

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORTHSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

North Finchley

London

LEA: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101296

Headteacher: Christine Brook

Reporting inspector: Paul Canham  
1353

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> May – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2000

Inspection number: 191981

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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
School address:	Albert Street London N12 8JP
Telephone number:	020 8445 4730
Fax number:	020 8446 8598
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alastair Finney
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>		<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Paul Canham	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Science; Design and technology; Physical education.	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school; The school's results and pupils' achievements; Teaching and learning; Leadership and management; Key issues for action.
David Holroyd	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and personal development; Pupils' welfare, health and safety; Partnership with parents and carers.
Martin Baxter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics	
Margaret Lygoe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Children aged under five; Art; Information technology; Music.	
Clifford Farthing	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Provision for special educational needs.	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.
Gerard Slamon		Religious education; Geography; History; English as an additional language; Equality of opportunity.	

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>7</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>30</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Northside is larger than most primary schools, with 123 boys and 121 girls aged from four to eleven years on roll. In addition, 65 children attend the nursery part time. The school caters for an unusually high proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the usual time of admission. This includes a large number of families who register their children at the school for short-term needs. Over half the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high, particularly those who are at the early stages of learning English. In addition, an above average number of pupils have some form of special educational need, including those with statements. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has fluctuated over recent years and it is broadly average. The attainment of pupils on entry to compulsory education, at the age of five, is broadly average, although there are particular weaknesses in literacy and language skills. However, in view of the large turnover of pupils and the challenges they bring to the school, overall attainment 'on entry' is below average.

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

The school is improving and is striving hard to overcome the challenging circumstances in which it works. The leadership provides a stable and positive learning environment, despite significant changes to staffing and the unusually high number of pupils who join and leave the school throughout the year. The school succeeds in serving families with specific needs, and it makes good provision for pupils' pastoral care. Teaching is sound and the strong relationships that exist are used effectively to help pupils improve their confidence and self esteem. By the time they leave school, the large majority of pupils who have benefited from being in the school for at least six years achieve standards that are similar to or above those expected of them. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Pupils who spend the full period of Key Stages 1 and 2 in the school achieve well and, by the age of 11, the majority reach the expected levels or above in reading and mathematics;
- Children aged under five achieve well in the nursery because of the good teaching and well-planned activities;
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and they want to achieve. They respond well to the school's consistently high expectations; they enjoy good relationships with one another, behave well and work successfully on their own;
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good;
- There are good procedures to support pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in all subjects, but particularly writing in both key stages;
- Assessment procedures to guide teachers' planning, and give higher attaining pupils more challenging work;
- The balance of the curriculum and the allocation of time;
- The school development plan, so that the school can measure its own success more easily beyond the current year;
- The monitoring role of the co-ordinators and senior staff.

*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 sound progress overall since its last inspection in February 1997. Standards in national tests have fluctuated but remain well below the national average. However, the school now provides a daily act of collective worship; schemes of work are in place for almost all subjects, and standards in mathematics, religious education, art, and information technology have improved. Pupils benefit from a wider range of writing opportunities than those reported in the previous inspection. Assessment procedures have been introduced in English and mathematics, but they have yet to be used in all subjects. The school's priorities are clearly identified in the school development plan, although it neither provides a strategic overview beyond the current year nor includes evaluation criteria against which the school's successes can be measured. The roles of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators have been defined, although they have yet to monitor their subjects. The capacity for the school to achieve further improvement is good.

## 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	C	E	E
Mathematics	E	D	E	D
Science	E	D	E	E

**Key**

*well above average*    **A**

*above average*        **B**

*average*                    **C**

*below average*         **D**

*well below average*    **E**



The information shows that standards in English, mathematics and science have fluctuated, although they have remained below average in mathematics and science since 1997. Results over time show some variation but an overall downward trend. However, attainment levels reflect the high proportion of pupils who leave and join the school during their school career, the large number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, and the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational need. When compared with schools having a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. Inspection evidence broadly reflects these standards. By the age of 11, standards in religious education meet the objects of the locally Agree Syllabus, and standards in art and physical education are similar to those found nationally. However, standards in information technology, design and technology, history, geography, and music are not high enough. When taking into account the challenging circumstances in which it works, the school has set realistic targets for English and mathematics for the Year 2000.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are interested in their work and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils clearly understand what is expected of them.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Older pupils enjoy the extra responsibilities they are given. The quality of relationships is good and a distinctive feature of the school community.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall, although levels of unauthorised absence are too high.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*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.*

Of the lessons seen during the inspection, 93 per cent were satisfactory or better, of which 42 per cent were good or very good. There was a higher proportion of good teaching seen in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Consistently good teaching was seen in the nursery and in the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 2. Overall, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the nursery because they benefit from well-

structured activities which give them a rich variety of experiences. Examples of good teaching were seen in all years and in all subjects. A feature of the good and very good teaching is the range of stimulating activities, which capture the pupils' imagination. Pupils are attentive and are keen to develop their ideas. Careful attention is given to pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. However, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently stretched with challenging tasks. Common features of the small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching (7 per cent) centred on the lack of focused tasks to match the pupils' needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad but it is not sufficiently balanced. The school places an emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills and this reflects the needs of the pupils. However, not enough time is allocated for several subjects to be studied in sufficient depth. Some good-cross curricular links are used to enrich pupils' learning. Children aged under five are given a good start in the nursery because the activities are well structured and closely matched to their needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good and pupils are given appropriate work matched to their needs. Pupils benefit from effective support and they make good progress when working individually or in small groups away from the main class. The detailed individual education plans are used well to help with assessments. However, children's needs are not identified early enough at the beginning of Key Stage 1.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good use is made of the limited support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Detailed planning is undertaken in partnership with class teachers to meet the needs of all these pupils. The programme of withdrawal is carefully managed to ensure that have full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for both moral and social development is very good and underpins much of the school's work. Pupils know right from wrong and relate well to each other. Spiritual and cultural development is good. Aspects of the school's curriculum enable pupils to reflect on events and on their lives.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures ensure that pupils are well cared for. Staff know the pupils well and take great care of them in a safe and supportive environment. Effective Child Protection procedures ensure that staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils. Systems for monitoring academic performance are unsatisfactory.

The school has established good links with parents. A small but committed number of parents give the school good support. Parent representatives contribute fully to the work of the governing body and its committees.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, with the support of staff and governors, provides a stable and positive learning environment despite the unusually high number of pupils who join and leave the school throughout the year. Subject co-ordinators and all key staff have yet to develop their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Members of the governing are knowledgeable and bring a range of expertise to the school's work; several are new to their roles. The governors have revised the admission arrangements to one-form entry, and now recognise the importance of developing the curriculum further and raising the levels of achievement. Members visit the school regularly to monitor its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching have yet to be formalised. Information from assessments and tests is not used enough to help with planning in most subjects. The school recognises the need to establish strategies to judge the value added to its work.
The strategic use of resources	Financial administration and planning are good. The school makes very good use of its resources and it budgets carefully to support the priorities identified for improvement.

The old school building is due to be substantially remodelled to improve the unsatisfactory accommodation. The school places a high priority on staffing and pupils benefit from additional support in lessons and around the school. Although the school has had to make several changes to its staffing, it has a sufficient number of qualified teachers and other adults with subject expertise. Resources are inadequate. The school makes effective use of best value principles.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The good teaching.</li> <li>• The good progress.</li> <li>• Being kept well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school listens to their concerns.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The caring environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework that is consistently set and marked.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence supports some of the positive features expressed by parents in response to the questionnaire and at the meeting of parents with the registered inspector. Examples of good teaching were seen throughout the school, although it was judged to be satisfactory overall. Although the school is particularly good at providing challenging work for pupils with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils are not stretched enough. The school makes effective use of regular newsletters and other forms of communication to keep parents informed. However, the information in the annual reports does not give them a good picture of their children's progress or of what action is needed to improve. Little homework was seen during the inspection and it did not form an integral part of any teaching. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, and the school organises a substantial number of educational trips to enrich pupils' experiences.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The high proportion of pupils who leave and join the school during their school career adversely affects all year groups. Attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly similar to that usually found at this age, except for some aspects of language because a number of children are at the early stages of learning English. The children experience a rich variety of skilfully structured activities and they achieve well during their time in the nursery. However, about half of these children do not go on to join the reception class, and some who join the reception class have little experience of pre-school education. For the children who join the school at the usual time of admission, attainment is at the expected standards in almost all areas of learning, with the exception of language and literacy.

2. The school caters for a large number of families who live in temporary housing or bed and breakfast accommodation and who register their children at the school for short-term needs. For example, of the 27 pupils currently in Year 2, 44 per cent joined during the key stage; many of these have special educational needs and many are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Similarly, 24 pupils in the current Year 6 have attended the school since Year 1. In that period of time, they have worked with 62 other pupils who have joined and later left the class. A large proportion of these speak English as an additional language and have special educational needs. Almost 33 per cent of pupils in the school have special educational needs. Therefore, attainment 'on entry' is judged to be below average.

3. Throughout the school, pupils made good or very good gains in their knowledge and understanding in 38 per cent of the lessons observed, and satisfactory progress in all but 7 per cent of the remaining lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they are withdrawn for specialist support, and satisfactory progress overall. However, a particular weakness of the provision is that their needs are not identified as soon as possible after entry into the reception. Targets in the plans for the majority of these pupils are clear, specific and suitably challenging for academic and personal development. Careful monitoring of progress and regular adjustment of targets mean that these pupils sustain a good quality of learning, and few pupils require a statement of special needs. The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is enhanced by the quality of support provided by the school. Whilst the school focuses well on the pupils with learning difficulties, the small number of higher attainers do not achieve as well as they should. For example, a particular weakness in science is the lack of extension work for the higher attaining pupils, because they are not given sufficient opportunities to plan and develop their own experiments. In English and in several other subjects, including physical education, the planning for the higher attainers does not consistently match their stages of learning.

4. The results of the 1999 national tests show that standards at Key Stage 1 were well below national averages in reading, writing, and mathematics. When these results are compared with those of schools which have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards remain well below in reading, and they are below in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in these subjects was well below the national average. In the 1999 results for science, the performance levels of pupils in the teacher assessments were well below the national average.

5. The results for the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that standards were well below the national averages in English, mathematics, and science. When compared with those of similar schools, standards were again well below average in English and science, but below average in mathematics. The proportions of pupils reaching levels above those expected for their age were close to the national average in English and mathematics, but well below in science.

6. Results over time show some variation, but attainment levels are adversely affected by the high proportion of pupils who leave and join the school. For pupils aged 7, there is a downward trend overall in reading and mathematics, but an improving one in writing. For pupils aged 11, a downward trend is more pronounced in English and science. At face value, this paints a negative picture, but an analysis of the performance of the small proportion of pupils who have benefited from attending the school for at least six years, and who took the national tests in 1999, shows that 90 per cent of these pupils at age 11 achieved the expected level or above in mathematics, and 77 per cent achieved the expected level or above in reading. These results are higher than national averages. However, the analysis also shows that lower attaining pupils achieve better than higher attainers when their performance levels are tracked from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

7. Taking into account the challenging circumstances in which it works, the school has set realistic targets for English and mathematics for the Year 2000.

8. Evidence gathered during the inspection mirrors the results of the most recent Nation Curriculum tests. Pupils aged seven and 11 are working at levels below those expected in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information technology match the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 1, but they are below average by the end of Key Stage 2. Conversely, pupils are not making enough progress in religious education to meet the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1, but standards match the objectives by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in art and physical education are similar to those found nationally by the end of both key stages. Standards in design and technology are similar to those found nationally for pupils aged seven, but pupils do not make enough progress to meet the standards found nationally for pupils aged 11. Standards in other subjects are below those found nationally for pupils aged seven and 11.

9. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills. The literacy hour has been introduced successfully in all classes, although there are few good examples of written work in English and other subjects. The supportive approach used by teachers and other adults encourages pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in all subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced, and its implementation is

helping to raise standards. Pupils' numeracy skills are used to support work in science, design technology, music and art. However, there is little evidence to indicate that these skills are built into the planning or developed systematically throughout the school.

10. Pupils benefit from the many good opportunities across the curriculum to take part in discussions and to practise skills in speaking and listening. Pupils thrive in the positive atmosphere generated in classrooms and where teachers speak clearly and offer a good model of spoken English. Opportunities for writing are more limited and expectations with regard to the quality of presentation are not high enough throughout the school. For example, the presentation of written work is often inconsistent in mathematics and science; sometimes, the work is carelessly set, unfinished, and the tables of data are incomplete.

11. Overall attainment levels for pupils aged seven and 11 are below those expected for their age in English, though standards in speaking and listening match age-related expectations. Pupils made good progress in the majority of lessons seen, although higher attainers are not stretched enough. Pupils learn to listen closely to their teachers and they eagerly join in discussions of shared texts and listen attentively to their peers. As pupils progress through the school, they become more confident in speaking to a range of audiences in a variety of contexts. Pupils often make good progress in 'circle time' lessons because they give pupils good opportunities to share their thoughts about every-day issues which may affect their attitudes or behaviour. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were seen to value one another's contributions and think through their ideas before speaking. By Year 6, pupils confidently contribute in small group and class discussions, and higher attainers make effective use of good levels of vocabulary. Pupils benefit from open questioning in several subjects, including mathematics, religious education and science, when they are encouraged to discuss their findings, use appropriate vocabulary, and value each other's contributions.

12. A significant minority of pupils aged seven are unable to read independently and their enthusiasm for reading varies considerably. Many pupils find it difficult to understand their texts without adult support. By Year 6, a significant minority of pupils do not read challenging texts, and many find it difficult to read aloud fluently, although accuracy levels are satisfactory. Just a small proportion of higher attainers read a wide range of styles. Standards in writing are under developed, but pupils are beginning to write for a range of purposes and to study poetry. The higher attaining pupils in Year 6 write good stories which hold the reader's interest. Those pupils who have attended the school through both key stages make sound use of punctuation and spell with some accuracy. Handwriting is under-developed and few pupils in Year 6 write fluently, with a legible, joined style.

13. Pupils have yet to benefit from the consistent use of information technology to draft and re-draft their work in English and there was little evidence of word-processed work in other subjects, such as history or geography. However, information technology is used appropriately to support work in mathematics. Data-handling skills are suitably developed across the school, although standards are below national expectations by Year 6, partly because pupils in Key Stage 2 have no opportunity to reinforce and consolidate their skills, or to use the computer during lessons other than those timetabled for information technology.

14. In mathematics, most pupils develop a confident understanding of the number system and become increasingly proficient in mental computation as they progress through the school.

By Year 2, most pupils gain a grasp of number facts to 20 and can recall them, but lower attainers have difficulty in adding to ten, and easily forget what they have been taught. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, and, by Year 6, higher attaining pupils add and accurately subtract numbers above 1000, recognise proportion, and calculate perimeter. However, average and lower attaining pupils have weaknesses in multiplication, problem-solving, probability and interpreting graphs.

15. Pupils are keen to talk about their science work but under-developed writing skills impede aspects of their work in both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons and those pupils who have not had disrupted schooling achieve well overall. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to set up simple investigations and predict what might happen when the conditions vary. However, the large majority of pupils have difficulty using scientific vocabulary in their writing. By the age of 11, pupils have a broad understanding of science. They can predict and run a fair test, though recording skills are limited. The work of higher attainers is well presented and most can write up investigative procedures in an orderly way

16. Standards in religious education do not match the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus by Year 2, although standards do match them for pupils aged 11. This is largely due to the quality of assemblies, and well-planned 'circle times' which effectively support pupils' understanding of moral and social issues. In consequence, pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding of human relationships, Christianity and other faiths. Most pupils have a good understanding of the nature of prayer.

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

17. Pupils have good attitudes to school and to their learning. A high proportion of parents (92 per cent) indicated in their response to the questionnaire that their children like coming to school. The inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils, endorses the parents' view. Pupils are happy to be in school, to play a full part in their lessons, and they take part with enthusiasm in the extra-curricular activities provided. The vast majority of pupils tackle tasks enthusiastically and this sustains a positive influence on the work of others in the class. The good attitudes and behaviour noted in the previous report have been maintained.

18. The development of children's personal and social skills underpins all the work in the nursery. Children play, work, and co-operate well together, for example when playing in the role-play area. They sustain interest and perseverance when undertaking activities with adults and on their own. Children are confident and relationships are very good. Most children understand the need to take turns in activities, and sustain concentration well when the activities interest them. The children respond well to new experiences, showing wonder and delight, for example, when butterflies emerged from their cocoons and began to fly during a session in the nursery. They learn to treat living things with care and concern, and to show a range of feelings. Behaviour is consistently good and there are good levels of concentration. Similarly, behaviour in the reception classes is good, particularly when children are taking part in activities. They generally concentrate well on tasks and try hard.



19. Throughout the school, pupils respond well to school's good behaviour policy, which is based upon high expectations and fostering pupils' self-esteem. Every class has its own rules which are prominently displayed. These 'golden or class rules' are devised at the beginning of each year following discussions between the class teacher and the pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others; behaviour is good around the school and in lessons in both key stages. Pupils are most attentive in lessons which are well managed and where strong relationships have been established with the teacher and other adults in the class. In these lessons, pupils behave very well, and they persevere with challenging and stimulating tasks. A good example was seen in Year 2, where pupils were able to use their own initiative during an English lesson, and move without teacher intervention across the good range of activities. In 'circle time', pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked well on a wide range of tasks, listened well, and valued the contributions made by others in the group. In just a few lessons, pupils became restless, noisy and affected the work of others. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4, lost interest and became noisy when not closely supervised during a science lesson.

20. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are a strength of the school. Good and strong relationships prevail despite the very high levels of pupil mobility, and the regular disruption of friendship groups. Pupils are supportive of one another, which is again a major achievement given the high mobility and thus the need to make and sever relationships on an arbitrary basis. For example, during a history lesson seen in Years 5 and 6, pupils used their strong relationships, and particularly the "buddy system", to support each other and encourage full participation. Teachers are supportive and sensitive to the needs of pupils, who respond well to the consistently high expectations. Pupils are keen to carry out tasks and, when given the opportunity, they behave sensibly and take their responsibility seriously. Well-established group work, such as is used in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science, gives pupils very good opportunities to work co-operatively and develop their independent learning skills.

21. Attendance is satisfactory, although the rate of unauthorised absence is well above the national average. This is due to extended holidays being taken by a small number of families. However, a significant proportion of pupils arrive late to school in the mornings. During the inspection, almost 10 per cent of pupils arrived late and were not ready to start work at the beginning of the school day. The school has written to parents explaining how the lateness of their children disrupts the beginning of the school day, affects the learning of other pupils who arrive on time, and undermines the work of the teachers.

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

22. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of all the lessons seen. Good teaching was seen 38 per cent of lessons. Very good teaching was seen in just a further 4 per cent of lessons. The staffing has changed considerably since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be good in over half the lessons seen. During this inspection, several teachers were on long-term sick leave and a significant proportion of the teaching seen was undertaken by teachers on short-term contracts. The quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory for children aged under five, although it was good in the nursery. Teaching was better in the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 than in those seen in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, 42 per cent of the lessons seen were judged to be good or better. The 7 per cent of unsatisfactory

teaching was seen in Key Stage 2 and in the reception class. Common features in these lessons were lack of pace in the activities and insufficient challenge in the tasks. In consequence, learning opportunities were lost, and pupils did not make enough progress.

23. Examples of good teaching were seen throughout the school, and during these lessons pupils benefited significantly from challenging tasks which captured their attention and focused well on their stages of learning. For example, the quality of teaching in the nursery is consistently good because children are involved in an exciting variety of skilfully structured activities. Children are encouraged to work independently and increase their confidence by using a range of utensils and small games equipment. The children's good learning is promoted through stimulating practical experiences and well-structured tasks. In consequence, they achieve well in lessons and over time because the skills are developed systematically through very good learning activities. Teachers and other adults have high expectations, and they use questions skilfully to help children think about their answers. This picture is in contrast to that witnessed in the small number of unsatisfactory lessons seen in the reception class, where children were not always given tasks which were purposeful. For example, some of the activities during a literacy session did little to improve the children's emergent writing and a significant proportion were not involved in the tasks when working in groups.

24. A feature common to good teaching throughout the school is the effective management of pupils. A particular strength is the supportive approach used by teachers and other adults. This reflects the school's aims and all but a few pupils reciprocate the good relationships which have been established. In several lessons, the good relationships are used to raise the standard of pupils' work, such as that seen during 'circle time'. In an English lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made good progress in their understanding of poetry because there was a good working atmosphere based on high expectations and trust. Examples of good teaching were seen throughout the school, but no subject was taught consistently well, with the exception of mathematics in Key Stage 2. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 5 and 6, their interests were captured with some lively presentations, and they benefited from clear explanations of strategies to successfully develop their mental skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, achieved particularly well in their understanding of patterns because they knew what they were expected to learn. Throughout the key stage, teachers plan the activities to build on learned skills and allow scope for individual learning and reflection. Plenary sessions are used well to monitor and share findings and consolidate expectations.

25. The examples of good teaching in several subjects were closely linked to the level of expectation. For example, pupils in Year 2 made good progress in their use of information technology because the tasks were closely linked to the previous work and planned to match pupils' learning stages. A similar picture was seen during a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, where pupils were engrossed in the tasks because they matched their need in mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 made very good progress during a lesson in design and technology due largely to the pace of the activities and closely-crafted tasks which were informed by assessment information. Support for pupils with special educational needs is also based on a careful analysis of their needs. In consequence, these pupils are very well taught when they are withdrawn for specialist help. They take part in a carefully chosen range of activities that engage them mentally, physically and emotionally. As a result, these sessions are productive and happy because pupils realise for themselves that they are making good progress. Individual education plans are appropriate, and teachers employ good management strategies

that effectively promote pupils' self esteem. The support assistants, play a valuable role in giving these pupils close attention. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and adjustments made to their individual education plans so that future lessons meet their needs. The good use of the limited support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language ensures that these pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. The support staff have a good understanding of how these pupils learn. Planning is undertaken in partnership with class teachers to meet the needs of these pupils. Detailed planning assures consistent links between classroom teachers and support staff. Pupils, and particularly those with special educational needs, benefit significantly from the good quality of teaching and learning in small support groups.

26. In contrast, a general weakness in teaching is the lack of sufficient challenge for the small proportion of higher attaining pupils. Examples of this were seen throughout the school in several subjects, including English, science and physical education, and this lack of challenge was a significant factor in the unsatisfactory teaching. This weakness is highlighted in the school's own analysis of its data.

27. Some good teaching in English, mathematics, design and technology, art and music reflects good subject knowledge and this underpins the questioning of pupils which makes them think and test their understanding. In design and technology, the teacher's good subject knowledge underpinned the pace of the activities and the quality of the evaluative comments, which helped pupils in Years 5 and 6 to make good gains in their learning. The teachers' depth of understanding is often used to underpin clear explanations and incisive questioning to help pupils extend their thinking. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of forces in science because they were continually challenged to explain the reasons for their predictions using scientific vocabulary. In mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good gains in their understanding of the use of bar graphs because the teaching included lucid explanations.

28. There is a good range of methods and strategies to support learning, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, some of the introductions are long and pupils lose interest because they are not sufficiently involved in the lesson. Teachers who have established a good rapport with pupils manage groups well while focusing their attention on individual pupils. Final summary sessions are used well to consolidate and share what has been learnt. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were well managed during a lesson in science which gave them good opportunities to work independently when working with magnets. Teaching in small groups helps pupils to understand and review their weaknesses; for example, pupils with special educational needs and those in similar attainment groups benefit from close individual support and sensitive use of questioning. Sometimes this draws out information from pupils, sometimes it develops their understanding, and sometimes it makes them think harder and express their thoughts more precisely.

29. During the inspection, homework was not set consistently and it was not used to support pupils' learning; some parents are critical of the amount of homework set.

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

30. The school provides a broad curriculum with a particular focus on English and mathematics. The priority that the school has placed on the provision for English, and to a lesser degree mathematics and science, is reflected in the amount of time given to these subjects. However, the time allocated to the curriculum is below that recommended nationally. The curriculum lacks sufficient balance because the time allocated to several subjects, including art, music, history, geography, and science in Key Stage 1, is below that found in the majority of other schools nationally. Although the school works hard to meet the challenges posed by the high turnover of pupils and the disruption this causes, the lack of curriculum time prevents pupils from studying the subjects in sufficient depth. This picture is similar to that reported in the previous inspection. By the time pupils leave school, standards are below those expected in almost all subjects, with the exception of art, and physical education, and also religious education where pupils have sufficient opportunities to meet the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 2.

31. The curriculum for children aged under five in the nursery and reception classes is planned with regard to the Desirable Outcomes for Learning. Children in the nursery benefit from a wide range of well-planned activities, and the teacher and nursery nurses work as a very effective team. However, the outdoor play area is small and limits play and, currently, the provision for physical development is unsatisfactory.

32. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects, with the exception of physical education and music, and the school is using national guidance for the introduction of the revised National Curriculum in September 2000. The school has good provision for children aged under five. In the nursery, there is a strong emphasis on promoting children's personal and social skills, speaking and listening skills, and literacy and numeracy skills.

33. The school has successfully introduced the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. It has identified the need to raise standards in literacy, and particularly writing. The development of literacy and numeracy skills has yet to be planned for systematically across all subjects. Cross-curricular links enhance the provision in some subjects, including science and design and technology. However, this aspect is not a strong feature of the school, and opportunities to enrich pupils' learning through cross-curricular links have yet to be embedded in the planning.

34. The school stresses equality of opportunity in its aims and objectives, curriculum and organisation, including the grouping of pupils. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and to all aspects of school life. Most teachers plan their work effectively, enabling pupils to work at an appropriate level. However, some teachers take insufficient account the small number of higher attaining pupils, and they are not given equality of opportunity to realise their potential. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, although procedures for the early identification of pupils with special

needs in reception have yet to be prioritised. The good use of the limited support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language ensures that these pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. Detailed planning is undertaken in partnership with class teachers to meet the needs of these pupils. The strong emphasis on improving standards in literacy means that a significant proportion of pupils are given additional support. The programme of withdrawal is carefully managed to ensure that pupils have full access to the curriculum.

35. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These include additional support for targeted groups of pupils and sporting activities. Some of these activities are enhanced by the engagement of outside agencies, such as multi-sports, chess and dance. Pupils respond well to the provision of sports and other activities, which make a valuable contribution to pupils' social development. The school makes good use of its links with the community, particularly local business, and a range of visitors to enrich the curriculum, such as writers and dance groups. The pupils transfer to a large number of schools at the end of Year 6, but well-established links ensure that pupils' learning is as continuous as possible and they are prepared for the next stage of their education.

36. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education, through its own set of aims and expectations. Pupils' self esteem is promoted through skilful and sensitive support. Values, such as tolerance and the needs of others, are promoted well in 'circle time' lessons. These give pupils knowledge and insights needed to help them become responsible citizens.

37. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is a strength of the school. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development. Good provision is made for their spiritual cultural development. The calm atmosphere that has been created in the school supports pupils' spiritual development. This is nurtured in assemblies, circle times, and the well-planned acts of collective worship, which meet statutory requirements. There are also frequent occasions for reflection in areas of the curriculum such as religious education, art and science. A very good example of this was witnessed in the reception class, when pupils watched in great awe and wonder as a butterfly emerged from a chrysalis.

38. The strong relationships that exist and the good example set by all who work in the school support pupils' moral development. The importance of truth and justice is communicated through the evident concern the school community has for these values. 'Circle times', which are part of the school's strong personal, social and health education programme, are well used to explore themes such as "taking responsibility for our own behaviour". The school's aims underpin moral development and the code of behaviour, clearly displayed throughout the school, is consistently applied throughout the school. Pupils' sense of citizenship is developed through the opportunities to discuss and reflect upon environmental issues. Pupils in the environmental science club, for example, collect and recycle all waste paper in the school.

39. The school actively promotes the development of good social skills. Assemblies, attended by staff and pupils, are well used to develop a feeling of community. Older pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility within the school, such as preparing the hall for assemblies, and all classes are represented in the school council. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to appreciate and to contribute to the community in which they live. Local studies, working with students from the local college on designing playground murals, and singing carols with other schools at St Alban's Cathedral, are good examples of this. Pupils are also offered opportunities to contribute to the wider community through donating to charities such as Save the Children, the North London Hospice, British Heart Foundation and Concern Worldwide. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from an annual residential trip which further enhances their social development and sense of achievement.

40. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate, and to develop their knowledge of, British culture and traditions, for example, through visits to places of cultural and historical interest such as the Verulamium, the Dome, and the London visit which takes in places such as the Thames Barrier. Visitors, such as theatre groups and authors during World Book Week, are further examples of this good provision. There are also well planned opportunities for pupils to understand and to appreciate the diversity and richness of other culture and faiths through their religious education programme and the study of art and literature from other cultures as well as their own. Religious festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Hanukkah are celebrated in the school. These, together with the annual international evening, give pupils opportunities to celebrate the diversity of cultures within the school.

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

41. Effective procedures have been established for Child Protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils. Staff are sensitive to the changing needs of the pupils and the challenging circumstances of the unsettled schooling which a large number of pupils have experienced. The good relationships allow pupils to approach the teachers and other adults with confidence.

42. The school promotes healthy living through its personal, health and social education programme. The school has good first aid procedures which are implemented effectively, and risk assessments are carried out by the headteacher, governors and designated staff. In addition, the governing body undertakes regular reviews of security and buildings. The school provides a good standard of care for pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Teachers and other adults give these pupils positive encouragement to promote their self-esteem, so that they play a full part in all aspects of school life. Good examples of this were seen during break times, 'circle-time' discussions, and where the 'buddy system' was seen in use during the school day.

43. The school has very effective systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, which include class-based behaviour rules, 'well done' assemblies and sanctions. Appropriate supervision and a positive approach give pupils good opportunities to discuss their behaviour and its consequences. Almost all class teachers know their pupils well and provide good pastoral support.

44. The improvement of assessment procedures was an integral part of a key issue in the previous inspection report. The school has yet to implement an assessment policy. Good systems are beginning to develop in English and mathematics, but they have yet to be developed in other subjects. The school has been slow to act on the key issue, although assessment provides a focus in its development plan.

45. When pupils enter the nursery, their knowledge and skills are assessed through observation of practical and verbal abilities. Nursery staff use the information to help with planning. However, not all children take up places in the reception class. Almost half the children who join the reception class have not attended the nursery, and some have little experience of pre-school education. In the reception class, pupils are assessed through the local authority's baseline assessment programme, although the school recognises that pupils with special educational needs are not identified early enough. The school acknowledges the importance of analysing the information from assessment procedures, including national tests and assessments. For example, the school is beginning to make effective use of data from national tests for reading and mathematics by plotting the progress made by pupils who have attended the school for at least six years. As result of this analysis, the school is able to compare the performance levels of different groups of pupils and show the value that it adds to pupils' education. Other information for the core subjects includes National Curriculum tests from previous years, and moderated assessments prepared by the Local Education Authority.

46. Most teachers can accurately judge their pupils' attainment and progress from day-to-day, although the information is not used consistently to help with planning for the majority subjects, including science and information technology. Teachers do not make effective use of the weekly planning sheets to include assessment information. This contributes to the lower quality of provision for higher attaining pupils.

47. However, assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. All assessments are overseen by the special needs co-ordinator as part of her regular monitoring and review. Assessment and monitoring procedures for pupils with special needs are a strength of the school. Accurate assessment is a good feature of the special needs provision and ensures that almost all pupils make good progress, although procedures are not well developed at the beginning of Key Stage 1. The information gained from a range of procedures is used effectively to guide the writing of pupils' individual educational plans. Specialist staff keep detailed running records to guide changes to individual plans. Class teachers do not consistently record progress of pupils with special needs or those with English as an additional language in order to plan activities for these pupils.

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

48. Evidence from the parents' questionnaire and from their meeting before the inspection shows that they have generally positive views of the school and its work. They are keen to know about their children's progress and the vast majority feel that their children are happy in school. Parents feel that the school is approachable and a significant number consider that it gives good support and encouragement to their children's academic and personal development. However, there were some concerns about the turnover of teaching staff, the limited range of extra-curricular activities and the amount of homework their children are given. The parents' comments are generally more positive than those recorded in the previous inspection report. The evidence from the current inspection indicates that the school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and the setting of homework is inconsistent.

49. The school has established good links with parents despite the difficulties caused by the unusually high proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at different times throughout the year. A small but committed number of parents give the school good support. Parent representatives contribute fully to the work of the governing body and its committees. Some parents are able to support teachers by helping in classes and other areas of the school, while others assist by accompanying staff on educational trips.

50. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given good information about the school's special needs policy and practice. They are informed of their children's progress and are invited to annual reviews. Whenever they have concerns, they are able to contact the class teacher and co-ordinator for special needs. The governor for special needs takes an active role in liaising between parents and the school. The school encourages participation by ethnic minority families in aspects of school life such as attending parents' evenings, curriculum events, and the annual international evening. The bilingual learning and home support assistant meets with parents at the start of the school day and translates information for them.

51. Some parents support their children's reading by hearing them read at home. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school, as governors, helpers and members of the parent teacher association. This small group raises valuable amounts of money for the school, and puts on a variety of social events. These have included an annual international evening, which brings together school members with differing cultural backgrounds. This evening is reported as very successful, with many cultures and ethnic groups taking part. Parents have been very involved in the plans for the new building which are prominently displayed in the school and have featured extensively in the local media.

52. The quality of information for parents is unsatisfactory, largely because of the poor quality of the annual written reports. These do not include all the required information, such as what children can do; how attainment can be improved, or setting targets for improvement. The school is planning to review the reporting procedures for the next academic year. The prospectus includes the required information, although it does little to celebrate the school's achievements and its style prevents it from being easily accessible to parents. The governors' annual report to parents is detailed in all areas, with the exception of the report on finance.



53. The school has a good newsletter containing notes on achievements and news of forthcoming events. There is also a folder with governors and other information available in the reception area. Information concerning the curriculum is provided, on request, at curriculum meetings held for parents, after school, and during consultation evenings.

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

54. The headteacher, with the support of staff and the governors, continues to provide a stable and positive learning environment, despite significant changes to staffing and the unusually high number of pupils who join and leave the school throughout the year. Although working within challenging circumstances, the headteacher has moved the school forward since her appointment almost three years ago. In response to the school's urgent needs, she has reviewed the levels of staffing; strengthened the senior management team by the inclusion of key staff; consolidated the accommodation onto a single site, and worked closely with members of the governing body to ensure the school's survival. She is very well supported by a knowledgeable governing body which brings a good range of expertise to its work. They have been instrumental in following a strategy which stabilises pupil numbers in each year group, with the intention of reducing the high level of pupil mobility. The school is now in stronger position to develop the curriculum, and to use the good relationships already existing in the school to help raise standards in all subjects. The great majority of parents are supportive of the school's work.

55. The headteacher delegates well, although the work of the senior management team and the roles of subject co-ordinators have not been fully developed, largely because of long-term sickness and changes in staffing. Staff are well aware of their roles. However, some areas for improvement identified in the previous report have yet to be fully addressed. In particular, a full school assessment policy has still to be developed and used to help raise standards. In addition, subject co-ordinators are not given sufficient time away from teaching to monitor teachers' planning, and to observe teaching and learning. However, some co-ordinators provide colleagues with helpful support and advice. Mathematics and religious education are particularly well managed, along with the provision for English as an additional language. The management of special educational needs is good and meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator ensures that reviews of pupils' progress towards their agreed targets happen regularly. Parents, and sometimes their children, are appropriately involved. The partnership between specialist support and class teachers has been significantly improved since the previous inspection. However, the school does not identify children with special needs quickly enough in the reception class.

56. The staff are supportive and they work well together as a caring team, committed to the welfare of the pupils. This gives the school a clear sense of purpose, and the school's potential for improvement is good. Some of the strengths highlighted in the previous report, for example the caring ethos of the school, have been maintained, whilst some weaknesses have been addressed. For instance, the school now complies with a daily act of collective worship; schemes of work are in place for almost all subjects, and standards in mathematics, religious education, art, and information technology have improved. Pupils now benefit from a wider range of writing opportunities, although standards in English remain low. The roles of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators have been defined. Assessment procedures have been introduced in English and mathematics, but they have yet to be used in all subjects. The school's priorities are clearly identified in the school development plan.

However, the plan does not provide a strategic overview beyond the current year, and this weakness was identified in the previous inspection report. School planning has yet to focus on the changing nature of the school; on the impact that training has on the quality of teaching and learning, and on standards. The plan lacks the inclusion of well-focused targets against which the school's success can be measured, such as the standards achieved by pupils who have benefited from attendance at the school over six-year period. The targets set by the school for English and mathematics are achievable and reflect the school's realistic commitment to raising standards.

57. Members of the governing body are new to their roles but very keen to support the headteacher and the work of the school. Through regular visits, key governors develop a good understanding of the school and its distinctive needs. The school is meeting all statutory requirements.

58. The school continues to target its budget carefully to support the priorities for improvement it has identified. It has an effective range of financial control measures which ensure that expenditure is properly authorised, validated and monitored by the headteacher and governors. These controls are complemented by efficient school administration. The small number of recommendations in the most recent audit carried out by the local education authority have been fully addressed by the school.

59. The governing body and senior management ensure sound financial planning. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure, although its development plan lacks some detail. Members of the governing body bring financial expertise to the school and the finance committee meets regularly to oversee financial matters and decisions. By necessity, the viability of the school has been the main focus for the governors' strategic planning. Governors now feel that the revised admission arrangements provide the school with a sound foundation on which to develop the curriculum further and raise the levels of achievement. A reduction in the unusually high level of pupil mobility will allow the teachers to work with more settled numbers of pupils and a greater awareness of their needs. Governors are aware of the high level of costs within the school and have sought to reduce these over the last three years. Specific grants are efficiently used to ensure the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Good use is made of the staff and resources used to support the learning of these pupils.

60. In recent years the school has undergone a significant number of changes in teaching staff and an increase in classroom support staff. This has been a necessary response to a decrease in the pupil roll and to meet budget targets. There is an appropriate match of the number of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The teaching staff are well qualified with a wide range of experience, and the special needs and English as an additional language staff are very well qualified. Systematic arrangements to provide subject co-ordinators with time to monitor the quality of teaching or standards of pupil attainment in lessons are in the early stages of development.

61. Teachers new to the school are given good support by the headteacher and deputy. Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are good. Although appraisal arrangements are in place for the headteacher, this does not apply for other staff, and performance management is at a very early stage of development. The headteacher conducts professional development interviews annually with each teacher to identify training needs in line with the professional development policy. However this is insufficiently frequent to monitor and report individual progress effectively, and set targets. Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service training in line with the priorities in the school improvement plan and a budget is identified for this. Training for literacy and numeracy has increased the basic training for all staff in school time, and subject co-ordinators are released to attend specialist meetings with advisers. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met by an experienced and well qualified co-ordinator who leads the team of classroom assistants. They make an important contribution to raising standards and work under the direction of class teachers. However their effectiveness is not systematically monitored so as to inform their training. Midday supervisors work as a team and contribute effectively to the management of behaviour. The school is well served by administrative support and the site manager. Staff work together to support the aims of the school and provide pupils with a working environment which encourages good behaviour and learning.

62. The main building of the school dates back to the 19th Century and plans are well advanced to remodel the building. This remodelling will provide coherent provision for the early years, as well as new classrooms, a hall and play area, a centrally located school library, and a room for information technology. The current accommodation is difficult to maintain. Some classrooms are small with inadequate water and electric points, and the buildings detached from the main building provide poor accommodation for teaching and learning. The two libraries are cramped and do not promote the development of literacy skills, and the main playground is uneven. Whilst good displays reflect a rich range of activities experienced by pupils, in some cases they disguise peeling paint. Some classroom displays are interactive, and include examples of poetry, art, design and technology, and mathematics. They contribute significantly to the creation of a learning environment which celebrates what children and pupils can achieve.

63. The restricted range of resources are used effectively to support teaching. Books, and other resources, reflect the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all of its pupils. A room is allocated for information technology but there are insufficient computers for whole-class teaching, and limited use is made of classroom computers. The school is not connected to the Internet. Although the range of books in the libraries is unsatisfactory, those in classrooms are satisfactory and used appropriately.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. To improve standards of work and the pupils' learning, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Raise standards across the school, and particularly in writing by:
  - \* ensuring that teachers insist on high standards of presentation and handwriting in all subjects;
  - \* including clear targets for improvement in the marking of pupils' work;
  - \* giving all pupils appropriately challenging work, and particularly those who are higher attainers.
  
- Improve the curriculum and raise standards in all subjects by:
  - \* reviewing the curriculum time, so that all subjects can be taught in sufficient depth;
  - \* making more use of national guidance material to support planning;
  - \* reviewing the organisation of teaching groups to cater for the higher attaining pupils.
  
- Produce and implement a whole-school assessment policy which:
  - \* enables the school to measure pupils' achievement in all subjects;
  - \* provides teachers with information to guide their planning, and help them to provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils;
  - \* helps pupils understand how well they are progressing and how they can improve further;
  - \* could inform the identification of clear attainment targets at every stage and level.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of strategic planning and self evaluation by:
  - \* ensuring that the school development plan reflects the changing nature of the school, and extends beyond the current year;
  - \* including clear, measurable targets for improvement, and criteria for judging the effectiveness of teaching and learning;
  - \* developing the monitoring role of the co-ordinators.
  - \* identifying and sharing the good teaching that exists in the school.

65. Other areas for improvement which the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan are:

- Improve the annual reports for parents about their children's progress, so that they give clear information about the standards achieved, and how they can improve;
- Improve the library provision as planned by the school;
- Build on the good relationships with parents to ensure that their children come to school on time;
- Ensure that pupils with special educational needs are identified early.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	38	38	7	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	<b>Nursery</b>	<b>YR- Y6</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	65	244
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	69

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	<b>Nursery</b>	<b>YR – Y6</b>
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	79

<b>English as an additional language</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	143

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	60
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	89

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	19	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	14	18	18
	Girls	14	15	16
	Total	28	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	67	79	81
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	11	18	18
	Girls	14	15	16
	Total	25	33	34
Percentage of pupils At NC Level 2 or above	School	60	79	81
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

*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	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	1999	25	18	43

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	10	14	17
	Girls	9	6	8
	Total	19	20	25
Percentage of pupils At NC Level 4 or above	School	44	47	58
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	13
	Girls	9	9	7
	Total	20	23	20
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	47	53	47
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)



### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	19
Black – other	3
Indian	42
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	2
White	93
Any other minority ethnic group	53

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
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)	14.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	24.4

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

*Financial information*

Financial year	<b>1998/99</b>
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	£
Total income	817442.00
Total expenditure	804811.00
Expenditure per pupil	2959.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	22720.00
Balance carried forward to next year	35351.00

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

Number of questionnaires sent out	323
Number of questionnaires returned	53

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	60	32	4	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	49	36	11	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	57	11	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	38	17	13	2
The teaching is good.	62	26	4	4	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	47	2	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	25	6	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	32	2	4	8
The school works closely with parents.	47	42	4	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	28	49	8	8	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	24	9	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	47	9	2	15

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

66. Children enter the nursery at the age of three or four. Attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly similar to that usually found at this age, except for some aspects of language because a number of children are at the early stages of learning English. The children attend for either the morning or the afternoon session until starting full-time school in the September or January of the year in which their fifth birthday occurs. Not all children take up places in the reception class in the main school at Northside. Approximately half the children join the reception class without having attended the nursery, and some have little experience of pre-school education. Children make good progress in the nursery. Assessment on entry to the reception class is in line with the average in Barnet, and is similar to that found nationally at this age. Learning in the reception class is satisfactory overall, and the majority of children reach the expected standards in every area of learning except language and literacy.

67. The nursery accommodation was judged to be unsatisfactory in the previous inspection, and this is still the case. The outdoor play area is small and limits play, particularly when children are riding wheeled toys. The staff continue to work hard to make the classroom areas bright and attractive with displays of children's work. All rooms are now being used fully to provide a wide range of activities. The reception class occupies two rooms in the main building, but children do not currently have suitable access to outdoor play facilities. A major building project which will provide new rooms for the nursery and reception classes and an early years outdoor play area.

68. The curriculum is planned with regard to the Desirable Outcomes for Learning. Children in the nursery benefit from a wide range of well-planned activities, and the teacher and nursery nurses work as a very effective team. Teaching is stronger in the nursery than in reception. Changes of staff this year in the reception class have obliged the children to adapt to differing styles and expectations. There are daily literacy and numeracy periods, and the teachers are gradually moving towards implementing the national strategies. At present there is insufficient direct teaching in some literacy and numeracy lessons. Children undertake suitable activities with adults, but at times the activities planned for those working independently lack purpose. The classroom assistant provides good support, particularly for children with English as an additional language.

69. The co-ordinator has identified the need to develop assessment procedures across both classes. Progress since the previous inspection has been slow. Staff in the nursery know children well, but systems for recording observations have yet to be fully developed. The school uses the local education's authority assessment procedures when children enter the reception class. Children's progress is monitored during the year, but the information is not used well in planning. Activities are planned for all children with insufficient attention being paid to their differing needs.

## **Personal and social development**

70. Teaching in this area of learning is very good in the nursery class. Most children settle quickly into the nursery. They benefit from the established system of home visits and, where relevant, from the support of the bi-lingual assistant. The children understand the nursery routines and feel confident and secure in the caring and supportive environment. Behaviour in the nursery is good. Activities are varied and interesting and staff are quick to intervene and redirect children when necessary. Children play, work and co-operate well together, for example when playing in the role-play area. They sustain interest and perseverance when undertaking activities with adults and on their own. For example one child sat totally absorbed by a favourite book. Activities such as the daily snack time are effective in developing social skills. Children take turns in serving the drinks and snacks. Relationships are very good in the nursery. Staff know the children well and use praise and encouragement very effectively. Teaching in this aspect in the reception class is good overall. The teachers and the classroom assistant work well together and children benefit from their consistent expectations. The children are confident and relationships are good. Most children understand the need to take turns in activities, and sustain concentration well when the activities interest them. For example, one group co-operated well as they worked on a large alphabet puzzle. Children only lose interest when activities lack sufficient focus. They respond well to new experiences, showing wonder and delight as the butterflies emerged from their cocoons and began to fly. By the time they are five most children reach the expected standards in this area of learning.

## **Language and literacy**

71. Teaching in this area of learning is good in the nursery. The teacher and nursery nurses encourage children to talk about activities and to use new vocabulary; they promote the children's confidence by valuing their comments. Children make good progress in acquiring new vocabulary as they talk about their experiences, for example as they make icing for their butterfly cakes, or learn about the life cycle of the butterfly. The children listen attentively to stories and readily join in rhymes and songs. They enjoy sharing books and understand how books are organised and that words and pictures convey meaning. Most benefit from taking books home to share with their parents. Higher attaining children begin to read, and most children begin to recognise letter sounds and shapes. Children learn to recognise their names, and many find their name cards independently to "register" themselves when they come into nursery at the start of the session. They begin to write their names, and have suitable opportunities to develop early writing skills with a range of pens and pencils.

72. By the time children are aged five, many do not achieve the expected standards in reading and writing because some of the teaching is unsatisfactory in the reception class. Skills in speaking and listening are generally better developed. Teaching in this area is unsatisfactory in the reception class. Most children speak confidently and listen when others are speaking. Learning is good in some lessons where new vocabulary is introduced, for example when children learn to use the correct vocabulary to describe the life cycle of the butterfly. Children at the early stages of learning English make good progress. Teachers ensure that they are included in whole-class lessons, and the classroom assistant gives very effective individual support.

73. There is a daily literacy period, which includes periods of whole class teaching and group activities. Teachers do not plan activities to match the differing needs of pupils. As a result higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is not enough direct teaching, particularly of phonic skills and reading strategies. Children generally work well with adults, but other activities lack focus and purpose. Some children lose interest and wander somewhat aimlessly and little learning takes place. In satisfactory lessons, all children are involved in the initial whole-class session. They are able to see the text and are encouraged to join in reading together. The teacher develops children's phonic skills through suitable activities. Higher attaining children read confidently and fluently, but most children are at a very early stage of reading. They understand that books convey meaning, and know some letter names and sounds, but their recognition of simple, frequently used words is limited.

74. Children understand that writing is used for different purposes, for example letters and stories. Most write their names with correct use of upper and lower case letters, but teachers pay insufficient attention to correct letter formation. Some children are beginning to write independently and attempt to spell words for themselves. Most children, however, depend too much on copying under an adult's writing and lack confidence in attempting to write on their own.

## **Mathematics**

75. Only a little direct teaching of mathematics was seen in the nursery, but staff plan a good range of suitable activities to support learning. Children sort, match and count. They recognise patterns, and develop an early understanding of symmetry through their work on butterflies. Older children count to 10 and beyond, and they learn to recognise and write numbers. Children are aware of the use of larger numbers in everyday life, for example, when they set the microwave in the role-play area, saying, "I'll give it twenty and a half".

76. Teaching in this aspect is satisfactory overall in the reception class, and half the lessons are good. Where teaching is best, all children are fully involved in purposeful activities which develop their understanding of mathematics. While some children worked with an adult to compare the weights of different items, others played sensibly in the sand and water, filling different containers and discussing which felt heavier and which felt lighter. Children made good progress in using mathematical language. Children with English as an additional language also made good progress because of good support from the classroom assistant and the practical nature of the activities. Most children count confidently to ten and beyond. They copy and continue repeating patterns, and show an emerging understanding of addition and subtraction. By the time they are five, most children achieve the expected standard.

## **Knowledge and understanding**

77. Teaching to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is good in the nursery. Learning is promoted very effectively through a range of first-hand experiences and is reinforced thoroughly by explanations and many supporting activities. Children could describe the life cycle of the butterfly and some referred to a set of pictures to help them to explain their ideas. They enjoy choosing materials to make butterflies and develop a range of cutting and joining skills. Children begin to gain confidence in using the computer and develop basic mouse skills. They talk about recent events in their own lives and begin to learn the order of the days of the week.

78. In the reception class, children also acquire a sound understanding of the life cycle of the butterfly. Teaching in this aspect is satisfactory, and the majority of children achieve the expected standard by the time they are five. Children make satisfactory gains in developing their skills of observation and extending their vocabulary through a suitable range of activities. They talk about their experiences, for example about planting beans, and begin to develop an understanding of how plants grow. Children begin to make drawings to record their observations. Most children who used the computer had satisfactory early skills with the mouse, but the computer is not used systematically to support learning. The reception class does not benefit from using the computer suite at present.

## **Creative development**

79. The teaching in this aspect is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. Children in the nursery benefit from a range of well-planned activities, many of which are linked to the topic. They develop an understanding of colour and pattern as they make butterfly prints, and they choose colours carefully as they paint. Staff encourage children to make independent choices, for example as they decorate their stitched butterflies. In the role-play area, children play co-operatively as they prepare meals and iron clothes. They enjoy wearing brightly coloured 'wings' and develop their imaginations as they pretend to be butterflies fluttering round the nursery. Children have suitable opportunities to experiment with musical instruments and they sing well when led by the teacher.

80. In the reception class, children continue to develop skills in creating pictures. They begin to mix paints and use a range of techniques, such as sponge and finger painting, to create pictures. A good wall display shows that children have had an early introduction to the work of major artists as they make pictures in the style of Jackson Pollock. Children have some opportunity to take part in role-play, but this area of the classroom is not well organised and play is seldom sustained.

## **Physical development**

81. Teaching in this area is good in the nursery. Staff in the nursery plan carefully to ensure that children have access to a suitable range of experiences in the cramped outdoor area. Children climb, balance and slide. They enjoy playing with a range of wheeled toys, although the scope for developing their skills is limited by lack of space. Activities are changed regularly. Children develop suitable skills in using balls and acquiring early football skills. There is also good provision for developing small motor skills. Staff give good support to individuals to help them become independent in cutting with scissors and using tools such as hole punches. Children gain confidence and dexterity as they are skilfully guided in working with clay and in stitching their butterflies.

82. By the time they are aged five, the majority of children achieve the expected standard in physical development. However, the quality of teaching in this area of learning is unsatisfactory in the reception class, because the tasks lack challenge for a significant proportion of children, particularly the higher attainers, and they do not develop their skills sufficiently. Learning is also limited by poor equipment, for example balls which are too flat to bounce. There is currently no suitable provision for outdoor play. Provision for the development of other skills is satisfactory.

## **ENGLISH**

83. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level or above in English was well below the national average, and well below the average for schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven, the proportion reaching the expected level or higher in reading and writing was also well below the national average. When the results are compared to those of similar schools, they are well below average in reading and below average in writing. Results over time show a declining trend overall in Key Stage 2. The school explains that the well below average performance is due largely to the high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, and particularly those who are at the early stages of learning English. In addition, an unusually high proportion of pupils join the school other than at the usual time of admission. This has led to much uncertainty, and a large number of pupils have had disrupted schooling. For example, 22 pupils in the current Year 2 have attended since the reception class. In that period of time, they have worked with 40 other pupils who have joined and later left the class. In the current Year 6, 24 pupils who have been in the school since Year I have worked with an additional 62 pupils who joined and left the class during the same period of time.

84. The school has provided information to show that pupils who remain in school achieve well in reading because they benefit from settled schooling during both key stages. When a comparison is made between the standards achieved by these pupils when aged seven and 11, 77 per cent of them achieved the expected level, or above, for their age in reading at the end of Key Stage 2. This level of performance is well above the average for similar



schools. Inspection evidence indicates that overall attainment levels for pupils aged seven and 11 are below those expected for their age, though standards in writing are well below, but standards in speaking and listening match age-related expectations. The impact of turbulence has a larger influence on pupils' achievement than the difficulties caused by learning English as an additional language.

85. Literacy has been given a high profile in the school and pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to improve their reading skills in almost all subjects. By Year 6, pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to speak and listen to one another and all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, develop confidence and an ability to express themselves clearly using appropriate vocabulary. However, writing is a weakness and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities in several subjects to write at length, or record using their own words.

86. Pupils learn to listen closely to their teachers, particularly when they ensure that all pupils take part in discussion through skilful and well-directed questions. Pupils eagerly join in discussions of shared texts and listen attentively to their peers. As pupils move through the school, they become progressively more confident in speaking to a range of audiences in a variety of contexts. Pupils often make good progress in 'circle time' lessons. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were seen to value one another's contributions and think through their ideas before speaking. By Year 6, pupils, including those with English as an additional language, confidently contribute in small group and class discussions, with higher attainers making effective use of good levels of vocabulary. Pupils often collaborate well and sustain concentration without the intervention of the teacher. However, the progress of some pupils is hindered during some over-long introductions to literacy lessons, when teachers talk too much, and provide pupils with few opportunities to gain confidence and develop their self-esteem when responding to incisive questioning. Pupils benefit from open questioning in other subjects, such as mathematics, religious education and science, when pupils are encouraged to discuss their findings and value each other's contributions. When working in small groups, pupils with special educational and those with English as an additional language needs talk with confidence and flourish when given the well-focused support.

87. By Year 2, standards in reading are below expectations and a significant minority of pupils are unable to read independently. Pupils' enthusiasm for reading varies considerably and those who enjoy reading do so with some confidence. A significant minority of pupils can sound out unfamiliar words and use a good range of strategies to find their meaning. However, levels of accuracy are below those usually expected for pupils aged seven, and many find it difficult to understand their texts without adult support. Very few pupils read with expression when working by themselves, though they enjoy reading expressively when sharing the texts in groups. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading in lessons and through the key stages. Pupils make good progress in some classes, such as those seen in Key Stage 2, where well-designed reading records and graded reading materials are used to plan the pupils' work and provide appropriately matched tasks. By Year 6, a significant minority of pupils do not read challenging texts, and many find it difficult to read aloud fluently,

although accuracy levels are satisfactory. Just a small proportion of higher attainers benefit from reading a wide range of genres and . These pupils are enthusiastic readers and eagerly talk about their favourite authors and poems. Library knowledge and research skills are sound overall, but very few parents are involved in their children's learning. Pupils have little idea of how to improve their reading, because specific targets are not consistently set by teachers and shared with pupils and parents.

88. By Years 2 and 6, standards in writing are below age-related expectations. However, good progress has been made since the previous inspection with regard to increasing the range of writing activities, including poetry. By studying poetry, higher attaining pupils have been successful in developing a stimulating and rhythmic style. By Year 6, the small number of higher attainers write good stories which hold the reader's interest. Standards of accuracy in spelling and punctuation are satisfactory for those pupils who have attended the school through both key stages. Standards of handwriting are well below the level expected at both key stages. Pupils do not benefit from a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting, and this has an adverse impact on standards throughout the school. Consequently, few pupils in Year 6 write fluently, with a legible, joined style, and standards of presentation are low across all subjects. Pupils have yet to benefit from the consistent use of information technology to draft and re-draft their work.

89. The majority of pupils who attend the school through both key stages achieve standards that match the national expectation for pupils aged 11. During the inspection, pupils made good progress in the majority of lessons seen in both key stages. When pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are withdrawn for specialist support, they make good progress because they are given work and targets which closely match their stages of learning. The quality of their learning reflects the good quality support and guidance. However, the small number of higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged with appropriate tasks; this is largely due to the lack of a consistent use of assessment procedures.

90. The quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall in both key stages, though teaching was good in half the lessons seen. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge, and this enables them to give clear explanations using appropriate vocabulary. In the good lessons, teachers used the resources well to support a brisk pace which captured pupils' interests and imagination. In lessons, the teachers support pupils well when contributing to discussions and when working in small groups. For example, in 'circle time' lessons, pupils respond well to challenging questions by listening to one another and asking questions to develop their own ideas. In Key Stage 2, pupils are used to working co-operatively and this enables the teachers to focus support effectively on particular groups of pupils. A weakness in the teaching is the prolonging of introductions without engaging pupils in discussion. This results in some pupils, particularly boys, being inattentive. Another weakness is the lack of challenge for the small proportion of above-average attaining pupils; information from marking and assessment procedures is not used consistently to help planning and identify targets for improvement, although this weakness has an impact on both average and higher attainers.

91. Currently, there is no subject leadership. The National Literacy Strategy has been adopted, although the procedures are not followed consistently across the school and lessons have not been regularly monitored. The school recognises the need to improve handwriting and standards of presentation and is addressing these weaknesses in its planning. Assessment procedures are being established but the information has yet to be used consistently to guide planning and help raise standards. Reading resources for the National Literacy Strategy have been improved significantly since the previous inspection, but the school recognises the need to improve resources for library provision, which are currently unsatisfactory. The school has plans to improve the library provision as part of the rebuilding programme.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. The results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that pupils achieved standards that were well below average compared with all schools nationally, and below when compared to those of schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, the proportion of pupils reaching standards above those expected for pupils aged 11 was close to the national average. Results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below both the national average and the average for similar schools.

93. When considering the results over a four-year period to 1999, the results show a declining trend overall, and with a marked decline for the girls. The school explains that the well below average performance and continuing decline in standards are due to the unusually high proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time of admission. For example, of the 43 pupils in Year 6 who took the national tests in 1999, just 28 had completed Key Stage 1 tests in the school. However, those pupils who remain at the school achieve well. When a comparison is made between the standards achieved by these pupils when aged seven and 11, 90 per cent of them achieved the expected level, or above, for their age at the end of Key Stage 2. This level of performance is well above the average for schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

94. Inspection evidence shows that standards achieved by pupils in the current Years 2 and 6 are below age-related expectations. Most pupils develop a confident understanding of the number system and all become increasingly proficient in mental computation as they move through the school. This is a strength, and pupils benefit from regular practice at the start of lessons and from opportunities to discuss different strategies. Where teaching is most effective, it is lively, has a brisk pace; challenges all pupils with carefully targeted questions, and enables the higher attainers to make rapid progress. Where teaching is weak, the start of the lesson is too long, pupils become restless, and lose concentration. Pupils with special educational needs are taught appropriately both in class and in small groups, but their progress is slow. By Year 2, most pupils gain a grasp of number facts to 20 and can recall them, but a few have difficulty in adding to ten, and easily forget what they have been taught. Pupils make appropriate and frequently good progress in Key Stage 2 by developing skills in analysing patterns in numbers, extracting and interpreting data, and solving numerical

problems. Some pupils in Years 4 and 5, especially boys, attain high standards, and display confidence in accurately adding three-digit numbers, checking results for accuracy, and recording data in a frequency tables and diagrams. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils add and accurately subtract numbers above 1000, recognise proportion, and calculate perimeter. However, both average and lower attainers have weaknesses in multiplication, problem-solving, probability and interpreting graphs.

95. All aspects of mathematics are given appropriate consideration. However the presentation of written work is often inconsistent, and in some classes the work is carelessly set out, and some is unfinished. In others, tables of data are incomplete; little regard is paid to the squares provided, and vertical calculations are not written in columns. The quality and usefulness of teachers' marking are inconsistent, because it does not always indicate the standards reached nor how pupils can improve their work.

96. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and lessons follow the prescribed format. In a very good lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 initially worked enthusiastically with the teacher, and each other, to round three-digit numbers to multiples of 10 or 100. With success behind them, pupils explored number patterns at different levels of complexity, which were carefully matched by the teacher so that each pupil built on prior knowledge. High attaining pupils were set challenges to add sets of two and three-digit numbers, whilst most pupils worked in pairs. Effective intervention by the teacher added to the challenge and fun of the learning. The small group of lower attaining pupils worked productively with a classroom assistant to consolidate simple number patterns. This arrangement is most effective in those classes where the class assistant is actively engaged in challenging each pupil. When pupils are withdrawn, they are provided with carefully planned work which matches the needs of individual pupils and consolidates what has been taught by the class teacher. Good communication between the class teachers and the special needs co-ordinator helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers, but some who join the school during the academic year take time to adjust, and their progress is initially slow. In lessons where they receive additional specialist support, they make good progress.

97. The quality of teaching and learning was never less than satisfactory, and it was judged to be satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. Common features of almost all lessons were the good management of behaviour, and lively presentations which captured the interest of pupils. In addition, pupils benefit from clear explanations of strategies to successfully develop their mental skills. In the best lessons, teachers have clear intentions and pupils know what they expected to learn. They plan the activities to build on learned skills and allow scope for individual learning and reflection. Plenary sessions are used well to monitor progress, identify misconceptions, and consolidate expectations. However, in some lessons, expectations are not made sufficiently clear and pupils are not sure what is expected of them. The majority of pupils are keen to learn, although some found concentration for long periods difficult, especially when confined to the carpet.

98. Pupils' numeracy skills are used to support work in science, design technology, music and art. However, there is little evidence to indicate that these skills are built into the planning or developed systematically throughout the school. An exception was an information technology lesson where pupils used the data from a mathematics lesson and entered it into a spreadsheet. In this lesson, pupils showed a good level of confidence in the manipulation of data and the creation of mathematical models using a computer.

99. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who is enthusiastic; has a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy, and has revised the policy on mathematics. He has led training for staff, and workshops for parents on mathematics, which were well attended. Planning is monitored, though the co-ordinator's role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has yet to be fully developed. An audit of standards, planning and resources identified shortages in equipment and some weaknesses in planning and assessment. The assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory because they are not standardised across the school; targets for individual and group improvement cannot be set with accuracy, and the progress of pupils is not tracked. Most classrooms have interesting and frequently interactive displays, and several corridors have examples of reflective patterns, tessellation, and shapes, which reflect the work carried out pupils in mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

100. Results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that pupils achieved attainment levels which were well below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching standards above those expected for pupils aged 11 was well below the national average. When the results are compared to those of schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, they are also well below average. Results over time show a declining trend overall; when considered over a four-year period to 1999, the results show a marked decline in the standards achieved by girls. The school attributes the well below average performance and continuing decline in standards to the unusually high proportion of pupils who join the school after the usual time of admission. In addition, the school has a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, including many who are at the early stages of learning English. For example, more than twice the number of pupils in the current Year 6 have joined or left the school during Key Stages 1 and 2. Results of the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 also show pupils achieving attainment levels well below the national average. Similarly, a high proportion of pupils in Key Stage 1 have had disrupted schooling. Of the 27 pupils currently in Year 2, 44 per cent joined during the key stage and almost 33 per cent are at the early stages of learning English an additional language.

101. Standards observed in lessons and in other work around the school are at levels below those expected for pupils' aged seven and eleven. Pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, are keen to talk about their work and show what they understand and can do. A particular weakness in Key Stage 1 is pupils' poor writing skills, which inhibit their ability to record their work. Pupils' under-developed writing skills continue to impede some aspects of

pupils' work in Key Stage 2, where even copied work shows inaccurate spelling of scientific words. Overall, in the recording of science work, the expectations of higher attainers were similar those of the lower attainers. Science has yet to be given a high profile in the school, although pupils benefit from aspects of their learning being reinforced in design and technology, in work on forces, and in physical education, when attention is given to the body's performance during exercise.

102. By Year 2, pupils have an understanding of the types of mini-beasts found in the local environment. They are beginning to set up simple investigations and predict what might happen when the conditions vary. Pupils understand that plants need certain conditions for healthy growth and are beginning to predict what might happen when conditions change. The majority of pupils are beginning to understand the functions of some of the organs of the human body, such as the eye, and use bar charts to record the popularity of different foods. The large majority of pupils do not record accurately and have difficulty using scientific vocabulary in their writing. All but the small proportion of higher attainers have difficulty relating science to every-day life, though they are familiar with electrical circuits and some of the properties of magnets.

103. By the age of 11, pupils have a broad understanding of science. They understand about materials and how they change, electrical circuits, forces, magnetism, stretching and squeezing and temperature changes. Pupils can predict and run a fair test, though recording skills are limited. The work of higher attainers is well presented and most can write up investigative procedures in an orderly way. During the inspection, good examples of investigations were seen. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed studying the properties of magnets, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 were constructing their own electrical circuits and making predictions. All pupils were very involved and successfully completed their investigations, thus increasing their knowledge and understanding of science.

104. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons and those pupils who have not had disrupted schooling achieve well overall. Pupils with special education needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress when given well-focused support. However, a specific weakness is the lack of extension work for the higher attaining pupils, because they are not given sufficient opportunities to plan and develop their own experiments. This is due, in part, to the emphasis placed on teacher-directed work. However, pupils are encouraged to learn and use scientific vocabulary, which the small proportion of higher attainers do with some confidence. Pupils enjoy working in groups and value each other's contributions. All but a few have good relationships with their teachers and value each other's work.

105. The quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. One of the lessons seen was good, but two were unsatisfactory because the practical activities were not well organised and the lessons lacked pace. In consequence, pupils lost interest in some parts of the lessons and made limited progress. Overall, pupils have good attitudes to work and they make good gains in their knowledge and understanding, especially during stimulating practical lessons. A strength in teaching is in the management of pupils and the use of support staff and resources. In the best teaching, lessons were well planned with differentiated tasks delivered

at a brisk pace. Pupils make significant gains in their knowledge and understanding because the tasks are interesting and, in the main, match their learning needs. However, an overall weakness in the teaching is the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils in the form of independent work and tasks which use their prior knowledge and understanding to stretch their thinking further.

106. The school has identified science as a focus for development. The subject co-ordinator has re-organised resources which are well used, and reviewed the planning in the light of recent national guidance although assessment procedures remain unsatisfactory. The role of the subject co-ordinator has yet to be fully developed, although she recognises the need to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, and give her colleagues additional support. Those pupils who participate in the after-school science and environment club are given good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of environmental issues and the conditions suitable for healthy plant growth. The subject has yet to make a strong contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, although the group work encourages co-operation and the development of good relationships.

**107. In several subjects, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, although some conclusions are drawn from the few lessons observed and the scrutiny of previously completed work.**

## **ART**

108. Standards achieved at the ends of both key stages are generally similar to those expected of pupils of the same age. The displays of paintings show that pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Art is taught in all year groups, and is usually timetabled to alternate with design and technology. Recently, all year groups focused on studies of the work of major artists. Pupils in reception experimented with rolling marbles in paint and over paper to produce pictures in the style of Jackson Pollock. Pupils in Year 1 worked creatively on an extended study of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, making clay models and paper sunflowers as well as painting pictures. Pupils in another Year 1 class successfully used collage techniques to copy a Monet picture. Pupils in Year 2 produced pictures in the style of Klee and Mondrian. Effective links are made with mathematics as pupils are guided to recognise the geometric basis in the paintings of many modern artists, such as Kandinsky, whose work prompted pupils to write about concentric circles. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 experimented with a suitable range of techniques, for example, exploring pointillism in a study of Seurat. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 pupils made effective copies of a painting of a bridge by Van Gogh and of a work by Gwen John. Pupils achieved good standards as they made paper sculptures in response to work by Escher. However, there is little other evidence of three-dimensional work.

109. Pupils have benefited from working with students from Barnet College to redesign the playground mural. Art, in the form of the attractive displays, makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, but the school has yet to develop studies of non-Western art. Resources are generally adequate, although the co-ordinator has identified the need to extend the range of art books for children and for use by teachers. The school intends to develop the planning and make use of national guidance.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Pupils achieve standards in design and technology which are similar to those usually found at age seven but below them for pupils aged 11. Aspects of design and technology are integrated into other aspects of the curriculum and enhance pupils' understanding in several subjects, including science and art. Evidence from displays shows that pupils' skills in designing, making and evaluating are developed but they are unsatisfactory overall, although there are examples of good practice in both key stages. The limited number of displays included toys which make use of moving parts and models which support pupils' knowledge and understanding in their science work.

111. By Year 2, pupils generate ideas making use of pivots, such as windmills, butterflies and flowers with petals. Pupils explore a small range of materials and use simple tools safely. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were given good opportunities to work with different materials and tools in the designing and making of a pneumatic toy. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were seen building on the work on forces they had previously covered in the making of a mechanical toy. These pupils were encouraged to plan and evaluate their work using a design sheets and clear criteria. In both these lessons, pupils worked with commitment and enthusiasm, but they struggled to match the products to the designs and showed little awareness of the properties of the materials they were using. Teachers place a good emphasis on the whole process of designing, making, evaluating and refining, but opportunities are limited for pupils to select materials and use a range of tools. The subject is not allocated sufficient curriculum time to develop pupils' designing and making skills and pupils make unsatisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. This is despite examples of good teaching which was well focused, and which gave pupils good opportunities to generate their ideas and refine their products. Pupils do not achieve well over time due largely to the lack of curriculum time which is given to the subject and the skills are not systematically taught. The large turnover of pupils also has a negative impact on the progress they make. Currently, the subject is without a co-ordinator and standards are not as high as those reported in the previous inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

112. Standards of attainment are below those expected by the end of both key stages. Pupils throughout the school achieve appropriately in lessons, but a large number of pupils enter the school having begun their education elsewhere, and this limits progress in their learning over time.

113. By Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the local environment, although they have difficulty recording their work. The small proportion of higher attaining pupils express views and opinions on features of the environment of a locality they find attractive or unattractive. They have a sound understanding, for example, of the effects of weather on the environment. Simple mapping skills are developed and pupils draw maps of routes around the school and identify well-known features on local maps.



114. By Year 6, pupils use simple skills and sources of evidence to respond to a range of geographical questions. However, the many pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs find it difficult to communicate findings using appropriate vocabulary. The majority of pupils describe, in simple terms, how people can both improve and damage the environment. They have a good understanding of the effects of pollution and search for clues to discover change in the environment over time. They give considered opinions on whether the local High Street should be closed to traffic. Pupils show a sound awareness that different places may have both similar and different characteristics, as for example, when they compare their own locality to Chemakoli, an Indian village. Pupils in this key stage have too few well-resourced opportunities to develop skills required to investigate places and themes.

115. Pupils benefit from teaching which makes effective use of the local environment to stimulate their interest in the subject, although they have too few opportunities to investigate places and themes. Teachers ensure that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development and sense of citizenship. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their literacy skills through independent research and extended writing.

116. The co-ordinator has produced a clear action plan for the subject's development which includes monitoring of teaching and learning and the adoption of national guidelines to help with planning and assessment. Resources have improved since the last inspection, although there are insufficient information books and artefacts to develop pupils' own independent learning skill. The use of information technology as a tool for learning is underdeveloped. Local visits and field trips are well used to enrich pupils' experiences.

## **HISTORY**

117. A large number of pupils enter the school having begun their education elsewhere. There is also a very high number of pupils for whom English is an additional language, and a significant number with special educational needs. In consequence, standards achieved by the majority of pupils are below those expected for their age at the end of both key stages, particularly in terms of skills and understanding. However, pupils in both key stages continue to make sound progress in lessons, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection.

118. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound understanding of old and new. They know about changes that have occurred in their own short lives and are therefore in a sound position to study changes over a longer time period. They know that we can find out about the past by talking to older people, such as parents and grandparents, and from books and pictures. By Year 2, the higher attaining pupils use the terms, past, present and future, and distinguish between fact and fiction. They understand that we know about the past beyond living memory because of what was left behind, such as toys from the past, and from stories told through generations. However, many pupils demonstrate little factual knowledge of the main events and people studied.

119. In Key Stage 2, pupils begin to develop a sense of chronology and understand that the past can be divided into different and distinctive periods of time. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills as they develop a historical vocabulary when describing events. Pupils in a Year 6 lesson, for example, used skills of skimming and scanning acquired in their literacy lesson that morning. However, the practice is inconsistent and teachers have yet to fully realise the contribution the subject can make to pupil's literacy skills. By Year 6, pupils learn about selected periods of the history of Britain from Roman times to the present. They understand the reasons behind the Roman invasion of Britain and appreciate the impact of the occupation. The higher attaining pupils understand how the monarchy influenced the lives of people in Tudor times and the impact of past decisions on the present. The majority of pupils know about some of the well known people from this period, like Henry VIII and Anne Bolyn. They develop sound subject knowledge and are able to recall information about the periods studied. They have not, however, systematically developed the historical skills of interpretation and enquiry, or gained a sufficient knowledge of dates and facts relating to the periods studied.

120. The quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, though there was one unsatisfactory lesson where the pace of learning was too slow. One third of lessons seen were good, and the remainder were satisfactory. Teachers generally display good knowledge of the subject, enabling them to give clear explanations and to motivate pupils' interest. A particular strength of the teaching is teachers' good pupil management, based on strong relationships. This gives all pupils the opportunity to learn in a calm, peaceful environment. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and of those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, their needs are effectively met in lessons and they too make sound progress. The learning of the small number of higher attaining pupils is limited in most classes, as lesson plans are rarely adapted to meet their needs, and expectations of what these pupils can do are too low. They have too few opportunities for independent, personal research, using a range of sources, including information technology. Most pupils have a good attitude to the subject and enjoy their lessons. Behaviour is good; pupils work at a good rate, and readily volunteer to answer questions and to join in discussion. These good attitudes and behaviour have a positive impact on their learning.

121. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. There has been no formal monitoring of teaching to help ensure consistency of practice. Although the scheme of work effectively guides teachers' planning, there are no whole-school procedures for assessing what pupils' know, understand and can do. As a result, skills are not progressively developed as pupils move through the school. Resources have improved since the time of the previous inspection. Visits to places of historical interest, such as the Bethnal Green Toy Museum and the Verulamium, are well used to enhance the curriculum.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

122. The development of information technology is a major focus for the school and recent improvements are having a positive impact on standards. Attainment levels match the national expectation for pupils aged seven, though they are below the expectation for pupils aged 11. Appropriate skills are now being taught in all year groups, but pupils in Years 5 and 6 have not had sufficient experience across all elements of the information technology curriculum.

123. All pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in the newly-developed computer suite. During the inspection, some lessons had a limited impact on pupils' progress because the full quota of computers had not been installed. Teachers adapted their lessons well, and ensured that all pupils could learn. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by classroom assistants and teachers. They learn at a similar rate to the rest of the class. Teachers are careful to include pupils with English as an additional language, and those pupils who have recently arrived in the school. The good relationships in all classes ensure that pupils readily take turns and help others.

124. The quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, though it was good or better in half the lessons seen. Examples of good teaching were seen in both key stages. Teachers plan effectively using national guidance which has recently been implemented. Explanations are always clear and, consequently, pupils understand what they are to do. Pupils in Year 1 confidently use a simple word bank to create sentences. They make satisfactory progress in learning to print their work, but the activity provides little challenge for higher attaining pupils. In a very good lesson Year 2, pupils worked confidently as they searched for information on a CD Rom. They made good progress in navigating their way through the pages, because the previous lesson prepared them well for the work, and the teacher had produced a very good worksheet requiring them to use a range of skills.

125. Data-handling skills are suitably developed across the school. Pupils in Year 1 prepare simple whole-class graphs and understand how to interpret them. In Year 2, pupils collect and enter information and learn to present it in different ways, for example in pictographs, pie charts and block graphs. This work is suitably developed in Years 3 and 4 as pupils present their findings on bullying for the school council. By Year 6, pupils present their findings as line graphs, although these are not always used with appropriate data. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress in control. They enter a series of instructions to draw letter shapes, such as 'M' and 'N'. Although progress is limited because pupils have to take turns on the machines, the teacher's organisation partly compensates for this. Pupils try out their instructions on a large grid before using the computer, and they begin to learn to identify errors and to change their work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress as they work on spreadsheets. Most enter data confidently and the majority recall how to identify and enter the correct formulae. The teacher challenges higher attaining pupils suitably by setting them an additional activity.

126. Information technology is used appropriately to support work in mathematics. There is little evidence of computers being used in other subjects, such as history or geography, or for word processing. The use of computers is restricted in Key Stage 2 because there are no computers in the classrooms. Consequently, pupils have no opportunity to reinforce and consolidate their skills, or to use the computer during other lessons. Planning is based on national guidance and this ensures the progressive development of skills. Assessment activities

are being introduced, although practice is not yet consistent across the school and planning is not based on assessment information. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject area. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching or to work alongside colleagues.

## **MUSIC**

127. By the end of both key stages, standards in music are below those expected for seven and eleven year olds. The school has been unable to recruit a music co-ordinator and most teachers lack confidence or subject knowledge. The school has recently introduced a commercial scheme of work to support staff and to ensure that pupils have a suitable breadth of experience. Although teachers find this scheme useful, it has not had time to become established across the school and progress made by pupils over time is unsatisfactory. This is due, in part, to the large number of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time of entry.

128. Pupils in Year 1 learn to listen attentively and to identify different sounds. They choose appropriate percussion instruments to represent sounds such as footsteps and the waves on the seashore. By Year 2, pupils learn a simple song and, with help, take turns in singing alternate lines. They enjoy singing but the standard of performance and of general musical understanding is below that usually found for pupils aged at seven. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be satisfactory. Teachers make effective use of the new scheme of work and the supporting taped material. Pupils benefit significantly from the good teaching because the questions help them to strengthen their understanding, and close guidance helps them to improve their performance.

129. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be satisfactory overall, although it was good in one lesson and unsatisfactory in another. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson because too much was attempted. Pupils had too little time to respond to what they heard; some misbehaved and progress was limited. Other lessons were planned more carefully as part of a sequence. Where teaching is best, the teacher's good organisation ensures that all pupils are fully involved. Pupils respond well to the teacher's expectations and show enthusiasm as they create music and perform to their peers. Learning is good because the teacher uses praise, encouragement and well-timed intervention to guide pupils to improving their work. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can follow a simple rhythmic pattern, and begin to recognise the use of symbols to record musical ideas. In Years 5 and 6, pupils begin to compose their own music, to record it with symbols and to perform with others.

130. There are no music clubs, but some older pupils benefit from extra-curricular tuition in brass and woodwind. The school occasionally arranges recitals, for example of brass or cello. At present there is no pianist on the staff. Songs in assemblies are sung with enthusiasm, but lack the guidance provided by an accompaniment. In general, however, music only plays a limited role in pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Currently, the subject is without a co-ordinator and the school recognises the need to develop music throughout the school. The time allocated to music is well below that found in the majority of other schools. Shortcomings in instrumental resources, identified in the previous inspection, remain.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

131. By the end of both key stages, standards in physical education, including gymnastics and game skills, are similar to those in other schools. This picture is similar to that reported in the previous inspection. By Year 2, pupils show confidence when handling small games equipment and they pass the ball with appropriate pace and accuracy. By Year 6, pupils move with confidence and work collaboratively in order to achieve some good levels of performance in gymnastics. Higher attaining pupils show good levels of control in their movements and work with composure. The majority of pupils in Year 6 are confident athletes who would benefit from more challenging activities and further opportunities to plan and evaluate their work. Extra-curricular activities give pupils some opportunities to strengthen their skills, and the engagement of outside specialists enhances pupils' learning.

132. The quality of teaching and learning was judged to be satisfactory overall, although one lesson seen was unsatisfactory. Pupils are keen to participate and they make the most gains in their skill development and understanding when the teaching includes well-paced practical activities, clear demonstrations and opportunities to practise and refine their skills. Aspects of good teaching were seen in most lessons, and particularly in the gymnastics games skills. However, pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to think about the quality of their work. Unsatisfactory teaching lacked pace and included few teaching points. In consequence, pupils made unsatisfactory progress because they were not given enough time to practise and improve their skills. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are challenged by most of the practical activities, though higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently stretched. This is due in part to a lack of detailed subject guidance to ensure that skills are taught systematically in both key stages. There are no whole-school procedures for assessing what pupils' know, understand and can do. As a result, skills are not progressively developed as pupils move through the school. Currently, the subject is without a co-ordinator despite full recognition of the need to develop physical education throughout the school. National guidance to support the teaching of physical education is now available for schools.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

133. Standards are below the level expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1, but they match the objectives by the end of Key Stage 2. This picture represents a substantial improvement to the one reported in previous inspection, when the school was not meeting statutory requirements and pupils were underachieving at both key stages. Teachers now make effective use of the Agreed Syllabus and requirements are met. Although time allocated to the direct teaching of subject is below average, assemblies and well-planned circle times effectively support pupils' understanding of moral and social issues and enhance the teaching of religious education. Throughout the school, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of human relationships, Christianity and other faiths. Most pupils have a good understanding of the nature of prayer. This is seen in their response to daily acts of collective worship.

134. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know a range of Bible stories, such as *the Good Samaritan* and *King David*, and display basic knowledge of some features of Christianity and other faiths, such as Islam. Higher attaining pupils interpret these stories appropriately and make some basic links between stories and festivals such as Diwali and Hanukah. All pupils know that a major element in different faiths is that of caring for one another. By Year 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs and the large number who speak English as an additional language, achieve as they should in lessons. However, most have not yet reached standards which match the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

135. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can relate some of the concepts of different faiths to their own experiences and go beyond this to discover more about religious beliefs, ideas and structures. They know facts about the main faiths in Britain such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism, and that each has a special place of worship and key leaders such as Jesus, Moses, and Muhammad. Pupils also know that each faith has a Holy Text, for example, the Qur'an, the Torah, and the Bible, and that each gives rules and examples for living. They develop a sound understanding that religions share some common features. For example, the role of festivals and the importance of giving as well as receiving are soundly understood. Pupils throughout the key stage consider basic religious concepts and ways in which they have been expressed in sacred books, daily living and rituals.

136. The quality of learning is supported by sound teaching and by pupils' good behaviour and attitudes. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was judged to be satisfactory overall, with one example of good teaching in Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils' learning in both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers, through their own personal research, are confident in teaching the subject and motivate the pupils through interesting discussion and planned questioning. A good example of this was seen in a lesson where pupils in Years 3 and 4 were being effectively challenged to consider special places and to gain knowledge of different places of worship, such as mosques, temples and synagogues. However, teachers in Key Stage 2 do not challenge the small number of higher attaining pupils to search for knowledge of activities, rituals, literature and practices of a variety of religious communities, through personal research. The support provided by the school for pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, is of good quality. This gives them full and equal access in lessons and allows them to achieve appropriately. Pupils' learning and understanding are well supported by the sensitivity with which teachers approach Christianity, other faiths, and the issues raised in lessons and circle times. Teaching in both key stages, in circle times and in assemblies, is used well to reinforce moral values and to provide recognition of pupils' own value as individuals. Most pupils throughout the school show real interest and listen attentively to teachers and to each other. They are keen to answer, and to ask relevant questions and to take part in discussions. In Key Stage 1, some pupils spend too much time sitting listening to the teacher at the end of the school day, and this results in restlessness.

137. The subject co-ordinator has been successful in ensuring that religious education is taught as a discreet subject and that it meets statutory requirements. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The importance of equality of opportunity and the need to encourage respect for, and understanding of, other faiths and cultures are emphasised appropriately in lessons. The use of outside speakers and visits to different places of worship is being developed. There is a

growing range of stimulating artefacts, which is supplemented by loans and donations from parents. Pupils would benefit from more information books to develop their research skills to help them gain a deeper understanding of the subject.