

INSPECTION REPORT

BARROW HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Westminster

LEA area: Westminster

Unique reference number: 101107

Headteacher: Mr Michael Matthews

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 30 April - 3 May 2001

Inspection number: 192792

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 7 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bridgeman Street

London

Postcode: NW8 7AL

Telephone number: 020 7641 5005

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms Julia Simpson

Date of previous inspection: 10 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9275	Candy Kalms	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	Science Art Music Special educational needs Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
3467	Margaret Rees	Team inspector	English History Geography Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Barrow Hill Junior School is an average-sized mixed school for pupils from seven to 11 years of age. There are 221 on roll, balanced overall between boys and girls. The school is oversubscribed in Years 3 and 4 but there are spare places in Years 5 and 6. The school serves a diverse community close to the northern edge of Regent's Park, and an above average proportion of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Two-thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with no predominant group, these pupils coming from all parts of the world. Over half are learning English as an additional language with 44 at an early stage. There are 10 refugee children, mainly from Iran. Over 15 per cent of the pupils joined or left the school during last year, mostly in Years 5 and 6. The proportion of the pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly average, but an above average number have Statements of Special Educational Needs. The majority of pupils transfer from the local infant school. Their attainment on entry in September 2000, as measured by National Curriculum tests, was above average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing, having fallen since the previous inspection. The school is involved in two initiatives: the 'Excellence in Cities' project and a local authority initiative for gifted pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has many strengths. It is calm, well-ordered and harmonious, providing a satisfactory education for pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds, who mix well and show a mature approach to learning. Staff successfully focus on the needs of each individual. Teaching is satisfactory overall with a significant amount that is very good or excellent. Standards are close to the national average in English, mathematics and science but are well above standards in similar schools. The school is well led and managed by the recently appointed headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head and governors, and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The emphasis on, and the quality of, teaching of literacy, are resulting in pupils making good progress in reading in particular.
- The school benefits considerably from strong leadership focused on raising standards.
- Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning, behave well and establish constructive relationships.
- The school successfully seeks to provide for the learning needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language.
- Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development.

What could be improved

- More effective use needs to be made of data to set targets and evaluate the school's progress.
- The information from regular testing is not used consistently to guide lesson planning or to provide sufficient challenge for pupils.

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 satisfactory progress since the previous inspection in March 1997. Teaching and attendance have both improved. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress, although the previously high test results have not been maintained. This is largely because less able groups of pupils have entered the school in Year 3 and high-attaining pupils left during Years 5 and 6. Standards have improved in design and technology, music and physical education - areas of particular weakness at the last inspection. The pupils' progress is rigorously assessed but information is not used consistently by all to guide lesson planning. Parents are now more involved in their children's learning and the life of the school. The strong and effective leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, and the good support from a well-organised governing body has put the school in a good position to improve further.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	C	C	A
Mathematics	A	B	C	A
Science	A	A	C	C

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

National Curriculum test results in English and mathematics were close to the national average in 2000 and well above results in similar schools (those schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals). Results in science were close to the national average and to results in similar schools. There has been a decline in results in recent years, as a result of the lower attainment of pupils on entry to the school and some high-attaining pupils leaving and being replaced by pupils who failed to achieve the expected Level 4. The school's targets for English were met in 2000 but those for mathematics were not. Further challenging targets have been set for 2001. Girls have achieved lower results than boys for the last two years, a matter that the school is currently investigating.

Attainment in English, mathematics and science currently reflects the most recent test results and is close to national expectations in each subject. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and many achieve well, although this is not a consistent picture across the school or between classes in the same year group. The recently increased emphasis on reading is successfully enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve above average standards. Many pupils speak confidently at length, using a wide range of vocabulary. Standards in history are above national expectations. Pupils also sing well in music lessons and choral groups. Attainment in all other subjects is in line with national expectations. Well-planned and effective support enables pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language to make good progress, with some of the latter becoming the highest attaining in the school by Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen, interested and well motivated. They enjoy school and show a mature approach to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils work and play well together, behaving well in lessons and around the school. They respond well to the high expectations of the staff.
Personal development and relationships	Constructive relationships exist between pupils of all backgrounds. Pupils develop independence and fulfil well the responsibilities that they are given.
Attendance	Attendance is now good, having improved considerably from being below average last year. Punctuality is a cause of concern as several pupils arrive late for school and some are frequently late.

Staff are successful in promoting high standards of behaviour while maintaining a calm, relaxed and

friendly atmosphere in the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of lessons, good in 38 per cent and very good or excellent in over 15 per cent. All of the very good and excellent teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6. English teaching is good and mathematics teaching is satisfactory. The best teaching is lively and interesting. Lessons are well planned and well resourced. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of these teachers by concentrating, working hard on tasks and collaborating well in pairs and small groups. In these lessons pupils develop new skills and consolidate their learning rapidly. Shortcomings in a small number of lessons were largely because the teachers did not have a clear picture of what the pupils were expected to learn and did not base their planning on knowledge of what skills the pupils had already mastered. This resulted in a slow pace of learning and some frustration in the pupils. The school successfully places a considerable emphasis on literacy, where teaching is good. Numeracy teaching is satisfactory with some support for the development of number skills in science and design and technology. Pupils learning English as an additional language and the pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching in their normal classes or in small withdrawal groups. The teaching of a small group of talented pupils is effective but has not been taken place for sufficient time to evaluate its impact on their progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced with an interesting variety of activities provided, including a good range of music and drama extra-curricular opportunities. All National Curriculum requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made through effective support either in class or in small withdrawal groups. Teaching is based carefully on the targets identified in each pupil's Individual Education Plan.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Well-targeted and effective support enables pupils with English as an additional language to make good progress. Great value is placed on the cultural traditions and home languages of the pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development and for their moral, social and cultural development in particular. Good provision is made for promoting the pupils' spiritual awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a level of care and support that meets well the wide variety of personal and educational needs of the pupils.

The school devotes much of its teaching time to literacy. Recent adaptations of literacy teaching and the focus on reading have been successful in improving standards. A promising area of development is the programme for gifted and talented pupils, as is the mentoring by specialist staff in which the school has recently invested.

A strong partnership has been developed between parents and the school since the appointment of the

new headteacher.

Policies are not in place for all aspects of health, safety and child protection, although these matters are taken seriously and procedures are secure.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head, has established a clear direction for the school based on a commitment to raising standards while maintaining the many positive features of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which they fulfil well. They recognise the school's strengths and the action needed to tackle any weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Informal monitoring has been effective in improving teaching. More use could be made of the assessment data now available to evaluate the progress of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Finance available to the school has been used well to maintain good staffing levels and to increase learning resources.

The new headteacher has established himself quickly. Senior staff and co-ordinators generally fulfil their roles well but the role of the senior management team needs to be more clearly defined. The accommodation available to the school is very good and is well maintained. Learning resource levels are good overall and the school is particularly well equipped with computers. There have been several staffing changes in the past year but staffing levels are good. The school seeks value for money when purchasing goods and services and is currently identifying how it can use the principles of best value most effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy at school. • Behaviour is good. • Staff help their children to grow up and take responsibility for their learning and each other. • The value placed on the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of all pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about how well their children are getting on. • Extra-curricular clubs and activities. • The consistency of homework.

The inspection team supports all of the parents' positive comments about the school. The information provided for parents through reports, half-termly plans and consultation evenings is good. There is a very good range of drama and music extra-curricular activities but little that is sporting. Homework is set regularly and supports learning well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics were close to the national average in 2000 and well above results in similar schools. Results in science were close to both the national average and results in similar schools. The main reason for the difference between these results was that higher-attaining pupils did better in English and mathematics than in science. The school met its targets in English but failed to achieve them in mathematics in 2000. The 2001 targets require an improvement in both subjects and inspection evidence indicates that they are likely to be achieved.
2. Test results have declined in recent years. They are below those at the previous inspection in mathematics, considerably below in science and only marginally higher in English. This is against rising national results. Results in English rose steadily from 1996 before declining sharply in 1999 but improving in 2000. Mathematics results followed a similar pattern to English until 1999 but declined further in 2000. Results in science started from a very high point in 1996 but have declined steadily since. There are some significant factors accounting for this decline in results. Firstly, the nature of each group of eleven-year-olds has changed. Evidence shows that the pupils' attainment on entry to the school, as measured by national tests at the age of seven, has declined from being above average to broadly in line with the national average. Furthermore, partly because of parental concerns over transfer to local secondary schools, several high-attaining pupils left the school during Years 5 and 6. Where they were replaced, this was often by pupils who subsequently did not achieve the nationally expected Level 4 by the age of 11. An analysis of the improvement made by pupils in their test results from the age of seven to eleven shows that most made at least satisfactory, and at times good, progress. This was particularly the case for the pupils who spent all four years at the school.
3. One emerging pattern in these results that is unusual when compared with national trends is that boys have done significantly better than girls in the last two years. The school has rightly started to investigate the reasons behind this. Inspection evidence tends to indicate that it may well be not that girls are underachieving, rather that boys are doing better than expected. This is largely because of the very mature and positive attitude many boys show to their work. This results in some making rapid progress, particularly when they are being prepared for sitting the tests.
4. Current standards in English, mathematics and science are comparable to the most recent test results. Overall they are close to nationally expected standards but with slightly fewer higher-attaining pupils in science. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and many achieve well, although this is not a consistent pattern throughout the school or between classes in the same year group. This is also borne out by school data from optional National Curriculum tests, which show that most pupils in one Year 5 class made good progress last year, while several pupils made unsatisfactory progress in the parallel class and failed to meet their targets. In some cases their targets for Year 6 are the same as they were previously when they were in Year 5. The target-setting process needs refinement.
5. Improving the teaching of literacy has been a major recent priority for the school. Adaptations to the Literacy Hour and extra lessons focusing on the development of reading skills have been introduced successfully. Pupils make good progress in reading and standards are above national expectations. Most pupils read accurately and with expression, and can find information from reference sources with confidence. Pupils write in a variety of forms, such as stories and poems. Most write accurately when given the chance to redraft their work but first drafts often have several errors. Standards, as a result, are close to national expectations. Speaking is promoted well. Many speak fluently using a mature and interesting range of vocabulary. They listen well, particularly when working together in groups, but also when responding to their teacher's advice.

6. Standards of numeracy are close to national expectations. Good attention is paid to mental arithmetic skills, which develop well. Pupils learn different methods of calculating and can explain these clearly when questioned. Older pupils use and apply their skills well to the solution of problems and mathematical investigations. Most pupils can calculate accurately with whole numbers and by Year 6 most higher-attaining pupils use fractions, decimals and simple percentages correctly. Pupils also understand and use the metric system of measure for length, mass and volume, many being able to convert correctly from one measure to another, such as changing centimetres into metres. Older pupils handle and interpret data well.
7. A major feature of recent improvements to the school has been the investment in a new computer suite, which was opened shortly before the start of the inspection. As a consequence, many classes were using the new machines for the first time during the inspection. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills had previously been taught on computers located in each classroom, with pupils then given the opportunity to practise and apply skills learnt. Although this meant that pupils did not always have regular opportunities to use computers, standards in ICT are still close to national expectations. Good progress was made in several lessons during the inspection. There is clearly now the potential for standards to rise with a careful balance between skills teaching in the suite and the application of these skills to support learning in other subjects,
8. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in other subjects. Many achieve well, responding well when the teaching is interesting and challenging. Attainment in most other subjects is close to national expectations, the one exception to this being in history where pupils make good progress and achieve above expected standards. A further strength is that pupils sing well, either in music lessons, school assemblies or choral groups. The school makes every attempt to ensure that the needs of each individual pupil are recognised and met. As a consequence of the well-planned and well-organised support, pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, including the small number at an early stage of learning English, make good progress. Their confidence and self-esteem develop well and several pupils with English as an additional language are amongst the highest attaining by the age of eleven.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships in the school and the pupils' personal development are very good. It is the combination of these factors that results in a harmonious atmosphere in the school and a positive experience for the pupils.
10. Pupils enjoy school and come with a willingness to learn. They are enthusiastic, well motivated and interested in their lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and follow instructions quickly. Pupils concentrate well during lessons. They eagerly ask and answer questions. For example, Year 3 pupils asked a vicar interesting questions during their visit to the local church. Pupils participate willingly in discussions, as in a Year 4 religious education lesson where they contributed many ideas about the signs and symbols used in their religions.
11. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations. Most behave well in lessons and around the school. This has a beneficial effect on the quality of life in the school and on the learning that takes place. Pupils play well together in the playground. They work in an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour, where harassment and bullying are extremely rare. There have been no exclusions this year.
12. Pupils relate well to each other and are aware of the impact of their action on others. There are harmonious relationships between pupils from the wide variety of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Pupils settle quickly to tasks set and work well independently, in small groups and in pairs. They co-operate well, sharing ideas, equipment and resources sensibly. Pupils listen carefully to each other during lessons and show respect for each other's views, feelings, values and beliefs. This was illustrated well in a Year 6 religious education lesson when the pupils listened carefully to others discussing the importance of the Koran on their lives.

Pupils are friendly and polite to each other and to adults, including visitors. The school custom is for pupils to refer to their teachers by their first names. This approach goes hand-in-hand with the friendly atmosphere in the school.

13. As pupils progress through the school they gain an increasing sense of responsibility and independence. Pupils willingly clear away after lessons, with little direction from teachers, while Year 6 pupils are paired with pupils arriving from the infant school. Pupils respond well to opportunities to show initiative in their learning. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson, they sensibly researched information about the Aztecs. They are very articulate, speak highly of their school and express their opinions sensibly about school life. They are enthusiastic about their role on the School Council and show a good understanding of the problems and issues involved in improving the school's facilities.
14. There has been a steady decrease in absence since the previous inspection and attendance is now good, with little variation between year groups. Punctuality is a problem. Several pupils arrive late for school, including some who are frequently late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching is satisfactory overall (a similar judgement to the last inspection), although there has been a reduction in the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and an increase in lessons that are very good or excellent. This is at a time when three of the staff with class responsibilities are newly qualified and one other teacher is in her first year at the school. There is, therefore, the potential for the quality of teaching to improve as these staff become more experienced. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of lessons observed during the inspection and was very good or excellent in over 15 per cent. There were some differences between the teaching in each year group and all of the very good and excellent teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6, with most of the unsatisfactory teaching occurring in one class.
16. The teaching of literacy is good overall, not only during the Literacy Hour but also in the other activities either at the beginning or end of the school day. Recent adaptations to the Literacy Hour to meet the needs of the pupils in the school have been successfully introduced. The literacy activities at the start of the day are particularly effective when the teacher has carefully planned challenging activities and the pupils understand that they are to work independently if they are not involved in a teacher-guided activity. While this is the case in most classrooms, some activities observed lacked a clear purpose and were largely filling time. The end of the day session, focusing on the work of a specific author, is particularly effective when the full time available is devoted to this activity and the teaching is lively and interesting. For example, in a Year 5 session, the enthralling reading of a story, backed by excellent questioning to draw out the pupils' reflections, resulted in the pupils becoming totally absorbed even though it was past the time to go home. There are occasions, however, when this session is rushed and not given sufficient time, thus reducing its impact. This is often because previous lessons have overrun.
17. The daily mathematics lesson has been introduced successfully in some classes but with less effect in others. Consequently, the teaching of mathematics is only satisfactory overall. Mental arithmetic sessions at the start of each lesson use a good variety of interesting activities. Pupils respond well, being keen to participate and becoming quickly engaged by the teaching. Although the direct class teaching of new skills is usually clear, there are times when the objectives for a lesson are vague. This leads to a lack of focus and a slow pace to learning. Pupils make good progress and consolidate their learning well when they are given regular opportunity to apply the skills that they have learnt to solving problems and undertaking investigations. Some support for the development of number skills was observed in other subjects but this is an area that would benefit from further development.
18. The best teaching is carried out at a lively pace, in lessons that are well structured and well resourced with clear objectives for pupils' learning. High expectations of the pupils results in their responding well to the challenge provided. Most pupils concentrate well, work hard on tasks and

activities and collaborate effectively in pairs and small groups. Lively and interesting teaching of a well-planned Year 5 ICT lesson resulted in the pupils being purposefully involved. Very good progress was made and new skills and knowledge developed well. Another very well-planned and well resourced Year 5 lesson, this time in history, was taught in a stimulating and motivating manner that promoted learning well. The high expectations of the teacher and the challenge provided by the work in a Year 6 top mathematics set enabled the pupils to consolidate learning and understanding well. High expectations were also evident in a Year 5 literacy lesson. This, coupled with good questioning and clear explanations of the features of the story being considered, elicited a good depth of response from the pupils, who contributed well, using their imagination to envisage the people and events described. This depth of understanding was also promoted well in a Year 6 religious education lesson on the Koran. The teacher encouraged the pupils to understand the importance of faith in people's lives, producing a mature response from the pupils.

19. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress as a result of effective teaching. Class teachers support pupils beyond the early stages of learning English within classrooms, guided by the specialist teacher, who plays an active role in planning jointly with the class teacher when giving in or out of class support. Good regard is given to the stages of English acquisition, with planning and tasks sufficiently modified to meet the individual pupil's needs. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well planned in conjunction with the class teacher, particularly with regard to vocabulary and language.
20. Class teachers are aware of the requirements of pupils with special educational needs as indicated in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and provide group teaching or individual support that generally meets their needs well. Tasks and activities are usually adapted to meet their needs and support staff effectively deployed. A small group of particularly talented pupils also receives good, challenging teaching; however, this programme is in its infancy and has not yet been taught for sufficient time to significantly increase the progress of the pupils.
21. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, or in some cases where lessons that were otherwise taught well still had some shortcomings, the reason was often that the teacher was unclear about the intended learning. This was because learning objectives were vague or not based upon knowledge of the ability of the pupils. These lessons lacked challenge and pace and were not well structured or well organised, resulting in time being wasted and the pupils becoming confused and frustrated and losing concentration. These weaknesses were associated with low expectations of the pupils. In general, some teachers do not make sufficient use of their assessments and evaluations of their pupils when planning lessons and activities.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the pupils are good and meet statutory requirements. The weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been tackled successfully. A map of the curriculum shows what is to be taught and when, helping teachers to ensure continuity and equality of access. Termly learning intentions have been identified for all subjects and schemes of work take account of recent national and local initiatives and recommendations. Assessments are systematically made and recorded and are available to be used in planning future work. Good progress has been made in the provision for ICT.
23. The organisation of the teaching day now ensures that pupils are taught for at least the nationally recommended amount of time in school. Time is well used, with lessons beginning very promptly at the start of the day and after breaks. Increased time has been allocated to literacy as part of the school's drive to raise standards in reading and writing. The time allocated to science is well below the usual amount in Key Stage 2 and science lessons normally take place in the afternoons when the concentration of pupils sometimes begins to flag.

24. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is very good. To deal with some disadvantages of the original organisation of the daily Literacy Hour, group work takes place in the first twenty five minutes of every day, the teacher participating in guided reading with a small group of pupils of similar attainment. This is followed by an hour of word and text level work on the first three days of each week, and by extended writing on the other two. Days end with twenty minutes of focused work on an author. This usually includes pupils being read to and sometimes poetry or singing, and makes a happy conclusion to their day. Pupils' literacy is used and developed in other subjects. Opportunities are taken to read and write stories with a historical or geographical setting. The impact of this rich and well-organised provision is apparent in standards seen in pupils' current work.
25. The school's strategy for teaching numeracy is satisfactory. Pupils are taught in sets for mathematics from entry to the school and there is free movement between the groups and additional support for those who need it.
26. There is good equality of access to the curriculum and the other opportunities that the school offers. There is good provision for pupils with individual educational needs of all kinds. Pupils with English as an additional language, those with difficulties in learning and those who are identified as particularly gifted all receive well-targeted and usually expert and effective support. Withdrawal from classrooms for individual tuition is a feature of some of this provision and teachers are alert to the need to ensure that this does not disadvantage the pupil in other ways. The organisation of appropriate and sustainable provision for gifted and talented pupils is a promisingly developing area, as is the mentoring role of special needs staff, in which the school has recently invested.
27. Although there are only a few extra-curricular activities after school, the provision for music and drama is very good and well attended. There is no provision for pupils who want to pursue their interest in sports and games. Pupils' day-to-day experience of the curriculum is enhanced by many visits in the locality and further afield, including a residential opportunity in Year 6. Good use is made of the school's community; pupils go out and about in the course of their work, for instance to a nearby church, and visitors come into school. Special events are arranged to enliven learning, such as working with a writer or an artist in residence, or occasions such as an Anglo-Saxon Day or a book fair.
28. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Proper attention is given to sex education and drugs awareness, which are either integrated with subjects such as science, discussed in circle time, or taught as an individual unit of work. Social inclusion and a sense of community are apparent in all activities and lessons, and pupils have some important areas of influence and responsibility through their elected council. Moral questions are explored in depth, for instance when pupils learn about the difficulties of very poor people in the past or in the developing world. In lessons, they are helped to reflect maturely on current issues, including instances of racial intolerance and the relationship between human beings and their environment. Assemblies make a strong contribution to their sense of community and social responsibility but do not always include acts of worship or sustained reflection. Spiritual experience and understanding are features of religious education lessons and the school sets a high value on pupils' own expressions of belief. Pupils are encouraged to enjoy what is different, worthy and beautiful in many lessons and in assemblies. This results in a strong ethos of mutual respect and appreciation.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The school provides pupils with a caring environment that supports their learning and development. The new headteacher is committed to high standards of care and is working hard to ensure that he knows all of the pupils well. The school liaises closely with outside agencies including the school nurse. Satisfactory systems operate to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Child protection is taken seriously and procedures are secure, although the school is without a policy and staff have not received any recent training. The new headteacher recognises the need to comply with statutory requirements for health and safety and plans to review the current policy. Informal checks of the premises and site take place regularly and most equipment is subject to annual checks. Appropriate action is taken where needed but details of any issues and action taken are not being systematically recorded. While day-to-day first aid and care for pupils who are unwell is satisfactory, staff have not undertaken the full 'first aid at work' course and records of all playground accidents are not methodically kept.
30. The school's informal methods for monitoring and improving attendance have helped to improve levels of attendance and reduce unauthorised absences this year. Registers are checked daily and parents contacted promptly when pupils are absent. Parents are reminded about the need for regular attendance and are encouraged not to take their children on holiday during term time. The school is strict about what constitutes being late but poor punctuality is not being sufficiently monitored.
31. Pupils' personal development is well supported through the caring atmosphere and the good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. Teachers know the pupils well and understand their individual needs. They use this knowledge to monitor the pupils' personal development. Teachers are concerned about pupils' progress and well-being and regularly discuss any issues or concerns that arise in staff meetings. Pupils' achievements are regularly recognised and rewarded in assembly. Learning mentors have recently been introduced in the school and are beginning to provide valuable individual support to pupils where necessary. There are plans to develop their roles and this will include responsibility for monitoring pupils with unsatisfactory attendance.
32. The school is committed to, and has effective procedures for, promoting good behaviour. These are implicit in the ethos and values of the school and are understood by pupils. Class teachers have a framework of rewards and sanctions but have individual discretion on managing behaviour in their class. In general, teachers manage behaviour well. Any concerns are discussed in staff meetings and only the most serious incidents are referred to the headteacher. Bullying in the school is rare and pupils agree that the headteacher deals very well with any incidents that do occur.
33. Clear procedures are used to identify needs and target support for pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Effective admission procedures ensure that pertinent information on the background of pupils is recorded and shared with teachers to ensure that they settle quickly.
34. Much has been done to tackle the weaknesses in assessment at the last inspection. Effective whole-school systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment have been developed. There is a good foundation for assessment in all subjects through the end-of-topic evaluations that the teachers make of the pupils' progress towards the learning intentions. Teachers also set individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics and these are shared with pupils and parents. This helps to ensure a good standard of evaluation at a class level. Teachers carefully evaluate pupils' attainment in the national tests and analyse the performance of different groups. However, the school does not yet make full use of the information to plan work at a suitable level for each child.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The majority of parents support the school and what it provides. Those who completed the questionnaire and attended the pre-inspection meeting were happy with many aspects of the school. They also felt that the new headteacher has brought considerable improvements to the school. Most parents feel that the school is well managed, that their children like school and that behaviour is good. Many report that staff have high expectations and that as a result their children are making good progress. The inspection team supports the positive views expressed by parents. A small number of parents were unhappy about the levels of homework, did not feel they received enough information about how their child was getting and were unhappy about the range of activities provided by the school outside lessons. Inspection evidence does not support their concerns. For example, homework is set regularly and the information parents receive about their child's progress is good. The inspection team found that the school offers a good range of activities outside the classroom. These include visits to places of interest as well as a wide range of extra-curricular activities; however, it is acknowledged that these do not include sporting activities.
36. The school has established a close and effective partnership with parents in this culturally diverse school. This partnership is forged from the time that pupils transfer from the infant school. New parents have opportunities to visit the school and meet with staff before their children start. Daily communication is good. Teachers are readily available at the start and finish of the day to discuss any concerns or matters of importance.
37. Parents are invited to class assemblies each week and to school productions. Some parents help around the school and have contributed their expertise to the curriculum, for example talking to pupils during 'Black History' week. A regular pattern of homework has been established and guidelines have been sent to parents ensuring that they are fully aware of the school's expectations. The headteacher has encouraged further successful initiatives to enable parents to become more involved in all aspects of school life and to support the education of their children. A new parents' room has just been refurbished and a Parents' Association recently formed, which has started to arrange events to raise funds for the school.
38. The school provides good information for parents. This helps them to become involved in their children's learning and to understand the work of the school. There is, however, no provision for information to be available in some of the languages spoken in the school. The weekly newsletter introduced by the new headteacher keeps parents well informed on school matters, diary dates and forthcoming events. A notice board outside the school also enables parents to be kept informed about daily events in the school. The prospectus contains useful information but, as with the governors' annual report, it continues to lack some required information. Each half-term parents receive details that clearly illustrate what the pupils will be learning. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Meetings each term provide good opportunities for parents to discuss pupils' progress or any concerns. Annual written reports are satisfactory and inform parents about what their children know and can do as well as providing brief information on where they need to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The newly appointed headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head, who was acting headteacher for one term, has quickly established a clear direction for the school. He has rapidly gained the respect and support of parents and the local community to such an extent that pupil numbers are expected to rise next year. In spite of considerable changes in the teaching staff the commitment to high standards has been maintained, as have the many strengths of the school. Senior staff and co-ordinators generally fulfil their roles well, although many curriculum areas are being looked after on a temporary basis by the headteacher and the deputy head. Plans are in place to remedy this situation from September. The senior management team has been extended but its role, function and responsibilities are not clearly defined. Consequently, the

burden of much of the school development falls to the headteacher and the deputy head.

40. Some formal monitoring of teaching has been undertaken but much has been on an informal basis. This has, however, been effective in identifying where weaknesses exist and in enabling action to be taken. This process now needs to become more systematic and focused sharply on specific aspects of teaching that the school is seeking to improve. Teachers' planning is checked and samples of pupils' work are analysed, with feedback given to teachers in both cases. A considerable bank of data has been gathered on pupils' performance in national tests and other assessments. This information is used well to set targets and look at overall performance. More use could be made, however, to evaluate the progress of the school and as a management tool to establish, for example, why pupil progress is more rapid in some classes than in others in the same year group.
41. The governing body has undergone several changes in the last two years since the separation of the joint infant and junior school. Several key governors have remained in post while other new governors have been appointed, although it is recognised by the governing body that it is not representative of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the school. The governing body is well led and governors generally have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They share the headteacher's commitment to higher standards but not at the expense of the positive aspects of the school, such as its ethos and focus on the achievement of each individual. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the steps that are required to eliminate weaknesses. While governors have an input in framing the broad areas for the school improvement plan, they could usefully be more closely involved in helping the headteacher to frame a long-term strategic view of the school's development.
42. A major target set for the new headteacher by the governing body is to prepare an improvement plan covering the next three years of the school's development. This process has not yet been completed but valuable improvements have still taken place that are already having a beneficial effect on standards. Certain support staff have been reorganised into the 'Learning Mentor' team, computer facilities have been extended, the teaching of literacy reorganised and a considerable investment in fiction books undertaken. At present there is no clear link between long-term priorities for the school and financial planning. Financial planning has tended to be retrospective and based on past spending rather than establishing a long-term financial plan based on identified priorities. The budget has been tight in recent years with little carried forward for longer-term developments. A schedule for the delegation of financial responsibilities is only now being written and the school is identifying how it can use the principles of best value most effectively when purchasing goods and services. In spite of these shortcomings the finance available to the school has been used well to maintain good staffing levels and to increase learning resources.
43. In spite of recent changes, which have included the arrival of a new headteacher, a new special needs co-ordinator and four new classroom teachers (three of whom are newly-qualified teachers) out of eight classes, staffing levels are good for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Both the headteacher and deputy head teach classes to provide valuable release time for co-ordinators and newly-qualified teachers. Arrangements for the professional development of all staff are very good, as are the arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school and the teaching profession. Administrative staff are experienced and fulfil their roles well. The accommodation is good and kept in a very good state of decoration and repair by premises staff. Classrooms are very spacious. They have good displays that celebrate pupils' work and provide a stimulating environment for learning. Corridors also have good displays. The school also benefits from three halls, a new computer suite and several small rooms for specialist teaching, although the outside play area is small. The swimming pool, while a useful resource as a learner pool, is limited for any reasonably competent swimmer. Resources are good overall and have recently been enhanced by the purchase of a large quantity of fiction books to support the school's focus on reading. The provision of computers is very good, with two machines in each classroom and 15 new machines in the new suite; however, more software and equipment is needed to fulfil National Curriculum requirements for the control and data-logging aspects of ICT.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. To raise standards further, the school should:
- 1) use data available as a management tool to set targets for improvement and to monitor the performance of teachers, particularly those in the same year group; (*paragraph 4 and 40*)
 - 2) ensure that all teachers use the information gained from assessing the pupils' progress consistently to guide lesson planning. (*paragraphs 21 and 34*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3.4	12.1	37.9	39.7	6.9	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	221
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	59

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	123

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	29	27	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	20	23
	Girls	18	19	22
	Total	42	39	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (70)	71 (81)	82 (94)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	24	26
	Girls	18	18	24
	Total	41	42	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (83)	77 (81)	91 (94)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	10
Black – other	5
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	8
Chinese	4
White	115
Any other minority ethnic group	66

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	27.4

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	666,320
Total expenditure	658,093
Expenditure per pupil	2977
Balance brought forward from previous year	-4,804
Balance carried forward to next year	3,423

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	116

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	33	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	36	7	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	6	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	44	15	5	1
The teaching is good.	50	36	8	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	46	19	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	43	7	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	36	8	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	37	48	11	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	52	36	3	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	37	3	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	42	24	4	3

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

ENGLISH

45. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in English in 2000 were close to the national average and well above the average of results in similar schools. Results have not risen as quickly as nationally but are above those at the last inspection. Pupils scored more highly in tests of reading and comprehension than in writing. Boys achieved better results than girls, a matter the school is currently investigating. However, it does not appear that the girls did badly, but rather that the boys did well.
46. Standards in pupils' work seen during the inspection were similar to the most recent test results. Pupils' progress is good overall, including that made by those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an alternative language.
47. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of competence in speaking, some needing extra help, and some having an already mature vocabulary and confidence in expressing their ideas. The school gives them many opportunities to develop these abilities and teachers set a good example of clear and often engaging speech. In most lessons, the teacher and pupils develop knowledge, thoughts and feelings through discussion. For instance, in introducing pupils to the work of an author being studied, the teacher gives a model of how to talk about character, plot and atmosphere, which pupils reflect in their own contributions. Older pupils in particular show that they are developing responses and ideas by articulating them clearly. In Years 5 and 6 pupils also show an ability to work together in a small team or group, for example negotiating with one another and building on each other's ideas to plan an adventure story. They listen well to the teacher's advice and discuss how to improve on their first thoughts.
48. Pupils' writing often benefits from the preceding discussion and the notes that they have made. Work in progress and finished work displayed or seen in pupils' files is often fluent, mature, lively and imaginative. During their time in the school, pupils write for a wide range of reasons, with examples of practical, creative, discursive and personal writing seen. They write very well in response to what they have read or heard, such as *Beowulf*, or James Berry's stories, to mention just two contrasting examples of the rich and varied literature they enjoy in class. In both of these cases, the pupils wrote in character and achieved vivid, perceptive and sometimes moving work. From an early stage in the school, most pupils complete book reviews and personal journals as well as other work such as carefully planned stories or poems. When their work is redrafted and edited, they mostly achieve an acceptable level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar; however, the first spontaneous drafts are often full of errors even when questioning shows that they know what they should have put and relevant classroom posters remind them. This lack of routine accuracy inevitably has an impact on Year 6 pupils' attainment in national tests; they have neither the time nor the resources to make corrections as they normally do in response to the teachers' comments and marking. Handwriting is also a weak area for many; some of Year 6 do not join their writing, for instance, and within the work of a single pupil handwriting is often variable.
49. Reading is well taught and standards are good. Pupils with special educational needs are given focused support to improve their reading, sometimes in the classroom and sometimes working on their own with a teacher. Reading is encouraged and reading skills are strongly developed during the first session of each day, when pupils engage in a cycle of literacy tasks which include reading aloud a novel they share with a small group and with the teacher. By Year 6, most pupils read competently and accurately, often with expression. When they read on their own they sometimes choose books which are undemanding for their age and ability, but reading journals show that they are expected to read and comment on more mature and substantial material as well. By Years 5 and 6, pupils can make good use of opportunities to find information in reference books and CD-ROMs, using contents lists, indexes and glossaries with confidence.
50. Literacy lessons are well structured and well taught; as a result pupils behave well and work hard,

almost always showing a good attitude. Teaching is good overall, never less than sound, with some inspirational teaching in Year 5. The best teaching elicits high attainment from the pupils, especially evident in thoughtful oral work and creative writing. Where a teacher's own reading aloud is skilful and expressive, the pupils appreciate this and work hard to do the same. In the great majority of lessons, clear criteria are shared with the pupils so they know what they must do to attain a good level and work towards their individual targets. They know what is being asked of them and are well motivated to think about how they can do it; for instance, pupils discuss how to make their story interesting and evocative by describing sounds, sights, odours and emotions as their teacher has asked. Review sessions allow pupils to reflect on their own and each other's work and they are often rewarded with appropriate praise.

51. Satisfactory progress has been made in English since the last inspection. The planning and teaching of the subject are kept under review and teachers are committed to raising standards. The school has recently given its provision for literacy a new impetus, with strategies to develop the use of information derived from assessment and to provide better opportunities for extended writing in English and other subjects. This is beginning to have an impact both on the quality of pupils' learning experiences and on the standards they achieve. In order to raise standards further, accuracy in writing needs improvement.

MATHEMATICS

52. National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds in mathematics in 2000 were close to the national average and well above results in similar schools. Mathematics results were similar to those in English and science but have fallen considerably since 1998. This is largely because some higher-attaining pupils left the school during Years 5 and 6 in the previous two years, and also because there has been a decline in the attainment of pupils on entry to the school. An analysis of test data shows that the pupils who spent four years at the school made at least satisfactory progress, when compared with their results at the age of seven, and many made good progress.
53. Current standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and many achieve well through their positive response in lessons where the teaching is lively and challenging. The development of number skills receives good attention in all classes. Most pupils calculate accurately using whole numbers and older pupils use fractions, decimals and percentages correctly. Their understanding of the properties of shapes, such as their symmetry and angles, is secure. Most pupils handle data, presenting them well, and higher-attaining pupils are able to interpret the information that they have gathered from surveys undertaken. Pupils are organised into ability groups in each year, enabling teachers to match the work tackled more closely to the pupils' ability. Teaching is satisfactory overall but with some lessons being very well taught. The features of the daily mathematics lesson have been introduced, but more effectively in some classrooms than others. Where this has been identified, further training has been provided.
54. Most pupils make good progress in the development of mental arithmetic skills, through a variety of effective activities to start each lesson. They learn to recall basic number facts quickly from memory and develop a variety of methods for solving simple calculations, as in a brisk session in the top Year 6 set when the pupils had to write as many facts as they could about 4.6 and -12. Many tried to find factors, addition pairs and multiplication facts. They worked hard and the session sharpened their understanding and engaged their interest. Teachers make sure that all pupils are involved in these sessions by selecting pupils to answer through carefully targeted questioning, for example, in a Year 4 lower set finding numbers that totalled 30, or in a lower ability Year 5 group where the pupils attended closely to the teacher's lively and stimulating approach.
55. Main class teaching is usually clear and at times it is lively and interesting, engaging the interest

of the pupils. In these lessons new skills and ideas are learnt quickly and the pupils achieve well. Activities used to practise or develop skills usually meet the lesson's learning intentions but at times can be repetitive and not sufficiently challenging. The information available about what the pupils have already mastered is not consistently used to guide lesson planning or to provide a consistent challenge for all pupils. Good progress is made and the pupils learn how to apply their mathematical skills when teachers use investigations or solving problems to consolidate pupils' learning. The pupils work well together in pairs and small groups, sharing tasks and discussing thoughtfully the problems set. They put in a considerable effort and many have a mature approach to their learning, being keen to do well. Some teachers make good use of computers to support learning but more opportunities could be planned now that the new computer suite is operational.

56. Sessions at the end of each lesson to review and assess learning are used with a varying degree of effect. In some classrooms they are brisk, thought out well and often used to extend as well as review learning. In others, however, they can lack focus, serve to fill time and add little to what has gone before. Teaching and pupils' learning would benefit from careful monitoring of these sessions and further training for staff. The marking of pupils' work was judged to need improving by the last inspection report. Although marking is thorough, few teachers write comments in pupils' books to show them where they have made mistakes and how to rectify them.
57. Pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language generally receive good support from classroom assistants, with activities provided that are matched closely to their needs. Support staff are effective in most parts of each lesson in the help and guidance that they give to pupils, but they are often not sufficiently involved in the mental arithmetic sessions or when the teacher is explaining a new idea or talking to the whole class. The recent introduction of a programme to cater for gifted and talented pupils in mathematics is a valuable inclusion in the school's provision. This programme needs further time and a careful evaluation to establish the impact it is having on the progress of the selected pupils.
58. Co-ordination of mathematics has been effective in bringing about improvement in provision and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Monitoring has identified where further support or training have been needed. To raise standards further, greater pace and more challenge is needed in some classrooms, support staff should be more actively engaged during mental arithmetic and direct class teacher sessions and targets should be used more effectively to ensure that there is a consistent development of skills from year to year.

SCIENCE

59. Results in the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds were close to both the national average and those in similar schools. These results show a steady decline over the last four years and standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection. The 2000 results were similar to those in English and mathematics. For the last two years, girls' results have been significantly lower than boys' have. An investigation is being undertaken to investigate possible reasons for this difference.
60. The standard of work seen during the inspection broadly reflects the most recent test results. The school has carefully analysed reasons for the decline in standards. In part it is as a result of changes in each year group but in recent years science has not had a high profile because of the emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy. However, the school is putting into place several effective strategies, which are now beginning to have a beneficial impact on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers plan a good range of activities with particular emphasis on experimental and investigative science. They identify what they want the pupils to learn by the end of lessons and share these intentions with the pupils.
61. An analysis of pupils' work shows that most pupils achieve well and make satisfactory progress in developing their ideas and skills. For example, most pupils have a secure grasp of the insulation properties of various materials. They understand processes such as reversible and

irreversible changes in materials. Pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language maintain good standards of achievement as a result of well-organised support matched closely to their abilities. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the pupils made good progress in developing their understanding of the life processes of plants. This was because both the class teacher and the support teacher planned work together with clear expectations for all groups of pupils, and an appropriate emphasis on practical work of dissecting a tulip. The good focus on literacy results in pupils developing a good level of technical vocabulary, for example, naming all different parts of the flowering plant and explaining their function. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently acquire facts and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson in which pupils learned about how plants and animals in different habitats are suited to their environment. They showed satisfactory application of research skills and sifting of information from CD-ROMs. Pupils enjoy science lessons and benefit from opportunities for investigative work. In most lessons, they are well motivated and engage in activities with a good level of interest. Most apply their knowledge and skills of experimenting successfully to investigations and new learning. They show curiosity by asking questions and making suggestions. The organisation and use of time and resources to support learning is generally effective. Pupils are sometimes organised in small groups and pairs appropriate to the activity. They work co-operatively, sharing equipment and helping each other.

62. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress; however, the progress shown by the higher-attaining pupils is limited in some lessons when teaching is aimed at pupils with average ability. At times the repetition of simple tasks performed in the past does not extend pupils' learning. Pupils are not always encouraged to make predictions and sensible suggestions, before starting an experiment. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not have sufficient opportunities to use simple equipment and their knowledge of key aspects of a fair test is limited. One lesson in Year 4 was less than satisfactory mainly because of the inappropriate match of the task to the different levels of abilities, slow pace and lack of challenge.
63. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, teachers use probing and open-ended questions to elicit a fuller response, prompt further enquiry and provide challenge. Teachers explain new knowledge accurately and carefully plan an appropriate sequence of activities with clear and specific learning intentions.
64. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. Following the monitoring work within the school, the main focus has been to improve the teaching and learning of investigative skills and the achievement of girls. All teachers now make accurate assessments of the pupils' levels of understanding at the end of each topic and they record the development of pupils' investigative skills. However, these assessments are not yet used effectively to set individual targets and to plan future work. In order to improve further the school needs to ensure that pupils learn and revise essential work at increasingly higher levels as they move through the school. A programme of further classroom monitoring is necessary to ensure that good practice is identified and shared, and that learning consistently takes place through scientific enquiry.

ART AND DESIGN

65. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations by the age of 11. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of different artistic techniques. Some of their work of observational drawings and paintings shows suitable depth and perspective. For example, pencil drawings of different types of chairs by Year 4 and costume design work by Year 6 show the pupils' keen sense of colour and detail. However, the standards reported in the previous inspection have not been maintained, largely because of some weaknesses in the organisation of the art and design curriculum. Insufficient emphasis is placed on teaching the design element of the subject and the skills in art have not been taught progressively across the year groups. The use by pupils of sketchbooks to record observational drawings, or to experiment with line and tone, is not consistently developed. There could be more emphasis on developing computer-aided art and design.

66. Most pupils demonstrate satisfactory powers of observation and accuracy of detail, shape and size when drawing and colouring with different media such as pastels, charcoal and chalk, pencil colours and felt-tips. They successfully explore techniques used in the work of famous artists. Year 3 pupils were inspired by Georgia O'Keefe's work in their drawings, while year 4 pupils have produced some good quality work on surrealism. Year 5 pupils carefully studied photographs of the Bayeux tapestry, Egyptian wall paintings and pictograms when planning the use of texture in storyboard pictures. They compared different textures such as papyrus, bark paper and a selection of textiles. Year 6 pupils made well-finished models of a body in action out of clay. However, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to evaluate and make improvements to develop their work further.
67. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It was very good in a Year 5 lesson where the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge and prepared effectively. The lesson provided a challenge to develop the pupils' skills and their ability to explore with imagination the texture in the use of textiles in art. Most pupils were interested and fully involved, rising to the challenge presented with enjoyment and application. Art is suitably linked to other subjects, such as science, history and geography, but sometimes the art component in these links is not always planned to support the systematic development of the artistic techniques.
68. Teachers are supported well in planning their lessons but monitoring of teaching and the standards achieved has not been fully developed. There is good involvement of artists in residence to enhance pupils' progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

69. It was a key issue at the previous inspection to raise standards and improve progress in design and technology. Unfortunately, it was not possible to observe any lessons of design and technology during this inspection because it is taught in a half-termly rotation with art and design. It is not possible, therefore, to judge overall standards or the quality of teaching, although the work seen on display was generally of a satisfactory standard for the age of the pupils. Teachers' planning, the work on display and other evidence provided show that the pupils experience a broad range of design and technology activities.
70. Most teachers place a good emphasis on the development of designing skills. Pupils plan their work with sketches and more detailed drawings. They identify the materials to be used and the methods by which they will be joined. The pupils are required to evaluate the quality of their finished products and whether or not they have fulfilled the purpose for which they were intended. This process becomes more sophisticated as the pupils become older. Year 3 pupils designed and then made pop-up toys, which were powered by a balloon. Year 4 pupils considered different types of bags before designing and making their own from various textile materials. Many pupils paid good attention to the quality of finish, the appearance of their bag and how they could be fastened.
71. Older pupils are given the opportunity to use computers to support the design process. Year 5 pupils, for example, designed Tudor houses, which they then constructed from card and paper. Many pupils marked out their work accurately and paid good attention to the quality and appearance of the finished house. Year 6 pupils also designed fairground rides using a computer. They looked at whether the rotation in their ride was vertical or horizontal before constructing them satisfactorily from paper, wood and card. Teachers plan to emphasise the links between design and technology and other subjects through the topic cycle. For example, pupils disassemble torches to establish how they work when looking at electricity in science, while the work of Year 3 pupils on packaging forged good links with looking at nets of cubes in mathematics.
72. No direct monitoring of teaching or standards in design and technology has taken place, although teachers' planning is supported by a nationally prepared scheme of work. Informal observations of teachers have enabled further support and advice to be given. To improve standards in design and technology the subject needs to be taught on a more regular basis and the skilled higher-attaining pupils extended more.

GEOGRAPHY

73. Pupils continue to achieve satisfactory standards in geography and the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in ensuring that geographical skills are systematically taught. Only a small sample of geography lessons was seen, but pupils' work on display and in their files was in line with expectations for their age and showed that they make satisfactory progress, including pupils with special educational needs. The value that the school sets on pupils' often first hand and recent knowledge of many different countries is underlined by displays in the assembly hall and in some classrooms.
74. Pupils develop specifically geographical knowledge and skills in Year 3 with simple maps and town plans, learning and thinking about their own locality and about why roads and buildings are placed as they are. In Years 4 and 5 their knowledge of the place-names and topography of Great Britain and other countries develops; they learn to read increasingly complex and detailed maps and to use grid references.
75. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have made the expected progress in a good range of geographical work, including studies of communities living in different conditions. In addition to the skills of making and reading maps, they know how to conduct simple surveys and to set out data in a variety of diagrams, sometimes using computers. At all stages, pupils' work shows knowledge of, and ideas about, the mutual impact of human beings and the climate and topography of their surroundings, including pollution. They record what they learn in a variety of ways, often showing some individuality in choosing how to display their work.
76. A strong feature of the school's provision for geography is the use of trips and visits, in particular to the Lookout Centre in Hyde Park, and the residential field trip which Year 6 enjoy. Both the pupils' own experience of many parts of the world and the immediate environment of the school itself are well used in lessons. The school is aware of a lack of resources such as published materials, including videotapes and CD-ROMs, although there is a good supply of helpful photographs.
77. Geography is satisfactorily taught overall, and appropriately planned, managed and monitored under the leadership of the head and deputy head, although at present there is no designated co-ordinator for the subject.

HISTORY

78. Pupils' attainment in history is above national expectations for their age, not only in factual knowledge but also in the development by Year 6 of historical skills and understanding, which show an improvement since the last inspection. They make good use of their literacy and oracy in studying the subject and they all make good progress.
79. The youngest pupils continue to be knowledgeable about Victorian England and can relate what they know to their observation of some roads and buildings in their own locality. In a Year 3 lesson, they showed lively curiosity about old photographs of the local area and the beginnings of an understanding of how to use resources such as contemporary photographs, pointing out differences and similarities. They made some interesting hypotheses about why particular photographs were taken. The development of historical skills is well exemplified in the work of pupils in Year 5, learning about archaeological research in relation to Aztec history. Although they have only just begun this unit of work, pupils have made good use of homework to find out some facts about the Aztecs and they have a good sense of the chronology involved. For instance, individual pupils know when the Aztec Empire was at its height and when it was destroyed, and what was going on at about the same time in Europe. During the lesson, pupils scrutinised photographs of artefacts, making hypotheses and discoveries about the culture and

history of the Aztecs. They made efficient use of reference books to compare and confirm their ideas. Year 6 pupils are familiar with the use of primary and secondary sources and in a lesson seen they approached the study of the Ancient Greeks with confidence.

80. History is well taught overall, with a good range of resources and strategies used including drama. The fruits of pupils' opportunity to visit the National Portrait Gallery are evident in their own "Tudor portraits". The good quality of other work on display or in pupils' files includes completed examples of empathic writing, of storyboards, and of the use of note taking to capture important facts.
81. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The history curriculum is well planned and takes account of recent curriculum initiatives. There is some systematic monitoring of plans and outcomes in the subject; the monitoring of lessons will help to strengthen good teaching still further. Pupils' enthusiasm for history is evident in the work displayed and summed up by a pupil studying the Aztecs, who remarked "We work hard and have fun!"

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

82. The school has recently invested in a new computer suite, replacing a facility of old and unreliable machines that was little used. The new suite had only been opened shortly before the inspection. During the week of the inspection many classes were using the room for the first time. Many pupils were, therefore, familiarising themselves with the new computers and their potential. In spite of this, the standard of work seen was in line with national expectations for pupils of this age and most pupils were making at least satisfactory progress.
83. Prior to the opening of the new computer suite, pupils have had many suitable opportunities to learn new skills and to apply them to support learning in other subjects, through teaching on the computers located in each classroom. Many pupils have become confident and independent users of computers, knowing how to perform all routine actions such as printing and saving their work without teacher support. They develop satisfactory word-processing skills and by Year 6 most can change the style and layout of text that they have written. They use and understand the process of desktop publishing, linking text and graphics to produce eye-catching layouts. Art packages are used confidently and support work undertaken in design and technology. Year 4 pupils have learnt to construct a database and then to print selected information. Pupils of all ages know how to access information from a CD-ROM and computers were seen being used regularly to support the pupils' language skills. Many pupils also have a good understanding of the impact of ICT on their lives and its applications in the home.
84. Teaching was satisfactory overall. Most lessons had many strengths but just as the pupils were new to the computers so were the teachers. Consequently, there was some lack of confidence evident, which showed in the pace of lessons. Furthermore, some teachers insisted on all pupils following routine instructions at the same rate, holding back those familiar with the computers while others completed simple tasks. This resulted in frustration amongst some pupils; however, once given the opportunity to explore the software being used, most worked hard, with much interest and concentration, collaborating well in pairs.
85. Pupils in a well-structured Year 6 lesson with a good sequence of activities and good team work between the class and the support teachers learnt how to use a 'search engine' to explore the Internet. The initial part of this lesson was a written exercise, which would have been more effective if carried out in the classroom. This method was adopted by the teacher in a Year 5 lesson introducing pupils to a spreadsheet. Good use of questioning to draw out the pupils' ideas and to gain their attention, and the enthusiastic style of the teacher, who demonstrated a high degree of expertise, resulted in the pupils learning the properties of the spreadsheet rapidly. Once in the computer suite the pupils were taken quickly but carefully through the features of the software before completing various tasks. New skills developed and were extended and applied well because the pupils were purposefully involved in the lesson.

86. Monitoring the provision for ICT had identified the need to expand and improve computer facilities. Teachers' planning is now based securely on a newly prepared scheme of work and they are provided with further support where necessary. Satisfactory improvements have taken place since the last inspection. The new computer suite and the additional computers in each classroom now provide the potential for pupils to learn, develop, extend and apply their skills. The challenge facing the school now is to ensure that the skills taught in the suite are used and applied effectively in the classroom. Staff will need further training if they are to use the full potential of the hardware and software available. Some further purchases of resources will be needed to ensure that the plans to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum can be fulfilled.

MUSIC

87. Pupils attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities but lessons observed were not consistently demanding and imaginative. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in the lessons involving singing and the use of percussion instruments. There are limited opportunities to compare and evaluate different kinds of music. Pupils' progress in other aspects, such as composing, is also limited. This aspect remains a weakness as reported at the last inspection.
88. Year 3 pupils listen attentively to music and recognise well-defined changes in sounds or explain how it makes them feel. They clap and tap simple rhythmic patterns and keep a steady beat in time to the music. Most pupils show control and an awareness of pitch and rhythm. Older pupils build on this to create percussion parts to songs and use simple melodies to accompany their singing. However, pupils do not consistently record their efforts in order to listen, assess and improve what they have done. Pupils in Year 5 were supported effectively in a lesson to invent a dance routine to accompany their singing. In lessons, most pupils are able to deal with a number of aspects of music and cope with rhythm, beat, pitch and pace. Pupils identify the instruments, handle them correctly and keep the pulse of music with developing confidence. A few use musical vocabulary accurately when working with pitched and non-pitched instruments but many pupils do not recognise musical notations and the relative values of crochets and quavers.
89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. A good lesson led by the music specialist in Year 5 was well structured and carefully prepared. The teacher in this lesson had a good command of the subject and provided pupils with stimulating tasks and opportunities to respond creatively. As a result, most pupils responded with increasing discrimination in the aspects of singing and playing in the lesson. In other lessons, teachers' knowledge of the subject is generally satisfactory. They manage pupils with good relationships and sensitivity. In most lessons pupils listen attentively and work collaboratively showing good attitudes to learning. They enjoy music and many have the potential to achieve well.
90. The extra-curricular music provision is a particular strength of the school, as is the tuition provided by the visiting music specialist. Individual instrumental tuition in the flute, violin and cello is provided for interested pupils. This starts in Year 4 and continues throughout Years 5 and 6. The pupils who play musical instruments achieve particularly good standards in reading and playing music. They play confidently in assemblies and concerts. The well-attended regular choir groups enhance this provision further and all Year 3 pupils are given an opportunity to learn the recorder. This enables the more able pupils to achieve well. Singing by the large choir drawn from a number of classes is a particular strength. Pupils rehearse regularly and sing from memory, which also encourages several soloists. Pupils sing enthusiastically, with clear diction, phrasing and dynamics.
91. Teachers' planning is supported by an appropriate scheme of work. Some teachers have limited expertise and lack confidence in teaching the subject, although they are provided with suitable support and guidance. Monitoring of the provision and standards being achieved is not fully developed. As a result there are gaps in the pupils' development of skills, knowledge and understanding. Resources are good and include both tuned and untuned instruments, recorded music and books and some instruments from around the world. The school is fortunate to have

provision of a well-equipped music room.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

92. There were some weaknesses in physical education at the previous inspection. In particular, not all aspects of physical education were being taught and standards in gymnastics needed to be improved. To deal with these weaknesses staff have been given training and the curriculum plan adapted so that National Curriculum requirements are now met. During the inspection a limited range of activities was observed. This was due in part to the cycle of planning and also the inclement weather, which resulted in some lessons having to be abandoned or hastily re-arranged. It is not possible to judge, therefore, whether or not standards have significantly improved in gymnastics.
93. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there are some shortcomings in some lessons that need to be eliminated if all pupils are to make progress. Insufficient emphasis is placed on coaching and teaching correct techniques, lessons just being a series of activities in which skills are practised. Some lessons also have insufficient structure or challenge to enable consistent progress to be made.
94. Younger pupils are taught swimming in the school's small learner swimming pool, but these lessons stop after Year 4. The use of the facility is valuable for non-swimmers and those with limited skills but the provision does not guarantee that pupils can meet the standards required in the National Curriculum by the age of eleven. The swimming session observed for the least able swimmers in a Year 4 class was taught well. The teacher's good level of expertise was shown by the quality of the individual coaching given to each pupil. All of the pupils listened carefully and practised the backstroke leg kick, trying hard to follow the advice that they had been given. Many made good progress in a short time, gaining in confidence, although overall standards were well below average.
95. Good use is made of some of the local facilities. Year 5 and 6 pupils are provided with expert cricket coaching from groundstaff at Lords Cricket Ground. Regent's Park is also used for athletics and other group activities during the summer term, although extra-curricular sporting activity is limited and there is no school sports day. No systematic monitoring of teaching and standards has taken place recently, although teachers' planning is checked to ensure that it complies with the school curriculum map. There is currently no co-ordinator, the deputy head holding this responsibility pending a permanent appointment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

96. Standards are similar to those at the last inspection when they were satisfactory and good at times. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious knowledge and understanding during their time in the school. A new Locally Agreed Syllabus has been introduced and clear guidelines to support teachers' planning have been developed, with details of resources and activities.
97. Over the junior years, pupils learn about the major religions of the world. Their learning is constantly enriched by the fact that many religions and their associated cultures are represented amongst the pupils and their families. They develop positive attitudes towards religion, considering important aspects of similarity and difference. Their personal spirituality and moral understanding are also considered and expressed, as some of the work on display shows. For instance, after seeing photographs of people suffering various problems, Year 6 pupils had written prayers showing insight and compassion.
98. Pupils' attitudes to discussion of religious topics are good. They show curiosity about and respect for the beliefs of others and are interested in the ways in which religion is expressed in day-to-day life. They make good use of their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing to

share and record both factual information and ideas. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were impressed and interested to hear one of their classmates read from the Koran, listening attentively. Other Muslim pupils in the group were also eager to contribute their own knowledge of stories from their culture. Frequently, classes write their own versions of parables and legends, so as to explore the significance of the teaching they convey.

99. Religious education lessons are well taught overall. In the best lessons seen, teachers build on their own and pupils' experiences, for instance of books and other possessions which have special meaning for them. An ethos of lively interest is promoted alongside respect for each other's feelings, for instance in the handling of the Koran. Moral and social themes are sometimes pursued further in assemblies and circle time. Visits to local places of worship and from people within the school's community add to the positive impact the subject makes on pupils.