in this area. This shows good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching of the staff. Children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve in a variety of learning situations. The staff act as good role models for children and explain clearly what is expected of them. Some simple classroom rules are shared with all. Children generally listen well and understand set routines. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and guided to behave sensibly at all times. They are attentive and eager to learn, and enjoy sharing their work with any available adult. Most children participate enthusiastically in teacher-led and self-initiated activities. The teachers and classroom assistants manage children skilfully and keep them purposefully occupied. The children's play and responses are supported and extended sensitively.

Communication, language and literacy

79. Most staff show that they value children's efforts at communicating and this enhances their progress as a result. Teaching of basic skills is good. Children in the nursery are beginning to talk about their experiences and develop new vocabulary during discussions and social occasions such as milk and snack time, but their communication skills are limited overall. While some willingly talk about the aspects of their work, many find speaking clearly and in full sentences quite difficult. Some older children in the reception classes are gaining satisfactory control in developing early writing skills. They draw and paint with increasing control. Many reception class children can write their own names unaided. Good progress is made when adults work in small groups or on one-to-one basis to give children individual attention. The introduction of the literacy strategy is making a significant impact. The children enjoy using the big books such as 'The Pig in the Pond', and are given planned opportunities to develop new vocabulary as they collectively discuss animals and focus on words such as 'cat', 'dog' and 'cow' in the storybooks they make for themselves. All the adults use talk to good effect and are good listeners. Children like the imaginative corner, the 'Stebon Hair Salon', which is very motivating and skilfully set up, using a good range of appropriate and interesting items. The assessment procedures and the recording of children's day-to-day progress in language activities is good and involves all staff who consistently build on what has already been achieved.

Mathematical development

80. Children's progress is good overall due to good teaching, but most do not reach the early learning goals in mathematics by the end of Foundation Stage, due to the very low start. A few children are beginning to count and order accurately up to 10. Most others, although able to count to ten, do not yet recognise the number symbols. Opportunities for practical activities are well planned, but these are insufficient for children to make representations and write the number symbols correctly. A few children recognise basic shapes and gain some knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. Some older children describe objects by position, shape, size, colour and quantity. Children enjoy working with large and small construction equipment. Most children demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of how to solve simple problems involving addition and subtraction, and use vocabulary such as, 'add one more' or 'take one away', 'how many altogether' and 'how many left,' by the end of the reception year. Adult involvement in children's activities is good. Reception teachers successfully use the early assessment tests (baseline) to help plan suitable activities, and useful timely assessments are made of the individual children's ongoing

progress. Pupils are suitably supported to move forward, through talk and practice, for example when working with repeating patterns or learning to use positional vocabulary such as 'top', 'bottom', 'next to' and 'middle'. An effective use of number rhymes and songs further enhances pupils' learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. Most children enter the reception classes with limited general knowledge. Adults support children's understanding and encourage learning of, for example, how children have grown since they were babies. The children work with sand, water and play-dough, and freely explore properties of malleable materials. They use paint and mix different colours, but most do not yet name basic colours correctly. There are opportunities for children to explore with everyday objects of interest in the home corner and play-kitchen or observe the gold fish in the water. Teaching is good and so children make good progress. In one lesson, the Islamic washing ceremony was well illustrated by the nursery nurse, and children were extended to practise the related vocabulary in the use of water. Children displayed feelings of real wonder when the prayer mat was unrolled to demonstrate how Muslims pray. Children use different materials, such as paper and textiles, and develop cutting, joining, folding and building skills. Most children confidently name main parts of the body. They have opportunities to build with construction materials, for example Lego and Duplo, but they have not sufficiently developed skills in asking questions to find out how things work. Most children demonstrate developing computer skills expected for their age. They show increasing control in the use of mouse, to move items on the screen. There is effective adult intervention in activities and encouragement for children to explore new ideas.

Physical development

82. Most children meet their expectations of early learning goals in this area. They have planned opportunities to use the good range of large and small outdoor resources, such as bikes and prams and a fixed climbing frame. However, the outdoor provision to enhance children's gross motor skills is restricted due to the lack of space. In the main school hall they learn to be aware of space and develop co-ordination and control in movement. In their use of construction toys, a significant number of pupils demonstrate reasonable hand and eye co-ordination. They are developing confidence in the use of different tools and joining materials, such as Sellotape and glue. Adults provide calm and sensitive support and show good understanding of how young children learn. They have a sensitive awareness of children's safety.

Creative learning

83. Most children are on course to meet their expectations of early learning goals in this area of learning due to the effective teaching. They experiment with paint and use their observations and imagination to create pleasing results. They are given opportunities to explore colour and texture, and work with a range of materials such as sequins and coloured stickers to create a collage of the first letter of their names or paint pictures. Children sing and clap nursery rhymes and express enjoyment. Support staff work closely with teachers and make positive contributions to children's learning. They talk to the children and ask relevant questions to extend their vocabulary, for example, when mixing colours in the nursery and making masks in reception classes. Indoor resources for the Foundation Stage are good and accessible. These are well organised and used effectively for all areas of learning.

ENGLISH

84. Results of the national tests in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 show attainment to be well below the national average for all schools in both reading and writing. When compared with schools of a similar context, attainment is much the same in writing but above the average in reading. At the higher levels, attainment was below the national average in reading but above in writing and well above that achieved in similar schools for both reading and writing. Over the past four years attainment in reading and writing has remained well below the national average, although improving in 2000. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls.
85. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English in the national tests is in line with the national average but well above that of schools in a similar context. At the higher levels, attainment is above the national average for all schools and in line with that of similar schools. Over the past four years attainment has risen steadily, in line with the national picture and with girls achieving a little better than boys. When pupils' achievements are compared to their prior attainment in Key Stage 1, these are in line with that expected from all schools and well above that of similar schools.
86. The present levels of attainment indicate that standards have risen significantly in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and are around the national average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents good progress as the majority of pupils enter the school with well below average skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing.
87. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average in both key stages. Their confidence grows as they move through the school so that, in Year 6 for example, pupils readily act out scenes from books they are studying. However, such opportunities are rare and little use is made of drama or role-play to develop speaking skills in other years. Many pupils are reluctant to offer responses in discussion sessions so that teachers try to ensure that these are not dominated by a small number of the more confident ones. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to answer in complete sentences and some opportunities are missed to allow pupils to speak. Pupils lack the vocabulary and hence the confidence to volunteer answers in whole-class discussions. They are more forthcoming, however, when asked to discuss things with their partners. This is a common device employed by teachers to encourage less confident pupils to talk with more confident friends.
88. Reading attainment is in line with national expectations throughout the school. Although this broadly reflects the findings of the previous report, improvements have been made which have broadened the range of reading strategies pupils use, raised the profile of literature and enhanced pupils' understanding and enjoyment of books. Most notable in these improvements are the school's successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and provision of improved reading material. The school has used the strategy well to improve pupils' awareness of the styles of different authors and to foster a greater interest in how characters and plots are produced. At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils understand what they have read, can talk about the plot, identify characters and predict what might happen next. They read with reasonable fluency, with many able to use appropriate expression for different characters. However, pupils of all abilities often read words without fully understanding their meanings and do not routinely seek to find these out. Younger pupils are able to name favourite authors and the books they have read. For example, the works of Jill Murphy and Roald Dahl are among their favourites. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are more critical about what they read. For example, they are able to contrast different books by the same author and give supported reasons why one is preferred to another. Good use is made in both key stages of multiple copies of the same book enabling groups of pupils to read, study and discuss these texts together.
89. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are achieving standards in writing that are in line with the national average. This represents good progress from the low start point most

pupils have on joining the school. Pupils in the youngest classes use common words in simple sentences to retell a favourite story or describe characters such as a fearsome dragon. By the end of Key Stage 1 their ability has developed well and most pupils use punctuation appropriately and have a good stock of common words they spell correctly. Pupils in both key stages are able to write from the point of view of a character in a book. This is developed well as pupils move through the school. In Key Stage 1, for example, they describe the actions of 'Mr. Large' or 'Mrs. Hardbroom'. This ability progresses well so that in Year 6 they are then able to consider the emotions and motives of various characters in the works of Jacqueline Wilson, for example. Teachers provide a great many opportunities for pupils to practise and learn parts of speech, grammar, spelling and other aspects of writing. This is evident in the number and range of writing for different purposes that pupils carry out. Thus pupils write stories, advertisements or poems, or re-tell old stories in a modern form. In these exercises, and in the more extended writing opportunities they have, pupils do well. For example in Year 3, pupils write in the 'first person' pretending to be 'Mr. Fox' and convey well his emotions at being shot at. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are familiar with the devices writers use to gain effect, many of which were introduced to them in Key Stage 1. Although pupils recognise the use of these, such as 'alliteration' and 'onomatopoeia', they rarely use these devices themselves when writing in contexts other than in exercises. Pupils have been well taught and understand the 'mechanics' of writing but are not yet given sufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge in other areas of the curriculum. Although some pupils write neatly and legibly, standards of presentation and handwriting remain low as reported in the last inspection.

90. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 but with examples of some excellent practice. In Key Stage 2 it is good overall with some very good teaching. It is good because most teachers keep their pupils' attention focused on the learning objectives through lively teaching. This is backed up by checking on their understanding and providing challenging activities for them.
91. Teachers are generally encouraging and use praise well to motivate pupils, especially those lacking the confidence to contribute in oral sessions. Learning objectives are invariably shared with the class so that pupils' attention is focused during the lesson. The implementation of the National Literary Strategy has helped lift the expectations of what pupils can do. Teachers use the correct terminology so that pupils understand and routinely use terms such as 'pronoun', 'connective' or 'metaphor'. In Year 2, for example, pupils consider spelling rules when encountering irregular verbs and attempt to write in the style of a well-known author. In the lessons where pupils make good progress, teachers take every opportunity to expand on pupils' responses to illustrate a point. For example, in Year 4, the teacher asked a pupil to repeat a 'correct' response but with an appropriate expression in his voice, which helped others understand how a character was feeling. In other lessons in Year 6, teachers ask pupils to comment on what their classmates say in order to ensure the points being made are understood. In some lessons opportunities are missed to do this. For example, all classes have prominent displays explaining what adjectives, nouns and verbs are. However, in several lessons observed, pupils' words and written work was not used to provide illustrations of these functions. Teachers read shared texts well to their pupils and in some lessons this is inspirational. In these lessons pupils become absorbed as their teachers draw them into the story through their skilled reading and handling of discussions. This promotes further interest so that, for example, pupils seek out other books by that author and become very knowledgeable about their style. Teachers' marking of pupils' work does not always make a positive contribution to their learning and in some cases provides poor examples of writing and presentation.
92. Throughout the school pupils have very positive attitudes to English. Pupils enjoy reading although many lack the confidence to read aloud. Pupils settle quickly and work hard to answer the tasks set. They co-operate well and teachers make good use of 'literary partners' for example. These pairings encourage less confident pupils to discuss ideas and problems with the result that many are then able to make a contribution in oral sessions. Although pupils

produce a lot of work in all year groups, their opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning are limited. Teachers tightly control much of the learning and this does lead to gains in understanding as pupils' attention is focused on precise learning objectives. However, in some classes there is an over-use of worksheets which reduces the opportunities for pupils to develop their presentation skills and to write at length. In some parts of other lessons, discussions are too teacher-dominated, restricting the opportunities pupils have for speaking

93. The school has invested heavily in the purchase of books and in the promotion of reading. The fiction and non-fiction libraries are small and were not seen in use during the inspection. However, there is a good range of fiction books for all ages with a good number written in two languages. Each class has its own stock of fiction and non-fiction books and there are enough dictionaries and thesauri to enable pupils to use them appropriately.

MATHEMATICS

94. The results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2000 show the school's performance in mathematics was well below average in comparison with the national average and below average in comparison with similar schools. The results of tests for eleven year olds in 2000 show that standards were below average when compared to all schools; however, when compared to similar schools they were above average.
95. Since 1998, the trend of the results shows a steady improvement. The pupils enter the school with below average attainment in mathematics, a very large proportion of the pupils have English as an additional language and there is a significant level of mobility of pupils in and out of the school through both key stages. Overall, the work seen during the inspection shows that the pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected at the end of both key stages and the pupils achieve well.
96. At the time of the last inspection, significant problems were found with the planning and teaching of mathematics. There was a narrow focus on numerical calculations, a weakness in the pupils' ability to use mental strategies, expectations for some year groups were not high enough and the planning was confused. There was no record-keeping system that tracked pupils' progress. In addition, pupils with English as an additional language were often withdrawn from the mathematics lessons and this meant that their progress was unsatisfactory. These issues have been very well addressed and the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The school is giving a high priority to developing the pupils' numeracy skills now by making full use of the opportunities for planning for continuity and progression provided by the National Numeracy Strategy. The school has made good use of the advice offered by a local education authority numeracy consultant; it is placing great emphasis on the use of language within mathematics. This is having a good impact on the pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary and how to explain their strategies for working out 'real-life' problems.
97. High expectations are a feature of the majority of the lessons. In particular this was a strong feature of the Year 6 lessons seen where the teachers make very effective use of a collaborative 'algebra bridge' project organised by the local education authority. The pupils follow the first ten lessons of the course in Stebon Primary School and complete the second ten lessons when they start at secondary school in September. In these lessons, the pupils made very good progress because the teachers were clear about what the pupils were to learn and the teaching methods were very well matched to what the pupils could do and pointed the way into how they could develop new skills.
98. Throughout the school the pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and confidently offer answers to questions. They work well both independently and in small groups. The pupils are given good opportunities to use skills of estimation, which they do with confidence, and to solve problems using all four numerical operations. They count and calculate accurately and

are able to use calculators to check their answers. The pupils are encouraged to explain how and why they have reached an answer and in some cases they are able to suggest alternative ways of working out.

99. By the time they are seven the pupils have a good understanding of place value, most are able to multiply by 2, 5 and 10 and some can divide by the same numbers. The pupils work out halves and doubles of two-digit numbers. They recognise two-dimensional shapes and can identify the properties that each one has. They tell the time using half and quarter past the hour.
100. As the pupils move through Key Stage 2 they are able to work out problems to do with weight, time and temperature, and they use negative numbers with confidence. The pupils learn to collect data and use it to construct and interpret pictograms where each unit represents two or five items. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils can multiply and divide numbers with decimals. They can calculate equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. The older pupils learn to use percentages to work out discounts on sale items. They know the names and properties of different sorts of triangles, such as isosceles and scalene. The most able can plot co-ordinates using all four quadrants. They are beginning to understand and use ratios in calculations. The pupils can find and justify probabilities in simple situations and calculate the mean, mode and median of groups of numbers. The pupils can measure the perimeter of shapes, and some can apply a formula to calculate the perimeter and area of regular shapes. Year 6 pupils know how to use brackets and are able to work out mentally and speedily the algebraic value of numbers.
101. Overall, the quality of teaching in mathematics is good with some very good features and only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. The teachers have put in place good procedures to check how well the pupils are learning and whether they are making enough progress. The teachers then match the work well to the needs of different groups of pupils. This enables the pupils to make good progress in learning new numeracy skills and in gaining mathematical vocabulary and understanding. However the erratic application of a consistent marking system means that some pupils are reliant on the quality of oral feedback from teachers about their work; they are not able to check to see how or if they have improved over time.
102. The teachers ensure that the pupils know what they are to learn in the lessons and they have high expectations of the pupils' ability to use intellectual effort, to concentrate and to explain their answers. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it; they use appropriate vocabulary and open-ended questions to extend the pupils' understanding of the mathematical topics. On a few occasions the use of support teachers or teaching assistants is not sufficiently well organised or used to target the learning of individuals or groups. As a result the progress of some pupils is not as good as it could be. In two lessons observed, the length of time spent on mental and oral work was inappropriate or the pace of the central part of the lesson was too slow, and the effectiveness of the learning opportunities was lessened. In addition, in some classes there is an over-use of worksheets. This limits the opportunities for the pupils to develop independence in setting out their work. Across the school, the presentation of written work in mathematics is often erratic and untidy, and the pupils do not show sufficient pride in their written work; for example, in most classes the printed squares for numerals are ignored and this means that on occasions columns of numbers become confused.
103. The school has put in place a team to manage the curriculum and in mathematics this is having a positive effect on the standards attained by pupils. The team is enthusiastic and well informed; they have made an audit of teachers' strengths and areas for development and are addressing these through checking the teaching and learning. They use the information gained to decide how the subject can be improved. The school analyses the results from the regular half-term assessments and yearly standardised tests and establishes group learning targets. However the tracking of individual pupils is at an early stage and there are no individual learning objectives and target levels for each pupil. Mathematics is given a high profile in the

school. In all the classes, there are interesting and interactive displays and they are well used to support the teaching and learning, together with a good range of resources for teaching and learning.

SCIENCE

104. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in science are in line with what is expected for pupils at the end of each key stage when they are seven and eleven years old. Their written work is less good, partly because so many pupils have difficulties with English, and partly because they work untidily in books. Both handwriting and drawing for diagrams are below average. Many find difficult setting down their ideas or writing about what they have done and found out. This leads the recording of well-understood work to be below average. It is also a reason for results in national tests in recent years being below the national average. This is true for higher attaining pupils as well as for those who find the work harder. Currently, for example, Year 6 pupils are working on flowers, naming the parts and finding out what each part does. This is work at an appropriate level for eleven year old pupils and they understand it. Their recording, however, does not reflect that understanding.
105. Similarly, Year 2 pupils do their experiment with ramps and cars and know that the gradient of the ramp will affect how far the car will travel. They also know that all the other parts of the experiment, such as the texture of the ramp and the ground on which the car will run, must be the same for the test to be fair. Their worksheets are not neatly presented and do not show how well almost all of them have grasped the work. Pupils in all classes understand the idea of a fair test well and they have a good understanding of the National Curriculum's first attainment target, scientific enquiry.
106. Pupils in Year 4 were not so secure in their work on temperature. This was partly because too many things were being discussed and tested and they became confused. In a second lesson the experiment was simpler and pupils understood better what the experiment was showing them. They still did not fully grasp why the hot water was cooling and the ice melting and could not predict when the cooling and 'warming' would stop.
107. Overall, teaching is good, with two lessons observed being very good. In the majority of lessons, teachers challenged pupils well, leading them to think about the problems arising from the work in hand. Tasks are appropriate and pupils' work shows that teachers follow the National Curriculum. Teachers plan and, in almost all cases, organise lessons well. In one lesson, the teacher took too long over her explanation and in another the teacher did not manage pupils firmly enough, which meant these lessons slowed and the pupils lost concentration. Generally, however, teachers manage pupils well and this enables lessons to move at a good pace, keeping children alert and interested. It also allows good discussion which in turn leads to good understanding of the work. Much of the work gives pupils the opportunity to extend their own work and teachers plan additional activities to stretch higher achieving pupils. The work sample shows, however, that this is not always the case, and occasionally all the pupils have completed the same worksheets in the same way.
108. In most cases teachers have adequate knowledge and skill in science to lead pupils through the work. In one or two lessons, however, it was apparent that the teachers were not completely clear about the underlying scientific principles.
109. Occasionally teachers do not pay enough attention to the setting out of work. This leads to untidy presentation. In little of the work seen, for example, had pupils used a ruler to underline titles or to draw diagrams or tables. This makes it unattractive and more difficult for pupils to look back and understand what they have done. Similarly, in some of the very attractive display of science work around the building, the pupils' work is not well presented. In class lessons, teachers understand well how pupils are coping with the work. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher worked *with* the pupils, enthusing them and prompting them to think about what the

experiment was showing them. Marking in books is less impressive, often being limited to ticks with little comment and help towards better work. There are some exceptions where the teacher has challenged pupils well and shown clearly what needs to be improved.

110. The programme of work follows the National Curriculum and tasks are appropriate. During the inspection week work in Year 1 was a little too hard and pupils' books showed that easier work on electricity had been done in later years. With this exception the progression of work is sound.
111. Science is well organised. There is a good policy document and clear guidance for teachers on what should be taught in each year group to make sure that pupils build on what they learned before. Liaison with the receiver secondary school is very good. The school needs to plan to improve the presentation of pupils' work. Their skill in writing about what they have done and found out could be much improved. This would help standard test results and make pupils' work books reflect more accurately what they know, understand and can do.

ART AND DESIGN

112. Pupils at Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in art and design and achieve standards appropriate for their age in painting, printing and collage,. During their time in Key Stage 2 classes, all pupils make good progress and achieve standards above expectations in drawing and painting, and appropriate for their age in printing, designing and collage. Pupils are introduced to an appropriate range of media throughout the school, including clay, pencils, weaving, paints and pastels. Pupils are encouraged to develop their drawing skills systematically through the consistent use of sketchbooks as they move through the school. They become increasingly adept at observing closely and translating observations into representational forms. At the time of the last inspection both attainment and progress in art were judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has made good progress since then.
113. Work is effectively linked to topics. In Year 1 the pupils experiment with a wide range of media and have produced some colourful pictures using cut-out shapes and simple sewing patterns. In the Year 2 classes, pupils are making sound progress in sketching the local area and the blocks of flats. Satisfactory progress is made in using pastels and coloured pencils when sketching fruit. Overall the art seen in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory and individual pupil sketchbooks are helpful in indicating progress and development. There was good evidence of three-dimensional artwork. Some of this was based on work that teachers had learnt for themselves in well-organised in-service training.
114. Pupils in the Year 3 classes have produced some very effective plant drawings using a variety of materials. Some of their intricate drawings were particularly good and showed good progress over the year. Year 5 pupils were working well together to make a tapestry portraying the Trojan Horse story. This was an effective link with the class's history topic about the Ancient Greeks. They have also produced good designs for duvet covers bearing in mind the person they were designing for, and very lifelike self-portraits. The way that Year 6 pupils were able to create a landscape in the style of two very different artists, Constable and Escher, through their well-developed drawing skills was very impressive. By the time they are eleven, most pupils produce work to a good standard in drawing, painting and collage.
115. Teaching is good overall, and in the four art lessons seen during the inspection the quality ranged from satisfactory to very good. The way the Year 6 pupils were motivated by their walk to the park and the production of thumbnail sketches to begin the class work on landscapes, was very well planned and carried out. The thumbnails were then expanded to A4 and then A3 pictures, and great detail was being added by all pupils. Pupils' work and scrutiny of displays indicate that teaching is satisfactory in all classes. The present art scheme provides breadth and balance, and is now beginning to ensure a systematic and even development of skills in

all aspects. More effective and regular marking of sketchbooks where pupils have experimented and practised their skills and techniques is required by some teachers to ensure optimum progress. The curriculum team has the chance to monitor progress and standards, although mostly informally. They have made sure their thoughts are communicated with the rest of the teachers and there is a uniform approach to teaching skills. There is a satisfactory range of materials.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. It was possible to see only two design and technology lessons during the inspection. Judgements are based on these lessons seen, on analysis of pupils' work and their design notes, and on discussions with pupils. Pupils enjoy design and technology projects and talk with enthusiasm about their models and how they made them. This has helped the school to maintain the satisfactory position they had gained at the time of the last inspection.
117. Provision for design and technology is satisfactory, with pupils at seven and eleven attaining standards expected for their ages and making appropriate progress in acquiring the necessary skills. Pupils with special educational needs also attain satisfactory standards and make sound progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well and good use is made of opportunities within design and technology lessons to extend their spoken English by including correct simple terms such as 'hem', 'seam' and 'join'.
118. The standards in Key Stage 1 are the result of sound teaching which promotes and encourages pupils to design and reflect upon the successes of their designs as their recorded work shows. Pupils' proposals clearly outline the methods and materials they plan to use and they also consider variations in need of a design. For instance, when creating hand and finger puppets, differences in the sizes of fingers and hands were considered carefully. Pupils use such terms as 'gears' and 'axle' correctly when they evaluate the structure of wheeled buggies, and they discuss aspects they find that are effective or otherwise within their design. Pupils have good manipulative skills, as seen in the accurate cutting and sticking used when they were making their wheeled buggies in Year 2.
119. In Key Stage 2, pupils use an increasing range of tools, materials and components, including textiles and wood. They describe clearly how to construct strong joints, for example when making box frames which are then adapted to a range of finished artefacts such as a vehicle or a model house. They make moving toys, correctly using terms such as 'body', 'chassis' and 'axle'. Food technology projects emphasise food hygiene and safe use of kitchen utensils as well as the functions of different foodstuffs, such as fruit and vegetables. The work in design and technology completed by the oldest pupils in the school is displayed to good effect around the school.
120. Teachers plan lessons carefully and give clear instructions so that pupils know what to do. They make good use of commercial products to draw pupils' attention to design features. For example, when making boxes, teachers dismantled ready-made boxes to show both nets and techniques for joining. Design and technology projects include a good balance of investigative, designing and making tasks. Throughout the school these projects support topics in other subjects; for example, the Year 4 lesson was on making money containers and linked with their current work in mathematics.
121. Resources are of good quality and chosen to promote the development of pupils' manipulative skills very well. The curriculum team monitors planning and looks at the artefacts pupils produce. The fact that there is more than one teacher available is enabling them to take a more active role in leading the school's development of design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

122. Standards in geography have not improved since the last inspection. Pupils in both key stages show insufficient progress over their time in school and achieve standards below the national expectations for their age. Pupils' geographical skills of observation, enquiry, recording and communicating information, as well as making appropriate use of geographical language, are under-developed. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, and those with special educational needs, make progress similar to their peers. Many pupils have insufficient skills in English to express themselves clearly, verbally and in writing, for example when recording or explaining a familiar route. As a result their overall achievement in the subject is lessened.
123. Pupils in Key Stage 1 acquire geographical vocabulary and identify key features of a seaside noted from photographs. Year 1 pupils demonstrated little knowledge of a seaside resort, as most have never been to one. However, this deficiency is realised and a trip is planned to the Southend seaside this term. Year 1 pupils do a traffic survey in the local area and produce graphs making good links with their learning in mathematics. However, the teaching of geography does not sufficiently extend pupils' skills of plotting routes on maps, and comparing and contrasting views about different localities. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have insufficient knowledge and understanding of the use of keys and symbols in atlases and maps. There is limited evidence of the use of information and communication technology to promote pupils' geographical skills. Opportunities for field study or to use sources of information, such books, photos and maps of different scales, to inform learning, are limited. The lack of progress particularly in Year 6 is partly due to the previously relaxed requirements in the teaching of the subject. Even when well-chosen resources support the teaching, opportunities to deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding are missed. This leads to superficial learning and achievement. For example, Year 6 pupils learning about 'rivers' know very little about their main features and functions. They are very confused when plotting features such as 'source' and 'mouth' in their recorded work. They are not sure about how a river is formed and in which direction it flows. However, the curriculum team is now making suitable efforts to raise the profile of geography through making an audit of resources and the confidence of teachers in teaching all aspects of the subject.
124. In the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory overall. Most teachers demonstrate sound geographical knowledge and understanding. The lessons are planned well and based on clear objectives. In good lessons teacher use appropriate methods and effective questioning. Praise and encouragement is used well in most lessons and this effectively supports pupils' attitudes to learning. The teaching makes sound contributions to literacy skills. Effective questioning and encouragement to use appropriate terminology improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and extend their vocabulary. Pupils' achievement improves where the work provides appropriate challenge, for example Year 4's visit to the recycling site. Pupils were well enthused and eager to answer questions.
125. Teachers' long and medium-term planning indicates that the curriculum is broad and generally well balanced. There is no formalised assessment of individual pupils' progress in the subject. The available resources in geography are currently insufficient. The school has some reference books and materials, including suitable atlases, globes and large maps. Resources are well maintained and centrally organised. Pupils benefit from visits to local places.

HISTORY

126. Standards of achievement in history are satisfactory overall. This indicates good improvement over the previous report when standards reported were unsatisfactory in both key stages. There is currently a more coherent long-term overview of topics and the school has adopted national guidance that supports teachers' planning more effectively.
127. In Key Stage 1 most pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of the past and a sense of the passing of time. They show this by their ability to sequence events and objects. For

example, Year 2 pupils learn about the events in the Great Fire of London and confidently sequence these in picture form. Most pupils demonstrate knowledge of what happened and why. They know what effect it had on people and whether the story is true. They are developing confidence in the correct use of words and phrases that relate to the passing of time. Pupils make comparisons between their lives and those of others who existed a long time ago, for example, Florence Nightingale. Their learning is enhanced through visits to the museum. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the past and understand that events in history really happened and that some happened a long time ago.

128. In Key Stage 2 most Year 6 pupils recall relevant information and demonstrate sound factual knowledge of the past. Years 3 and 4 pupils learn about characteristics of the past period and recognise changes, through the study of the Romans and the Tudor Britain. In one of the lessons they research the lineage of Henry VIII and his six wives, and effectively develop their skills of enquiry. Pupils have opportunities to develop historical skills related to the use of evidence in history. Years 5 and 6 pupils learn about Victorian Britain and know something of their customs and way of life. There are some opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support research and investigation in history. However, pupils are not sufficiently skilled in using and interpreting other historical sources and evidence, for example a wide range of artefacts. Their recorded work is hampered by the over-use of commercially produced worksheets.
129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make effective use of their own knowledge and understanding of the subject to help pupils increase theirs and use suitable materials and artefacts to support lessons. Teaching of history makes satisfactory contributions to the development and use of literacy skills. However, pupils' writing skills are limited and their written accounts lack detail. Pupils confidently use their knowledge of numbers to work on time-lines. Effective discussions about the past help to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory. They are interested and inquisitive about the past. Their attitudes and responses in history are positive. They show keen interest in finding out about how people lived in the past and how things have changed over time. Pupils behave well and listen attentively as a result of the clear expectations of work and behaviour by the teachers. There are no formal procedures for assessment of pupils' progress in history.
130. Resources are adequate in range and quality and include artefacts, charts and books relating to different periods in the history. The out of school visits to local places of interest based on class topics effectively enhance pupils' learning. The classrooms are adequate for history lessons and learning is well supported by some good interactive displays in classrooms and corridors.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

131. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is now in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. This is a considerable improvement on the position noted at the time of the last inspection when information and communication technology was receiving little attention and pupils were making little progress. At Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the use of computer equipment and the software that can run on such equipment. They use basic word processing successfully, choose fonts and explain their choices. Two pupils in one of the reception classes were able to start up the computer, click on the appropriate icons and begin their "game" successfully. In Year 1, this skill and knowledge was being built on in lessons on using 'switches'. The pupils could all use their computers to share ideas by working with both sound and text on their screens from a range of different sources. In Year 2, pupils showed good progress in their use of 'Colour Magic' as they combined pictures and text well.

132. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 used 'Paint Box' and showed a very good level of expertise in creating their designs. The pupils in Year 5 showed a good understanding of databases and CD-ROMs and how they are used. They discussed the information they gleaned about water and the Greeks, their two projects from the classroom, very effectively and made good progress. In Year 6, pupils working with spreadsheets demonstrated their competence in logging on and in retrieving previous information they had saved. They were able to interpret data on a spreadsheet and modify the formulae to achieve the results they wanted. This is a good level of achievement for their age and shows the effectiveness of the teaching in the computer suite. Pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in both key stages.
133. Pupils in both key stages are interested in and motivated by the use of information and communication technology. They collaborate well and are proud of demonstrating their ability. Concentration skills are good and pupils respond positively to interventions by the teacher. This was clearly demonstrated in lessons in the information and communication technology suite where pupils showed a high level of motivation and enthusiasm.
134. The overall quality of teaching is good. In the seven lessons observed it was never less than satisfactory, and in the majority of lessons the teaching was good. Much of this was in the information and communication technology suite and reflected the level of confidence and expertise of the different teachers. Lessons are well structured and have clear aims. In most lessons clear explanations of the objectives and positive interventions enable all pupils to make good progress and acquire key skills. Lessons are appropriately linked to previous learning and pupils are often involved in evaluating their learning.
135. The number of computers is now good as a whole class of 30 can use the information and communication technology suite at the same time. The school is appropriately equipped with facilities for using the Internet. Good use has been made of funding to provide training for teachers and the curriculum team and head teacher have a clear long-term plan for developing the subject. Planning has been improved through the adoption of the national guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, with all aspects being carefully considered.

MUSIC

136. Standards in music are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection and are above the level expected for seven and eleven year old pupils. This is because the satisfactory teaching of class teachers is enhanced by some excellent input from visiting specialist music teachers and a series of very good projects. Pupils sing enthusiastically, making a bold sound. At Key Stage 1 they sing well in pitch and the tone is good. At Key Stage 2 the sound is sometimes slightly forced and not so attractive. Fewer pupils here pitch accurately. However, the oldest pupils are keen to sing and very few do not join in all the songs in the key stage singing assembly. Those at an early stage of speaking and understanding English must gain much from hearing the language sung by those around them. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils, currently involved in a project using the story and some of the music from Rigoletto, also show the same enthusiasm and a good level of singing skill.
137. In a Year 5 class pupils demonstrate a good sense of pulse and rhythm. They can think through parts of the song silently and restart in time. In another class in the same year group, pupils had good ideas about the piece of music to which they listened and understood its nature well. They realised that they would have to choose their instruments carefully to make music in the same style. In Key Stage 1 pupils can read simple rhythms from traditional notation.
138. Teaching is good and, by the teacher-musicians who direct the projects, very good. Some excellent teaching was seen during the inspection from the visiting specialist teacher where

high level music skills combined with very good basic teaching skills to produce first rate sessions. Lively pace and appropriate interesting activities also helped to keep pupils motivated and enjoying their music making. In the key stage singing sessions, almost every pupil became involved and worked hard. Singing skills advanced perceptibly within the sessions.

139. Accommodation for music is good although the design of the hall does not produce a good musical sound. The music room is small but provides a good base for the school's fine collection of musical instruments.
140. Music is well managed. The curriculum leader ensures that the specialist input through visiting teachers and the allocation of projects to year groups is fair and the experiences they provide run through the school. Class teachers learn well from these sessions and carry on their class-based music in between the visits of the specialist teachers. The music projects, funded partly by the school and partly by the local authority Standards Fund, bring high level musical expertise into the school. The school has taken a very positive and bold step in committing large sums of money to enhance its music provision and is aware that the musical input of these projects is being used to help all pupils make music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. No lessons were observed in dance or gymnastics so no judgement is possible on the attainment of pupils in these aspects of the programme of study. Pupils' attainment in games is below that expected of pupils aged seven and eleven. In the lessons observed there was little evidence that pupils' ball skills are being adequately developed. In Year 6, the skills practised are more appropriate for much younger age ranges and, indeed, pupils in a Year 3 lesson displayed throwing and catching skills similar or better than their older colleagues. Evidence suggests that by the time they leave school all pupils will be able to swim at least five metres and with about half being able to swim at least 25 metres. Some higher attaining pupils are currently practising for more advanced awards in swimming. The level of expertise of some teachers is insufficient at present to provide pupils with the opportunities needed to improve their performances.
142. Overall the standard of teaching observed in the three lessons was unsatisfactory since the activities provided were undemanding and did not lead to any significant improvement in performance. Swimming instruction is provided by qualified coaches using the school pool and leads to satisfactory progress. Older pupils move on to use the larger pools nearby, allowing them to experience deeper water and so practise more advanced techniques.
143. The school has worked hard to produce a scheme of work which will enable all the programme of study to be taught adequately. Lesson plans are available to teachers that show the activities to be covered and how these can be developed. These plans form a useful basis but teachers lack the knowledge to use them to the best effect as, for example, in the use of demonstration to show good technique. In addition, planning does not ensure that skills practised in the Early Years are repeated at a higher level in the older years.
144. The after-school athletic, cricket, football and netball clubs are well attended by boys and girls and offer good opportunities for pupils to develop the appropriate skills. For example, coaching staff from a local professional football team are used well and pupils enjoy the experiences they have.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in religious education are in line with the levels expected for seven and eleven year olds. As in some other subjects however, pupils' difficulty with written English, coupled with the untidy work in some classes, makes their work appear worse

than it actually is. When questioned, pupils have a sound grasp of fact and ideas. Since many are Muslim, their background knowledge of this religion is very good. The same is true of several teachers. A Year 2 lesson, for example, showed the teacher was very knowledgeable in his religion and able to present the main ideas to his pupils. This led them to be enthusiastic and interested in the lesson. In another lesson, the head teacher was able to answer all the pupils' questions about Sikhism easily and fluently. She also showed them several good artefacts and explained their use. In the Key Stage 2 corridor there is a set of papers on which pupils have recorded their conversations with teachers about their (i.e. the teachers') own religions. The school was careful to make sure all religions were covered. These papers are informative but also bring out the enthusiasm with which the exercise was done. All these examples link well with pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for which the school provides so well.

146. Pupils' difficulties with English showed in a Year 5 lesson where several could not grasp 'disciple' and 'miracle' despite a good explanation by the teacher. They did have, though, a good understanding of the important elements of the life of Jesus, which was the focus of the lesson. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils gave thoughtful answers to difficult and quite abstract questions about Hinduism. This lesson also showed the respect that pupils have for one another's religions in the multi-ethnic school.
147. Teaching is good. Teachers use their own expertise and that of their colleagues well. They lead good discussions and prompt pupils to think about the issues raised in religious education. In many classes, however, all pupils do the same work in the same way and from the same worksheet. Teachers need to consider how to lead the higher attaining pupils to a greater understanding through more advanced work. Pupils very often work from worksheets. Even in the Year 5 lesson, where pupils presented their work quite well, the direct copying of the results of the 'brainstorming' was not an exercise that provided opportunities for progress. However, in several classes, pupils' work shows that they have been given good opportunities to write creatively, for example in Year 2 where pupils have written about 'Memories' and 'Promises'.
148. The quality of marking varies widely. In some books, it is good because comments guide pupils towards improving their work. In others, very little marking occurs and this is of no help to pupils at all.
149. The school successfully uses the guidance from the local education authority on what should be taught in religious education. There is a good range of work across the main religions and the written work of pupils shows that religious education is regularly taught. The subject is well organised in the school and well resourced. It is currently a priority subject and is clearly advancing well. Provision has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. This is gradually being reflected in the standard of work. Pupils grow in their knowledge and understanding of the subject and their progress is good.