

INSPECTION REPORT

NIGHTINGALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Woolwich

LEA area: Greenwich

Unique reference number: 100160

Headteacher: Ms M Carney

Reporting inspector: Mr J Tyler
20506

Date of inspection: 10th July 2000

Inspection number: 191743

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, with nursery
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr J Draper

Date of previous inspection: 20th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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John Tyler	Registered inspector	Science Information technology Physical education Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils?
Susan Cash	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Robin Coulthard	Team inspector	English Music Religious education English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Under-fives Mathematics Art Design and technology Equality of opportunity	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mike Milton	Team inspector	Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Nightingale Primary School is an average size for schools of the same type. The 223 pupils are organised into eight classes, including a nursery. Pupils come from a broad range of ethnic groups and English is an additional language for 52 per cent, which is very high compared with most schools. A significant number of pupils arrive or leave during the school year as families relocate. Many are from families with refugee status or who are asylum seekers. About 54 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The number of girls and boys is broadly balanced, though there are variations between year groups. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is well above the national average, at 45 per cent. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is, on balance, very low.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective in enabling pupils with different abilities, languages and backgrounds to make very good progress. This includes a significant number of pupils who join the school in the course of each school year. The support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very effective, and middle and higher attainers are challenged appropriately and are highly motivated. The leadership and management of the school are very good and have brought about many important improvements since the previous inspection. The cost per pupil is high, but the quality of teaching, care of pupils and other strengths ensure that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils of different abilities, languages and backgrounds make very good progress in their learning, especially in literacy and numeracy, because of the high quality of teaching.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school and pupils behave well.
- The leadership and management of the school have brought about very significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- This is a supportive, caring community in which the aim of '*Inclusion and respect for diversity*' is very successful.

What could be improved

- Pupils' achievements in information technology.
- The accommodation (though funding for this is not within the school's control.)

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 improved very significantly since the previous inspection in January 1977. The main action points at that time included: assessment of pupils' performance, monitoring of teaching and learning, staff morale, curricular planning, achievement of higher attainers, and the role of governors. Having been weaknesses, some of these are now notable strengths and all have improved. There have been improvements in standards of work and behaviour, the quality of teaching, the role of support staff and the management of the school. Resources have improved and funding is used more efficiently. The school offers better value for money than in 1997.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	E	D	A
Mathematics	E	E	D	B
Science	E	D	D	A

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

Although the 1999 results were below national averages for these three subjects, they were noticeably better than in most schools with a similar proportion of pupils taking free school meals. Standards have risen over the past few years at a faster rate than the national trend; the school is catching up. Although the balance of attainment in the present Year 6 is lower than last year, pupils have achieved very well in relation to what might be expected. A significant number have reached the higher Level 5 and some pupils with little spoken English have done very well to reach Level 3. The school has easily surpassed the targets that were externally set, not only because it has taught pupils successfully but also because the targets were too low.

Relative to national expectations, standards of literacy and numeracy are well below national expectations at the age of five and the end of Year 2. In the nursery, children are achieving satisfactory standards in relation to their attainment on entry, but their progress accelerates in the Reception class and through Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, pupils are underachieving in information technology. In the work seen in geography and history, standards were below those expected nationally, but appropriate for the pupils' abilities. Standards match what is seen nationally in physical education and religious education, with pupils achieving well. In art and design and technology, standards in the work seen were above expectations for the ages of the pupils. This is a significant achievement and of particular importance for pupils who have difficulties with language.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about school and show interest in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils understand the impact of their actions upon others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils show great respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. They show initiative and take responsibilities seriously.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average. Many families take extended holidays during term time or move without notifying the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Very good	Very good

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

The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in every lesson observed, good or better in 68 per cent and very good in 19 per cent. It was satisfactory in the nursery, where the school has had difficulty recruiting a permanent teacher of the same quality as in other classes.

Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching in most subjects. Most lessons are very effectively planned and teachers set clear, high expectations of what pupils should achieve. In the Nursery, plans are not sufficiently focused on how to guide children into making good choices about their play and other learning activities. In the rest of the school, an aspect for improvement is for teachers to consider how to use information technology in more lessons. Pupils learn basic skills very well and this helps them with other learning. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well structured, with whole-class and individual or group work. Teachers know their pupils very well. Whatever the attainment of pupils or their particular circumstances, work is appropriately challenging and is also fun. Class teachers work with support staff exceptionally well. Their teamwork sets a good example to pupils, who also respond well to the consistent behavioural expectations. The quality of learning is reduced by the accommodation. For example, pupils often find it hard to hear their teacher or other pupils because of the working noise from nearby classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a good range of opportunities for all pupils to succeed. The range of activities outside the classroom is sound and there is good planning for personal, social and health education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and are helping to raise standards.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school meets the needs of these pupils very successfully. Individual education plans are detailed and reviewed regularly to ensure that pupils are making progress. The Reading Recovery programme is very effective. Support staff work closely with teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Joint planning between class teachers and specialist support teachers and assistants is very effective. The strong emphasis on language development in almost all lessons helps pupils to learn quickly. The school's support for parents also contributes significantly to pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Social development is especially good. Staff are excellent role models and strongly encourage all pupils to value one another. Moral and cultural development is fostered well. Spiritual development is satisfactory, with assemblies playing an important role.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff works very successfully to ensure pupils' welfare and to promote good behaviour. The school works well with agencies that provide support for pupils and their families. Pupils' personal and academic progress are monitored well and information from assessment is used to help raise achievement.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school strongly encourages parents to be involved in the life of the school. It makes every effort to communicate in languages other than English when required. Many parents are unable or choose not to attend the good range of school events and informative evenings.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides excellent leadership and management. Subject leadership is also very effective. These strengths have brought about very good improvement since the previous inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are very supportive. The school improvement plan is appropriate.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Rigorous evaluation of assessment information, monitoring of teaching, and regular curriculum reviews ensure that the school continues to improve. The means by which success is judged in the school improvement plan are not sufficiently measurable.
The strategic use of resources	Teaching and support staff are very effectively deployed. Resources for learning are good except in information technology, for which there are too few computers. There is insufficient space for more computers. The accommodation is poor overall and significantly reduces the quality of learning. Finances are used well and best value principles are applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The school is well led and managed. ♦ Their children are expected to do their best. ♦ The quality of teaching is good. ♦ They feel comfortable to ask questions or raise concerns with the school. ♦ Their children like going to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The range of activities outside lessons. ♦ The way that the school works with parents and informs them of their children's progress. ♦ The amount of homework.

The inspection agreed strongly with parents' positive views and, to some extent, with one of their concerns. Some inconsistency was found in the amount of homework that is set. Inspectors found no evidence to support the other concerns. The range of extra-curricular activities and visits is satisfactory. Parents have many opportunities to find out about their children's progress, both formally and informally, and the school seeks to collaborate with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children enter the Nursery with attainment that is, on balance, very low compared with other local schools. They settle in well to the routines. In the Reception class, the greater structure and challenge enable children to achieve more. By the age of five, standards have improved but remain well below national expectations in language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are in line with expectations in physical, creative, personal and social development. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

2. The results of the 1999 national assessments for Year 2 were well below the national averages for reading and writing, and very low for mathematics. The results were also below average when compared with similar schools. Some pupils reached the higher Level 3, but most did not attain the middle Level 2B. Standards rose from 1996 to 1998 and then dropped in 1999. In the present Year 2, standards remain well below national expectations but with clear improvements. A much greater proportion is attaining levels 2A and 2B. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, especially considering the proportion who join the school during Years 1 and 2.

3. In the 1999 tests for Year 6, standards were below the national averages in English, mathematics and science. In the context of similar schools, these results were above average in mathematics and well above in the other two subjects. The proportion attaining the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. From 1996 to 1999, standards have risen steadily at a rate that is faster than the national trend. Standards in the present Year 6 are well below national expectations, with fewer pupils than last year working at the expected Level 4. However, a significant proportion is working at Level 5. Pupils are achieving well in relation to what might reasonably be expected. Many of those pupils who joined the school in the infant classes have moved forward three levels of the National Curriculum, when the national expectation is only two. Of the one third who are working below Level 3 in one or more subjects, all have either arrived recently, speak little English, or have special educational needs. However, many pupils with these disadvantages do attain Levels 3 or 4 in at least one subject, which is a significant achievement.

4. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve very well, within the context of their needs. The school focuses especially on younger pupils and those recently arrived, so that problems are quickly identified and support provided. Higher-attaining pupils also achieve well because their needs are recognised and they are appropriately challenged. Literacy and numeracy skills are practised effectively in other subjects, though more could be done in geography and history.

5. Work seen in geography, history and information technology was below what is expected for the ages of the pupils. In geography and history, many pupils are held back by the language content in these subjects and so, taking this into consideration, they are actually achieving well. In information technology, pupils do not use computers enough and so achieve less than they could.

6. In art and design and technology, the work seen was better than is usual for the ages of the pupils. Many pupils who find it hard to express themselves in English are able to do so through these subjects. Success increases their self-esteem and confidence, and this helps them in their language development. Standards in the work seen for physical education and religious education were in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils. In religious education, pupils are achieving well partly because work is carefully related to their own experiences. The breadth of study is good. The school gives high profile to both subjects. In physical education, clear routines and good demonstrations help pupils to achieve well even when they understand little English.

7. The school has surpassed its targets for the numbers attaining Level 4 in Year 6 assessments. The targets were too low, as are future targets, because they were drawn up externally on the basis of data that was not directly related to the pupils in Nightingale. The school is nevertheless providing a challenging learning environment for pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. In the lessons seen, pupils showed positive attitudes to school and this was a significant factor in the quality of learning. They showed interest in what their teachers wanted them to do and even those who find the language difficult to understand were attentive to what others were saying. For example, during a Year 3 literacy lesson, when following the shared text, pupils tried hard to read aloud even though many speak English as an additional language and some have been in England for only a short time. Pupils are willing to answer questions and most use school conventions, such as putting up a hand before speaking. The social development and behaviour of the younger pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now good. There is a purposeful, industrious atmosphere throughout the school. Almost all the pupils spoken to said that they enjoyed school, and parents confirmed this through the questionnaire.

9. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils play well together in the playground. They stand still instantly when the whistle blows at the end of playtime and line up in an orderly manner to return to class. They co-operate well together in pairs and small groups in lessons. Year 4 pupils, for example, successfully organised the different roles and tasks within their groups in order to solve a scientific problem. Only one pupil was permanently excluded during the past year. Pupils and parents say that there is little bullying or racism and that it is dealt with promptly and effectively. A strength of the school is the way that pupils learn to appreciate how their actions and words affect others. During circle time they share their thoughts and feelings, and others listen respectfully and respond appropriately. Pupils from a very broad range of cultures and ethnic origins quickly learn to respect each other within school. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils are polite and take good care of the school environment.

10. Pupils willingly take on responsibility. Even the Nursery pupils return registers to the office and are encouraged to tidy up when they have finished their activities. All classes have monitors who help with the smooth running of the day. Older pupils help to look after younger ones and perform whole-school duties such as delivering milk and tidying the library. The school has plans to introduce a school council next term. By the time they leave the school, pupils are generally self-confident young people.

11. Levels of attendance are below the national average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is well above the national average because many families take extended holidays in term time and others leave the school without saying where they are going. Families who speak little or no English do not find it easy to explain absence. Punctuality is just satisfactory. Some pupils frequently arrive late, even though most live within a short walk of the school. However, registrations, assemblies and lessons start and finish on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The overall quality of teaching is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in every lesson observed, good or better in 68 per cent and very good in 19 per cent. It was satisfactory in the nursery, where the school has had difficulty recruiting a permanent teacher of the same quality as in other classes.

13. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching in most subjects. This enables them to give clear explanations and to ask questions that get to the heart of issues, checking and extending pupils' understanding. In science and information technology, some teachers lack sufficient expertise. This has partly been recognised by the school and further information technology training is planned.

14. Most lessons are very effectively planned, setting out clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils so that everyone is working towards the same end. This sharing also enables teachers to make clear the expectations that they have for what will be achieved, which is very effective. When Year 1 pupils were asked to discuss the difference between two poems, they understood that they might have to report to the whole class and that there was a tight time limit. This helped them to concentrate and many of their ideas were very helpful. In the Nursery, plans are not sufficiently focused on how to guide children into making good choices about their play and other learning activities. In the rest of the school, an aspect for improvement is for teachers to consider how to use information technology more in lessons throughout the day.

15. Although there are some inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work, teachers know their pupils very well. This enables them to plan work to match their precise needs so that, for example, pupils with special educational needs are given extra revision before moving on to the next step in learning. Whatever the attainment of pupils or their particular circumstances, work is appropriately challenging and is also fun. This contributes greatly to pupils' learning.

16. Class teachers work with support staff exceptionally well. Support teachers and assistants are briefed before lessons so that all adults share the same learning objectives and understand how they can be achieved. At the same time, class teachers accept good advice from the support staff, some of whom have considerable expertise and experience. This teamwork has a significant impact on how pupils learn. Pupils recognise the strength of relationships and respond by being co-operative and having positive attitudes to learning. The consistency of approach is also evident in the management of behaviour. All pupils, including some with significant behavioural problems, benefit from this. They understand that all adults set the same standards and limits, and this helps them to behave appropriately.

17. Pupils learn basic skills very well and this helps them with other learning. For example, their ability to work out unfamiliar words helped some pupils studying food chains in a science lesson. Teachers employ a good range of methods to reinforce and extend these skills. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well structured, with whole-class and individual or group work. Pupils sometimes chant number patterns or read texts aloud, but at other times work in silence or discuss quietly in pairs. Sometimes, the teacher introduces a competitive element and this is usually very effective in helping pupils to concentrate hard. In one mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils were very keen to beat their previous best time for recalling times-table facts.

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

18. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. It provides all pupils with a good range of learning experiences and the opportunity to succeed. Good schemes of work provide well-balanced coverage and progression in all subjects, which helps teachers to plan effectively. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when the planning in some subjects was inadequate. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been effectively implemented in all classes.

19. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is very strong. Pupils' intellectual, ethnic, and social circumstances are taken into account when work is planned. The school's aim is of *'Inclusion and respect for diversity'*. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language. They receive effective and well-managed support because their precise needs are identified and appropriate work planned. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons for specialist teaching, such as for Reading Recovery, it is carefully planned so that it does not disrupt other learning.

20. There is good planning for pupils' personal, social and health education, which includes appropriate sex education and drugs misuse education. This has been significantly improved since the last inspection. The school has good links with other schools and organisations. Teachers work closely with a local secondary school and university to share and develop further its good practice in teaching. Good links with secondary schools helps pupils to transfer smoothly at the age of eleven.

21. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, an improvement since the last inspection. There is now a daily act of collective worship in which pupils are encouraged to reflect on moral and social issues through stories from Christian and other traditions. A candle is lit as a focus and to establish a reverential and reflective atmosphere. Care is taken to ensure that those of different faiths or of none can take part. While some teachers successfully develop a sense of awe and wonder at the world and encourage pupils to reflect during lessons, planning is not consistent and some opportunities are missed. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall.

22. Circle time, religious education and personal, social and health education lessons provide good opportunities to discuss moral and social issues of relevance to the pupils' lives. A good system of behaviour management consistently uses praise and rewards to promote co-operation and mutual respect.

Pupils' social development is particularly effectively promoted. Each pupil is valued as an individual. Adults provide excellent role models, which helps pupils of many different backgrounds to relate positively to each other. The social development of younger pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now good. They settle quickly into school routines and are helped to relate positively to each other and share toys and equipment. Pupils are encouraged to support others through collections for various charities during the year. They take part in inter-school events such as sporting fixtures and music festivals, which promote their social development.

23. The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development, with a particular strength in the way it promotes understanding of the richness of a range of cultures. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils visit places of worship and the school celebrates major festivals such as Divali, Eid, Chinese New Year and Christmas. Pupils are encouraged to bring artefacts from home and to talk about their family traditions. Art, music and stories from around the world are included in a rich multi-cultural curriculum. Western art is displayed around the school and music is played as pupils enter and leave the hall for assembly. Some visits are arranged to museums and art galleries, but these are limited by the inability of many parents to pay travel costs. Good use is made of visits within walking distance of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

24. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well. The school's behaviour policy is consistently and effectively applied. There are very few incidents of harassment or bullying and they are dealt with swiftly. Adults value pupils individually at the same time as encouraging them to work as a team. The success of this approach is seen in the very good relationships between pupils of different ethnic origins, religions, languages and abilities. Some parents said that harassment at previous schools made their children unhappy and introverted or aggressive. Since moving to Nightingale, they have become happy and more confident and are making good progress. Break and lunchtime are very well supervised and midday supervisors actively help pupils to enjoy their play. At the start of the inspection, arrangements before school were not sufficiently rigorous and pupils were sometimes not supervised. However, supervision improved greatly before the end of the inspection.

25. First aid is administered quickly when necessary and there are efficient systems for routine medicines. Child protection is very well organised and staff are appropriately trained. The school works very effectively with external agencies that provide family and educational support. School meals are an important part of the diet for a significant number of pupils. The school provides a good range of meals, including specialist foods such as halal and vegetarian dishes, and they are greatly appreciated by the pupils.

26. Systems for monitoring and encouraging good attendance are satisfactory, although there is currently no education welfare officer supporting the school's efforts. Pupils' personal and academic progress are monitored well. The school uses annual assessments to measure pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Groups of pupils who are underachieving can be identified and action taken. The school has significantly raised the achievement of higher-attaining pupils since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified and given very good support. Individual education plans are detailed, with precise targets and regular, thorough reviews. Newly-arrived pupils who do not speak English are assessed to find out whether they have special educational needs as well as needing support for English as an additional language. The school has recently received funding to refine its methods of assessing the needs of recently arrived refugees.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

27. The school strongly encourages parents to be involved in the education of their children. Many parents speak little or no English and the school makes very good use of its bilingual assistants and of translation services to ensure that they are kept informed about their children's progress. A group of parents, supported by the school and outside agencies, has been developing ways to help their children learn and, at the same time, some have improved their own English. This was very successful and a new group has received funding for a course to start in the autumn term. The headteacher greets parents in several of the 30 languages spoken in the school, which helps establish a welcoming atmosphere. The school carries out home visits before children join the nursery and this encourages a close working

relationship between home and school. The school works well with agencies that provide support for families in difficulty.

28. Written communication is good. There is an informative booklet about the nursery and the prospectus and regular newsletters give parents useful information. Annual reports have improved since the last inspection in the amount of information they give, but they are inconsistent and not always carefully produced. The school has held meetings to explain developments in the curriculum though these have not been particularly well attended. Parents are invited to class assemblies on Friday mornings to celebrate their children's achievements and there are other opportunities to see the work of the school. Some parents attend but not as many as the school would wish. Most parents of pupils with special educational needs attend meetings to review their child's progress and agree a new individual education plan. The school makes every effort to encourage parents to become actively involved in this. There is no parent teacher association at present, though nursery parents raised money for sand for the outside sandpit. Some parents support the school well by reading with their children regularly and by reporting reasons for absence, but many do not.

29. Parents responding to the questionnaire and at the meeting expressed a generally positive view of the school. Some felt that the school does not work closely enough with them. However, they felt welcome and able to approach the school if they had concerns. The inspection confirmed the latter view and also found that the school is actively seeking to work closely with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

30. The headteacher, who joined the school shortly after the previous inspection, provides excellent leadership. She has a clear vision – that all pupils should have the opportunities they need to develop academically and socially, whatever their abilities, origins or starting-points. The rising trend in the school's results in national tests confirms the success of this aim. She maintains a conspicuous presence around the school, knows all the children well and makes a significant contribution to the strong sense of community and the very good relationships within the school. The headteacher, assisted by an able deputy, has built a successful, dedicated team that has brought about very good improvements since the previous inspection

31. Clear job descriptions for all staff ensure a strong sense of common purpose and they collaborate effectively, for example to minimise the disadvantages of the cramped accommodation. Delegation is very effective and staff are awarded responsibilities which exploit their strengths. For example, the deputy headteacher carries the major responsibility for financial management, which is scrupulously organised. The successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is largely due to the work of the respective co-ordinators. Provision for special educational needs and English as an additional language is managed very effectively. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and all relevant adults are involved. The management of support staff is excellent, and so they are highly effective in lessons.

32. Teachers develop appropriate action plans for their areas of responsibility and review them annually with the headteacher. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored and a personal action plan is devised for each teacher, following an annual consultation. The senior management team and the local education authority's advisory service rigorously monitor the work of subject co-ordinators.

33. The school improvement plan is wide-ranging and appropriate, and all staff development and spending are carefully linked with it. However, it is not made clear exactly how each initiative will raise standards, and clearer criteria are needed for assessing the effectiveness of planned developments.

34. The chair of governors visits the school very regularly and the governing body is very supportive of the school and well informed about developments. The availability of individual governors to visit the school varies. One governor works in the school for a day a week, and individual governors make occasional visits to classrooms. The governors work appropriately through committees and discharge all their statutory duties conscientiously. They make a suitable contribution to the school's development plan and to setting targets for the headteacher and deputy.

35. The school makes excellent use of specific grants and the headteacher shows great initiative in applying for additional funding. For example, the school is piloting new systems for the assessment of

refugee children, and has recently used additional resources for early intervention where pupils' reading is below expectation. The management of finance is excellent. The budget, which was in deficit at the previous inspection, is now in surplus. The efficiency of accounting is being increased further following the appointment of a new administrative officer with appropriate skills in the use of new technology.

36. A key issue from the previous inspection was to identify the causes of staff absence and improve teachers' attendance rates. This has been successfully addressed. There is a clear policy for monitoring teachers' absence, staff morale is good and absence is not now a problem for the school. Although there were two temporary teachers at the time of the inspection, the number, qualifications and experience of the teachers match the requirements for effective teaching of the curriculum. However, the school finds it difficult to recruit high-quality teachers. There is a good number of well qualified, effective learning support assistants, including some who are bilingual.

37. The school's open-plan accommodation makes it difficult to teach the curriculum effectively. Physical education is hampered by the absence of a playing field, and the surface of the hard-play area is loose and gritty. The open-plan layout of the building means that the teaching in one class is sometimes disturbed by noise from a neighbouring class or visitors arriving at the school. During the inspection, there were instances when some pupils could not hear the teacher properly during whole-class teaching, and occasions when teachers found it difficult to hear quietly spoken pupils. The classrooms have to be used as corridors which creates further disturbance. This is a particular problem in a school with a relatively large number of pupils learning English as an additional language. Teachers cannot teach music in their class spaces but have to use the hall, which is also timetabled for physical education and other activities. Some classroom spaces are relatively small so that when a class undertakes a design and technology activity, the teacher has to negotiate with neighbouring teachers about the re-organisation of furniture. In order to fit into the limited space, older pupils use smaller furniture than is appropriate for their sizes. There is only one computer in each class, and this is below the national average but there is not the space for a second computer in most teaching areas. Apart from computers, the school's learning resources are good although storage is a problem for some subjects.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

38. The school has a thorough policy and very good procedures for analysing the needs of the 52 percent of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Their progress in learning English is a high priority and the school consistently seeks to improve its provision. The deputy headteacher has responsibility for organising support staff and the budget for this, and provision is financed from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG). Financial and day-to-day management are carried out meticulously. Pupils' needs are analysed when they join the school and care is taken to distinguish between pupils' specific language requirements and other special educational needs. Teachers plan with EMAG staff to make the National Curriculum accessible to all pupils. They are supported within mainstream lessons and their progress tracked carefully. The EMAG teacher and bilingual assistants, who between them speak Vietnamese, Gujerati, Punjabi, Somali and Cantonese, provide carefully structured assistance, maintaining thorough records by the use of monitoring sheets. Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed by the systematic analysis of all data. Staffing, resources and schemes of work appropriately reflect the school's ethnic diversity and a very strong commitment to the principle that all pupils should have equal opportunities to learn. The school strongly encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning and makes good use of interpreters in home/school liaison. It organises regular and productive educational workshops, currently for Asian and Somali parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. The school should now:

- raise achievement in information technology by continuing to improve resources and staff expertise, and by planning how information technology should be used during almost all lessons (see paragraphs 72-74);
- seek to persuade relevant funding bodies to improve the accommodation (see paragraph 37).

40. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- the method for formulating school targets for attainment in English and mathematics (see paragraph 7);
- the level of attendance (see paragraph 11);
- supervision before school (see paragraph 24);
- lack of clarity in the criteria for judging success in the school development plan (see paragraph 33);
- planning and assessment in the nursery (see paragraph 43);
- the amount of detail in the science scheme of work and related assessment procedures (see paragraphs 67- 68).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	14	49	32	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	223
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	146

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	88

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	142

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	48

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	8
	Girls	8	9	7
	Total	18	20	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60	67	50
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	15
	Girls	10	7	12
	Total	22	18	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73	60	90
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	10	20	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	10
	Girls	12	13	12
	Total	19	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63	70	73
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	10
	Girls	14	13	12
	Total	23	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77	70	73
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	44
Black – other	2
Indian	19
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	9
White	54
Any other minority ethnic group	30

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	3	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)	11.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	153

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
	£
Total income	587,138
Total expenditure	581,308
Expenditure per pupil	2,643
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,545
Balance carried forward to next year	31,375

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	223
Number of questionnaires returned	29

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	38	10	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	41	17	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	45	14	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	38	31	7	7
The teaching is good.	34	55	10	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	41	21	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	38	10	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	45	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	38	31	28	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	34	62	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	41	14	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	38	14	24	7

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

41. During the inspection it was not possible to see enough lessons taught in all subjects to be able to make valid judgements about every aspect of learning and provision.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. When children start part-time in the Nursery their attainment, on balance, is very low compared with children of the same age in other local schools. This is particularly so in language skills. The Nursery provides a caring environment where children settle happily and soon learn the routines of the day. This continues in the Reception class, but with more structure and challenge so that pupils achieve more. By the age of five, standards have improved but remain well below national expectations in language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are just in line with expectations in physical, creative, personal and social development. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

43. The quality of teaching is sound overall, and is very good in the Reception class. This applies to all the areas of learning for this age group. Support staff make a strong contribution to children's learning, both for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. All adults work together very well. The curriculum offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor experiences in all areas of learning for the under fives, but is not sufficiently specific about what the children should learn in the Nursery. Assessment in the Nursery has improved recently and there are now more efficient systems to record children's achievements. However, these could be more structured. Assessments completed at the start of the Reception class are used well to track children's progress, and good use is made of this information as a basis for discussion with parents.

44. The development of children's personal and social skills is given a high priority. Teachers provide varied opportunities for children to practise these skills through play and for the older children to take part in structured activities. Younger children still lack concentration and only apply themselves to tasks for a short time. They receive insufficient guidance to help them develop faster in this aspect of learning. They form good relationships and demonstrate awareness of the needs of others. They are encouraged to return resources to the appropriate areas, such as tidying the home corner. They put away paints and modelling materials and wipe the tables. In Reception, children continue to make good progress in their personal and social development. They are eager to participate in whole-class and group discussions and are learning to listen to each other and to put up their hands if they want to speak. Children are well behaved and relationships between adults and children are good.

45. Children of all abilities make satisfactory progress in the development of language and literacy skills and some achieve nationally agreed objectives in this area of learning by the time they are five. Children's speaking and listening skills are well below average when they enter the Nursery and a significant number of them speak little if any English. Teachers and support staff use both planned and spontaneous opportunities to talk to children, which helps to develop their language and understanding. In the Nursery, children select books and demonstrate an understanding of their purpose. Some children talk about the pictures. Most listen attentively to stories and join in with familiar repetitions. However, some children still call out and interrupt. Children in the Reception class follow familiar text with their fingers and a few older children read simple stories fluently. They enjoy class reading and the well-focused activities and good organisation of lessons ensure that children at all levels make good progress. Younger children have some understanding of the written word and most can recognise their names. Older children write their names using upper and lower case letters and a few are starting to write stories.

46. Standards in mathematics are well below the expectations for this age group and few children achieve the required standard by the time they are five. Lessons are planned to build on children's knowledge and understanding. A great emphasis is placed on vocabulary. Few children in the Nursery recognise numbers up to five without assistance but this is developed through, for example, having numbers on their tricycles and the parking spaces. Children in Reception count from one to ten and all try to join in. More able children know one more and one less than a given number. They describe the language of position, such as 'next to', 'between' and 'in front of'.

47. Children make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and resources are used effectively to extend their learning. They are given appropriate opportunities to use computers. In Reception they learn to control the mouse and work through a simple program independently. They write their names, which are printed off to label work they have done. In imaginative play, children show growing awareness of other people's roles. In the Reception class, this is more focused through role-play and adults create situations such as a hospital, so that children gain understanding of activities in the world. They have a variety of small and large construction materials to make models. Support staff also use these activities to develop children's understanding of the language.

48. In the Nursery, children have opportunities to use a good range of equipment to develop their physical skills. They climb and balance and use large-wheeled toys with increasing confidence. Teachers encourage spatial awareness and ensure that children pay attention to safety. In the Reception class, children's physical skills are developed through regular physical education lessons. They show good control in handling small pieces of equipment such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors.

49. Children make good progress in their creative development. They have access to a wide range of activities and are encouraged to explore painting, sand and water and modelling material. The youngest children are encouraged to develop their ideas and, when supported by an adult, they enjoy the success of the finished product. The older children make very well observed drawings of familiar objects and colour them carefully.

50. A good induction programme is in place. Home visits take place before children enter the Nursery and information about the children and their learning continues to be shared with parents. In the Reception class there are termly meetings with parents to discuss children's attainment and progress.

ENGLISH

51. In the 1999 tests at the end of Year 6, standards in English were below the national average. However, when compared with similar schools, standards were above average and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was close to the national average. Attainment had risen at a faster rate than nationally since 1997, when results were well below the national average. In tests for the current year, fewer Year 6 pupils reached the expected Level 4. About half of this class have been in the school a relatively short time. At the end of Year 2, attainment in the 1999 national tests was well below the national average in both reading and writing. When compared with similar schools, it was below average.

52. The context of the test results is that 30 languages are spoken in the school and a very significant number of pupils speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs. Many pupils are unfamiliar with Standard English. Pupils' achievement is very good in relation to what might reasonably be expected. Their very good progress owes much to the challenge and support offered pupils of all abilities. Some pupils who entered the school with no English have reached Level 3 after less than two terms, which is a considerable achievement.

53. Standards of speaking and listening are well below average in both key stages. However, pupils make significant progress because the development of speaking and listening is a major priority in all lessons. Pupils in Year 4 made good progress in speaking when they read their wishes for the future of the world to a school assembly. A good idea in Year 5 is a topic board, which pupils use for indicating what they would like to discuss in class.

54. Pupils make good progress in their writing. By Year 1, they know what a sentence is and are aware of the need for a capital letter and full stop. They write accounts of visits, and, by year 2, pupils write poems based on those they have studied. They are aware of the need for accurate spelling and know how to use a dictionary. The very good range of writing in Key Stage 2 includes scientific accounts, extended stories, journalistic exercises, book reviews and analyses of poems and chosen authors' styles. Pupils practise a cursive writing style from an early stage. However, many pupils' overall standards of presentation are unsatisfactory for their age.

55. Pupils' reading is better than their writing and they read very well in relation to their abilities and prior learning. By Year 2, they understand the structure of sentences and reflect this when they read aloud. They know how to work out unfamiliar words from the context and by building up the sound patterns. They retell what they have read in an accurate sequence. By the end of Year 6, many, but not

all, pupils have a positive interest in reading and well developed tastes in literature. Some read aloud very expressively. Pupils know how to use reference books, but some pupils carry this out laboriously. Higher-attaining pupils can skim-read to locate information. Reading resources are very good. Non-fiction texts have been carefully selected to appeal to and challenge pupils. The school library is well stocked and organised and provides a good resource for research, but too few pupils use the library independently. Some pupils use public libraries, but many pupils receive little support at home with their reading, often because their parents do not speak English.

56. Pupils have good attitudes to English and literacy. They are enthusiastic, for example, when studying together a poem or story. They listen attentively to the teacher and classmates when they read aloud or express views. They evaluate the work of other pupils constructively. Pupils' staying power varies when they work independently. Few are able to sustain their creative effort well without support from a teacher, their work rate is often slow, and the volume of work produced is comparatively small, particularly by boys. They collaborate with each other readily but not always efficiently. They respond very well to the help of support staff.

57. The teaching of English is very good in both key stages. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils over the whole range of ability. They carefully prepare suitable resources to match these needs. Bilingual and other assistants in class are very well organised so that they make a valuable contribution to learning. In an outstanding lesson in Year 4, the teacher used well-targeted questions to provoke lively discussion about the disadvantages of television. She used the board very well to consolidate each point. Pupils were given a wide variety of challenging individual tasks. Two assistants worked very purposefully with small groups and individuals, including two pupils who recently joined the school speaking no English. The classroom was a hive of activity and all pupils were able to make excellent progress at a suitable level. The lesson contained much good humour. Throughout the school, learning is sometimes impaired by the noise from nearby lessons because of disadvantages in the accommodation. It is cramped, does not allow pupils easily to be heard by classmates, and imposes a burden on teachers. Marking is regular and consistent, and conforms to a very good policy.

58. The co-ordination of English is of a very high standard. The subject policy is a thorough and user-friendly document, which ensures consistency of approach across the subject. Assessment is very well used to track pupils' progress and set them targets, and to organise suitable support. There have been good opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to monitor colleagues' teaching during the Literacy Hour. The lessons learned have helped to establish effective teaching throughout the school. A good level of in-service training enhances the teaching. A lack of space and equipment prevents the adequate use of computers as a means of editing and presenting work. Where they are available, they are not used enough. Attractive displays of books and work give English a high profile around the school. The teaching and co-ordination of English have improved well since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

59. Attainment in the 1999 national tests for Year 6 was close to the national average. Compared with similar schools, the results were above average. There was a steady rise in standards over the previous few years. Standards in the present Year 6 are well below national expectations, but pupils are achieving well in relation to what might be reasonably expected. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who have recently joined the school or who are at an early stage of English fluency. Assessment information shows that pupils who have been at the school for four or more years have made very good progress since Year 2. A significant proportion has gained three levels in national tests, though the national expectation is that pupils should gain two levels.

60. Results in the 1999 national tests for Year 2 were very low in comparison with both the national average and that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 was broadly in line with similar schools, but relatively few pupils attained the middle Level 2B. There was a drop in test results in 1999 where there had been a steady rise in the previous three years. In the present Year 2, standards are well below national expectations. Fewer pupils are working at Level 3 than last year, but more are achieving at least the lower range of the expected Level 2.

61. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and has improved since the last inspection. The practising of mental and oral skills at the beginning of each lesson sets a brisk pace and motivates pupils

well for the whole lesson. Teachers' astute questioning, involving all pupils, helps to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm, and younger pupils make good progress through the systematic use of repetitive language. Teachers set work at different levels to suit the needs of all the pupils. Lower attaining pupils are well supported and higher attaining pupils enjoy the challenge of more difficult questions. For example, the majority of Year 2 pupils read the half and quarter hours on an analogue clock while the more able pupils worked out what this would be on a digital clock. Lessons usually consolidate and build on previously learned skills. Some Year 3 pupils used their understanding of doubling and halving, rounding and counting back to check written calculations. Year 6 pupils used their understanding of addition and subtraction to solve problems.

62. Teachers' plans show clearly what the pupils are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. This is shared with pupils and discussed at the end of the lesson, which helps them to gain understanding from what they are doing. Teachers have accurate knowledge of pupils' mathematical ability and set high expectations. The use of games and competitions motivates pupils well, which was seen in Year 5 when pupils enthusiastically rose to the challenge of learning their multiplication tables. In the lessons seen, teaching was good or better. Very good classroom management and good relationships with the pupils ensure that they respond well, remain interested and enjoy mathematics. Teachers and support assistants work together very effectively. Mathematical skills are used appropriately in other subjects, such as science where pupils record their work in graphs and tables.

63. The subject is well managed. The subject co-ordinator has led several training sessions and is very supportive of her colleagues. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has proved effective in raising standards. Improvements since the previous inspection include better use of assessments to track pupils' progress and monitoring of teaching, which has helped to ensure a consistent approach. The accommodation has a negative effect upon learning because normal noise from one class interferes with the activities of another. Resources are good and used well to support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

64. Attainment was below the national average in the 1999 national assessments for eleven-year-olds, but well above the average for similar schools. Attainment in the present Year 6 is well below national expectations. Although fewer pupils reached the expected Level 4 in this year's tests, they achieved well in relation to what might be expected of them. A significant proportion reached Level 5 and some pupils with very limited time in the school and little spoken English attained Level 3, which was a considerable achievement. Of those pupils for whom the school has long-term data, most progressed more than the expected two levels since the end of Year 2.

65. The 1999 teacher assessments for Year 2 suggested that standards were above the national average, but they were inaccurate, especially in evaluating attainment in investigative science. In the present Year 2, standards are below national expectations. The teacher assessments this year are much more accurate, though still over-estimate pupils' attainment in this aspect. Many pupils find it hard to express their ideas and communicate their findings because they are at an early stage in learning English.

66. The quality of science teaching is good. Teachers spend a lot of time in science lessons developing language skills, which is of great value to many pupils. They are skilful at doing so whilst appropriately challenging those who already have sufficient language to cope with more complex ideas. Numeracy skills are used well, such as recording in tables and communicating findings through graphs. This often helps pupils who find written recording more difficult, though literacy skills are also used well. Lessons are planned very carefully and all adults know the learning objectives so that they are able to focus questions on the right issues. Most lessons are structured to include class discussions and individual or group investigations. Pupils work hard to achieve success and greatly enjoy the practical approach. Year 2 pupils became very excited as they searched for different types of plant around the school pond. Some of them recalled previous learning to help identify fruits on a bush. Year 6 pupils also visited the pond as part of their study of food chains. Their brief observations helped them see the relevance of what they were learning.

67. In some lessons, teachers set learning objectives that were too general. In one lesson, the objective "learn to make a fair test" did not lead pupils to focus on the precise skills that, over time, would have

helped them to achieve this. However, the challenge to “find the rock that would make the best step” helped them to concentrate on how best to test samples for hardness. In a few lessons, teachers and assistants gave pupils inaccurate information. The scheme of work does not include enough detail to support teachers when planning lessons. However, a good feature is that it ensures balance in the curriculum.

68. The new subject co-ordinator has carried on with the existing subject development plan, which has ensured continuity of approach. One aspect that remains underdeveloped is the procedures for assessing pupils’ attainment. Teachers have their own systems and so it is difficult to gain a clear picture of progress from year to year.

ART

69. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were above those expected for the ages of the pupils. Many pupils who find communication in English a problem are able to express themselves through art. Pupils make good progress in developing their techniques, knowledge and understanding. Skills are developed systematically through the school, following good guidance from the scheme of work. In Year 1, pupils start to learn how to mix colours and this remains a focus as they get older. They study a variety of patterns from different countries and the natural patterns that occur in flowers. There are good links with other subjects such as design and technology. Sketchbooks are used very well for developing skills and ideas. In one lesson, Year 4 pupils created beautiful pictures using different techniques and media, inspired by one of Kandinsky’s works. They followed a theme of journeys in which they have studied colour and pattern. The teacher has systematically built up pupils’ skills and encouraged them to reflect on their work and modify it. This has resulted in pupils making good progress and the work is of a high standard for their age. Art contributes significantly to pupils’ cultural development. Pupils worked with students from a local secondary school on an art project and made a very good series of banners depicting a journey through trees to a mountain. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

70. Standards in the work seen for design and technology were above those expected for pupils’ ages. Standards have risen since the previous inspection. The youngest pupils learn to plan and evaluate their work. In Year 1, pupils looked at various toys and tried different materials before making a house with a winding mechanism that raises a spider. When Year 2 were making model vehicles, they considered what they would be used for and then practised joining wheels to axles before making their model. Their plans were carefully recorded. In junior classes, the quality of the designs and products show the positive response of pupils. The money containers made in Year 4 are of a good standard. Pupils made careful notes about the designs, the materials and the kind of fastening to use. Year 6 pupils made careful measurements and plans when designing and making slippers. The subject is well planned to give a good balance between opportunities for designing and making and evaluating finished articles. There is an adequate range of resources, but the accommodation presents problems of space for both working and storage.

GEOGRAPHY

71. There is very little geography recorded in infant classes. Some matches national expectations but the quality is generally below expectations for the pupils’ ages. Year 1 pupils successfully identified features of the local environment that they liked and disliked, and competently drew maps of the playground that identified different areas. They have drawn maps to show the route of ‘Rosie’s Walk’. Year 2 pupils have drawn clear maps of their routes to school. In junior classes, there is little recorded work for Year 3 and generally insufficient work on the study of localities. There is some sound work on rivers in Year 4. The subject co-ordinators know that the guidance to teachers for this subject needs improving, and have made a start in doing this. There is a satisfactory amount of fieldwork but too many worksheets are used so that pupils do not have enough opportunities for recording work in a suitable variety of ways.

HISTORY

72. Some of the work seen matches national expectations but the quality of recorded work is generally below expectations for the pupils' ages. Year 1 pupils compare old and new teddy bears, and Year 2 pupils compare homes in the 1950s with their own homes. In the junior classes, there is much more recorded work for history than geography. Year 3 pupils use Victorian photographs to compare rich and poor families, and Year 4 pupils identify historical questions about Henry VIII. It is good that Year 5 pupils learn about note-taking skills as they study a text on the everyday life of the Anglo-Saxons. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the units studied but their understanding of the key elements of history, such as chronology, is weaker. Last term, the subject co-ordinators wrote constructive guidance for teachers and the use of this should raise standards in the future. There is a satisfactory amount of fieldwork, including visits to a Roman villa and Victorian school, but too many worksheets are used so that pupils do not have enough opportunities for their own writing.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

73. Standards are below national expectations throughout the school. Pupils are not achieving as well as they might because they have insufficient practice in using computers. This particularly affects the many pupils whose only opportunity to use computers is at school. The curriculum ensures a sound balance of work but it is often at a relatively low level. For example, older pupils often copy edited text onto the computer rather than both writing and editing on screen. The relatively few pupils who have computers at home are mostly good at word-processing and some use the Internet confidently.

74. Good use was made of the power of multi-media machines in a few literacy and numeracy lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils with little spoken English used a computer to sequence numbers. The repetitive spoken instructions together with visual clues helped both their mathematics and their language. On the whole, however, teachers do not plan how to use information technology in enough lessons. One reason for this is that most teachers are not sufficiently familiar with computers and how to use them to best advantage. They have received some very good training and more is planned, which is a strength in the management of the subject. Another reason is that there are too few computers and insufficient software. Whilst the software can be extended it is hard to see how the school could accommodate more computers. Teaching areas are cramped and there are no spare rooms. The accommodation is a very important factor in pupils having less access to this aspect of the National Curriculum than in most other schools.

75. The subject development plan sets a clear way forward within the considerable constraints of the building. The school has rightly identified training as the key area for development, so that the present computers and future upgrades may be used more effectively.

MUSIC

76. There is neither a specialist musician nor an accompanist amongst the teachers, who each take responsibility for their class's music. This limits the scope of what can be achieved. However, teachers' planning indicated that a good range of activities is being attempted. Occasionally, the headteacher, who co-ordinates music, takes each class for a music lesson. Pupils listen with guidance to music before and after assembly and become acquainted with a good range of pieces during the year. Regular school productions use recorded accompaniments. Visiting musicians have recently given demonstrations on brass and percussion instruments. Music occurs incidentally in lessons throughout the school, though less than in most schools. Pupils in Year 1 chanted a rap based on the story of the Three Little Pigs. Pupils in infant classes have limited opportunities to sing nursery and number rhymes, which would help their language and mathematical development. A good range of resources is available which includes Indian and Vietnamese instruments. The school has not yet remedied the deficiencies in music noted at the time of the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

77. In the work seen during the inspection, standards in physical education were in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils. Pupils entering the school, both in the nursery and in other years, have a very wide range of prior attainment. Whilst some are fit and well co-ordinated, others are overweight or physically immature. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan activities that match the needs of all the pupils. The fact that standards are as they are is a clear indication that they manage this successfully. In the lessons seen, teachers gave very clear instructions and demonstrations, which often involved pupils. This enabled even those pupils with poor English to understand what they were expected to do. Lessons have a clear structure, with warming-up exercises, skills training and main activities that often include a competitive or performance element. Pupils are used to the routines and the teachers' expectations, and this helps them get down to work quickly.

78. Subject co-ordination is very effective and developments in the curriculum, teacher expertise and resources have been significant factors in improving standards. The school makes very good use of the poor accommodation. There is no field and, despite the caretaker's persistent efforts to keep it safe, the available hard surface is gritty and causes minor accidents.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

79. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are met and pupils are achieving standards that are in line with expectations for their ages. In Year 2, pupils gained a good understanding of moral and social aspects of prejudice from a story, 'This House is not for People with Glasses'. They were thoughtful and responded well to the teacher's well-targeted questions. Many were able to relate the issues to their own lives. They also retold the parable of the Good Samaritan in accurate sequence. The purpose of the lesson was that pupils should consider rules for society and understand that everyone is important. They achieved good levels of listening, thinking and speaking. Their understanding was demonstrated when, for example, one pupil drew a picture of people of different colours shaking hands. Pupils in Year 6 considered their ideas of happiness when studying the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism. Some contributed thoughts from personal experience of selfishness, racism and life as refugees and these helped the whole class to understand the ideas.

80. The quality of teaching was good in the few lessons seen. Teachers were knowledgeable and planned the lessons well to develop pupils' understanding methodically. They are good at encouraging pupils to put forward their own ideas and to ask questions. One pupil perceptively asked, 'If we are part of God's family, why isn't he here?' The good level of resources enhances pupils' learning. In most classrooms there are attractive displays of religious artefacts and explanations of important symbolism from different religions. Visits to places of worship reinforce their learning. Following a visit to a mosque, Year 1 pupils understood the symbolism of washing rituals in Islam and had carefully designed prayer mats.

81. The subject is well co-ordinated. There is a helpful policy and the scheme of work now includes a wider range of world religions following the judgement of the previous inspection report. Pupils gain sound knowledge of Christianity and learn facts about the other five main world religions. There is a constructive emphasis on similarities between different religions and on the relevance to pupils' lives of important messages from world faiths. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

