

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Argyle Primary School**

London

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100008

Headteacher: Mrs Usha Sahni

Reporting inspector: Keith Sadler  
16405

Dates of inspection: 1 – 5 October 2001

Inspection number: 193341

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior  
School category: Community Primary  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Tonbridge Street  
London  
Postcode: WC1H 9EG  
Telephone number: 0207 837 4590  
Fax number: 0207 833 1384

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Cllr. Barbara Hughes

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1640 5	Keith Sadler	Registered inspector	Art and design Foundation Stage	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9010	Gail Ellisdon	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3242	Mike Newman	Team inspector	Science Design and technology English as an additional language	
2045 7	Brian Fletcher	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	
1487 1	Beryl Buteux	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education	
2421 6	Maureen Roberts	Team inspector	Special educational needs Information and communication technology	How well does the school care for its pupils?
2578 7	Edmund Morris	Team inspector	English Equal opportunities Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

*PkR* Educational Consultants Ltd  
6 Sherman Road  
Bromley, Kent  
BR1 3JH

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Number of full-time pupils	389 (above average)
Pupils with English as an additional language	350 (very high)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	53% (well above national average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	21% (below the national average)
Average class size	27

The school's excellent qualities have led Argyle to be designated as a Beacon School. The school is situated in the King's Cross area of Camden, close to the main line stations of King's Cross/St Pancras. It occupies a large three-tiered building which dates from 1880 and which has been well maintained in recent years. The immediate vicinity of the school presents all the challenges, and opportunities, of inner-urban social deprivation. This is recognised through the school being part of the Kings Cross Single Regeneration Budget Education Project. In addition, the school is part of the LEA's pilot for the government initiative *Excellence in Cities*. This enables the school to provide additional support for gifted and talented pupils, learning mentors for about 40 pupils, and a new Learning Support Unit which is an area provision to support the needs of pupils with learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Virtually all the pupils live in the immediate neighbourhood, where most residential accommodation consists of blocks of council or housing association flats, small hotels and hostels. There is a very high percentage of overcrowded households. Ninety per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic groups who have English as an additional language. The major groups are Bangladeshi and African pupils, mainly Somalian, and there are significant numbers of East European and other refugees (making up 25% of the school). Of those that enter the nursery most speak languages other than English and few have had prior educational experience. Whilst the whole range of abilities is represented in the school's intake, overall the children's attainment on entry is very poor. The school has a particularly high turnover of pupils. Fifty nine pupils joined and 111 left during the last school year.

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

This is an outstandingly effective school that provides a shining example of what can be achieved. There is excellence in most aspects of the school that leads to the pupils' achievements to be very high when they leave the school. The leadership and management of the school, from the governors, head, senior staff, teaching and support staff are outstanding. The curriculum has many exceptional features. In the 2001 Key Stage 2 tests, the pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was well above average in comparison with all schools and very high when compared to similar schools. Links with the parents and community are a further outstanding feature. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and their personal development is excellent. The teaching is very good and the school provides very good care for its pupils. The arrangements for supporting and meeting the needs of the pupils who have English as an additional language are excellent. Provision for the Foundation stage (the Centre for Early Learning) is very good. The school is highly successful in gaining additional funding and has a huge array of links with businesses, museums, art galleries and theatres. Above all, every member of staff in the school has a clear expectation that all pupils will succeed and they invariably do. The costs per pupils are very high, its achievements outstanding. It represents very good value for money.



### What the school does well

- Standards attained in the 2001 tests at Key Stage 2 are well above average and very high in comparison with similar schools and show steady improvement;
- The curriculum is outstanding. It is rich, varied, extremely well planned and supported by a large number of links with museums, theatre, art galleries, businesses and there are other very significant enrichment opportunities;
- Leadership and management are of the highest quality, and in particular that of the headteacher;
- The quality of teaching is very good;
- Arrangements for the pupils' personal development are outstanding;
- The school is a deeply inclusive organisation which provides equal opportunities for all;
- The teaching of English as an additional language is excellent;
- Links with parents and the community are very strong and most beneficial to the pupils' learning;
- The pupils' attitudes to school and learning and their behaviour are very good;
- The school has outstandingly high expectations of what all members of its community can achieve.

### What could be improved

- Rates of attendance remain well below the national average;

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been startling improvements from the good provision and standards found in the previous inspection. The issues identified in 1997 have been systematically addressed and all of these, other than attendance, are now strengths of the school. The school has not been significantly successful in improving the rates of attendance, though they have improved year on year, but still remain well below the national average. However, there has been a sharpening of the focus on improving attendance and the practice for extended leave has been changed. There were key issues relating to the standards attained in writing, Years 2 and 3, science and information technology. The pupils' attainment in each of these areas has improved very significantly. For example, attainment in both science and information technology is above the national average, and in the case of science, based on the 2001 results standards are very high. Although the school rightly continues to target standards in writing, there have been very good improvements to above national levels. Standards in history and geography in Key Stage 1 have improved, though they continue to be constrained by the pupils' acquisition of literacy skills in these subjects. The quality of the provision overall is now at least very good. The use and teaching of information and communication technology across the school is now outstanding, the quality of the teaching is very good and assessment practice is excellent. The arrangements to develop the monitoring of teaching and learning through lesson observation are of the highest quality.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	D	A
Mathematics	D	E	C	A
Science	A	D	C	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

For 2001, in comparison with all schools, the performance in English is A; mathematics A and science B. In comparison with similar schools, standards are English A\*; mathematics A\* and science A.

The standards achieved have been improving steadily and have shown a big rise in the 2001 tests. Standards attained are a strength. Children in the Foundation stage make very good progress in their learning, but few attain the early learning goals except in physical development. At Key Stage 1, results are below the national average in tests, though current work in reading, writing and mathematics is stronger than this. Standards in the Key Stage 2 tests have improved since 1996. In the 2001 tests, in comparison with all schools, results were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. In comparison with similar schools, standards attained are in the highest 5% in the country in English and mathematics and are well above average in science. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards achieved in information and communication technology, art and religious education are above expectation and are in line with expectations in all other subjects. These results are testimony to the school's effectiveness. Children enter the school with very poor standards of attainment and, in 2001, left with well above average results. Their achievements are outstandingly high. The school has set highly demanding targets for the oldest pupils for the next two years.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and are very involved in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally pupils behave well: pupils are courteous, friendly and show respect for each other, staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Outstanding. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and there are excellent opportunities provided for them to do this. Relationships are excellent. Pupils thrive in the positive and supportive ethos. By the time they leave school they are mature and self-possessed, independent, assertive, sensitive and have high self-esteem.
Attendance	Well below the national average despite there being excellent arrangements to bring about improvements. Lessons start promptly and there is no time wasted.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very good

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

The percentages of good or better teaching observed overall were 76%; (Foundation 94%; Key Stage 1: 68% and Key Stage 2: 73%). This shows a slight improvement from the previous inspection. There were four instances of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of English and mathematics is generally good and there are many very good features. All pupils are very well catered for including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented. The teaching of English as an additional language is a particular strength with these teachers playing an important positive role in securing such outstanding levels of achievement across the school. The strength of the teaching is in the extremely high expectations that the teachers have for all pupils, the planning and the very effective use of support staff who make an excellent contribution to the teaching quality. The teachers' subject knowledge is a particular strength as is the specialist teaching of ICT and music. Where teaching is unsatisfactory it is because on these few occasions teachers allow the pace of the lesson to slow. Learning across the school is very good. Pupils make very good use of their time in school and they work at a good pace. The pupils that have English as an additional language make exceptionally quick progress in English acquisition. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The highest quality. The outstanding curriculum significantly exceeds national requirements. There is a suitably strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, science and personal development. There is an enormous range of additional opportunities that help to enrich and deepen the pupils' learning experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils' needs are met very well. Staff make every effort to identify and provide for pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	An outstanding strength of the school. The provision is excellent and ensures that additional English language provides no barrier to these pupils' attainment when leaving the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Outstanding in all respects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a safe and supportive environment in which pupils prosper in their learning.

Taken overall, the school's provision is exceptional and outstanding. The school's partnership with parents is also excellent. Parents are recognised as co-educators, they are helped by the welter of provision to become involved in their own and their children's education and they are kept well informed of the life of the school. The school consults parents regularly and responds very well to any concerns they may have.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The Headteacher provides the highest level of leadership and management. She secures an overwhelming ethos of purpose and positive inclusion. She has helped the school to become outstandingly effective and a deeply learning organisation. Leadership by other staff is outstanding.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Outstanding. Governors have a deep commitment to the school, are well organised, bring a wide range of skills and abilities, have an understanding of the strengths and needs of the school and provide a purposeful steer in securing the school's aims.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Brilliant. The school has a myriad of outstandingly effective arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of its provision. These are deeply embedded in the school's overall provision and provide a stunning example of what can be achieved through structured reflective practice.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Governors and the Headteacher plan very carefully and spend wisely to meet stated strategic objectives and look after funds carefully. Their work is underpinned by excellent use of the principles of best value.

The school's leadership and management are exemplary. Excellent use is made of the very substantial additional grants provided for the school to support the pupils' outstanding achievements. Staffing and learning resources are sufficient and well used. The accommodation is well maintained and there is a rolling programme of improvements. There have been very significant positive developments in the use of the school grounds to enhance further opportunities for pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Parents are pleased with almost all aspects of the school. They are pleased because their children like the school, make good progress, behaviour is good, teaching is good, they feel well informed about progress, expectations are high, their children are helped to mature and be responsible, the school works closely with parents, is well managed and led and there is a good range of activities outside lessons.</p>	<p>Some parents are concerned about the amount of homework set.</p>

Parents are supportive of the school. They appreciate the quality of what is provided for their children, and taken overall, there are no issues where parents have major concerns about any aspect of the school. The inspection confirms the parents' positive views, and finds the amount of homework to be appropriate.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards attained for the oldest pupils in the school are at least in line with the national average for English and mathematics and are above average for science and information and communication technology (ICT). For pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics and are above average for science and ICT. In all other subjects standards are in line with the national expectation at the end of both key stages, except in art and design and religious education, where at Key Stage 2, standards are above average.
2. The children enter the school with very poor levels of attainment and make very good progress in each of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. However, only a few achieve the early learning goals in the areas of learning by the time that they enter Key Stage 1. The only exception to this is in physical development where most children are in line to achieve the early learning goals.
3. Pupils' achievements are outstanding in all subjects and they make enormous strides in their learning throughout the school. Across the whole curriculum, the results attained are very high given the overall very low starting points that the pupils have when they enter school.
4. National assessment results in 2000 show standards at the end of Key Stage 1 to be well below the national average in both reading and writing and in line with expectations in mathematics. Compared to similar schools, attainment in reading was above average, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. The 2001 results show an improvement in mathematics.
5. National test results for 2000 for 11 year olds show that standards were below average in English but in line with the national average in both mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, standards achieved are very high. However, the 2001 results show a startling improvement. In English, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level 4 in English improved from 68% to 91%. In mathematics the improvement was from 77% to 87% and in science from 86% to 96%. These results place the school with at least above average results compared with all schools and in comparison to similar schools they are very high. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 5 also improved in 2001 to 30% for English, 25% for mathematics and 49% for science. These results, given the context of the pupils, are of the highest order. Of the 53 pupils in Year 6, 60% were entitled to free school meals, only six children had English as their first language and 14 pupils had left and 16 joined the cohort throughout Key Stage 2.

6. The school is determined that the exceptionally high standards of attainment will be replicated in the current school year. If they are to do so, pupils will make very rapid progress in their learning over the next seven months. Given that in English and mathematics the inspection found standards to be at least in line with national expectations and the rapid progress that pupils make in the last year of schooling, it is likely that the school's very challenging targets of 85% to reach the national expectation for English and 87% for mathematics may well be attained. If so, this will demonstrate a remarkable achievement.
7. The school's patterns of attainment for boys and girls at both Key Stage 1 and 2 reflected the national picture in 2000. However, in 2001 boys' results in mathematics were better than girls, were similar in science and 10% behind in English. This shows that the boys' results at Argyle are significantly better than the national average.
8. Children make very good progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage. This is because of the very good teaching, the quality of the curriculum and activities provided and the excellent support for children who have English as an additional language.
9. Currently, in English, standards of speaking and listening are above average at the end of Key Stage 2, though speaking skills at Key Stage 1 are less well developed because so many pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition. Even so, average standards are achieved. By Year 6, pupils are confident in speaking. During an assembly, for example, all the pupils spoke clearly and confidently and with good expression and wide vocabulary.
10. Reading is a strength of the school. By the time pupils leave they have attained above average standards with the majority able to read both fiction and non-fiction with good understanding. This represents a remarkable achievement given the very low base of literacy skills that the pupils have when they enter the school.
11. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 represent a similarly high achievement. As a result of the very good teaching of literacy linked to the outstanding support provided to teach the pupils with English as an additional language, progress is rapid. Although pupils enter Key Stage 1 with below average levels of writing, by the time they reach Year 6, almost one third of pupils gain the higher level 5. The pupils are able to write at length with a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and because of the good teaching, which demands high quality writing across the curriculum, pupils are adept at writing in a range of forms.
12. Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average and all pupils achieve their highest potential. Most seven year olds attain good standards in numeracy, they have a secure foundation in number and make good progress in shape and measures.

13. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well. They have a good grasp of place value and four operations of number and their mathematical vocabulary is very good which enables them to explain what they are doing. Numeracy skills are well used in other subjects and are supported well by good ICT skills that, for example, enable the pupils to prepare tables and graphs effectively.
14. Standards in science are above average at the end of both key stages. Nearly all seven year olds have a sound knowledge and understanding of basic life processes and common living things, everyday materials and their properties and physical processes. The teaching at both key stages is particularly strong in its emphasis of investigational and practical science. This helps pupils to make very good progress because it provides a very good context for the science being studied. By the time they are 11 years old, nearly all pupils have a good all-round knowledge and understanding of science.
15. Standards achieved in information and communication technology are good and above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Even the youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to use the keyboard to type simple text. They are able to save and print work. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good skills across the whole range of the ICT curriculum. Good progress is maintained throughout Key Stage 2 and by the time they are 11, almost all pupils are competent in all aspects of the curriculum. They change fonts, colour and size of their work, manipulate text successfully, use spreadsheets, short cut keys and are able to import their own artwork to merge with their text. Pupils regularly e-mail partners in schools in Hong Kong, Singapore and Canada.
16. The school makes excellent provision to secure high standards for its higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils. These pupils make particularly good progress and they achieve outstandingly well. This is as a result of the good teaching, which is matched to meet their needs, and the very good curriculum provision. For example, Master Classes have been held for mathematics, science and design and technology, performing and visual arts and sport.
17. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. They are identified early and given individual and small group support and their progress is monitored carefully. The 90% of pupils in the school that have English as an additional language successfully learn and apply the range of English skills very well. This is due to the very good teaching provided by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) teachers and the high expectations that the school has of these pupils.
18. The school strives to ensure that standards are raised even higher. Currently, its targets for the end of Key Stage 2 are very much higher than the LEA requires. The school analyses its results comprehensively to check the relative attainment of boys and girls and different minority ethnic groups. These show that the school is very successful in securing very high levels of attainment for each of its ethnic groups, with the school's attainment of both Bangladeshi and African pupils being significantly higher than the LEA

average. In 2001, the Black African pupils achieved particularly well with eight of the nine pupils achieving level 4. Most of these pupils were refugees and had a history of disrupted schooling. The school is particularly successful in minimising the effects of other factors. In 2001, pupils entitled to free school meals outperformed those that were not. Seventy eight per cent of pupils who attained fluency in English as users of EAL attained level 5 in English.

19. The school has the capacity to raise these standards even higher.

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

20. The pupils' very good attitudes reported in the previous inspection have been maintained. They continue to have a beneficial effect on standards of attainment throughout the school. Parents and pupils confirm that most children enjoy school and come ready and eager to learn. Apparent in many lessons is that the pupils relish learning. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson pupils engaged very enthusiastically in a study of the pyramids enabling them to gain a good understanding of the role of archaeology in finding out about the past. The enthusiastic way pupils talk about extra curricular activities and their keen uptake of them is further evidence that they like school and all it has to offer. From the earliest stages, pupils mostly work well in lessons; they settle quickly and concentrate on tasks though this is less obvious in lessons where pupils have not been well briefed. Many pupils respond positively to challenges persevering hard, for example, to design a shelter for a particular purpose, and showing pleasure when they succeed. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and each other. This is effectively encouraged from the time the children enter the school. They are keen to answer questions and most take turns when doing so. Many have the confidence to participate in discussions making thoughtful contributions appropriate to their age and level. A good example of this was in a Year 6 history lesson when pupils considered very perceptively the merits of various forms of heating in a Victorian home. The attitudes of a minority of pupils, especially those who have joined the school late, are occasionally less good. Many older pupils have good independent learning and research skills developed by well-planned lessons based on the key elements of enquiry and interpretation, as was seen in history and ICT. Through setting their own targets for improvement and discussing them with teachers some pupils are also beginning to evaluate their own work.
21. Pupils are taught about the importance of friendship and the feelings and needs of others. Relationships amongst the pupils and with most adults at the school are very good. All the pupils mix well, working and playing together harmoniously. They collaborate constructively in groups, for example, when working together at a computer, developing a script for a play or singing in rounds. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. There have been no exclusions at the school for several years. Pupils relate well with staff and are open, warm and welcoming towards visitors. Through the strong and supportive ethos of the school and the continual celebration of diversity, pupils learn to respect the



values, feelings and beliefs of others. They are tolerant and accepting. This is manifest, for example, in their willingness to help new arrivals settle into school and the way they listen attentively and with great interest to stories about other people's faiths and experiences. Pupils are also very positive about each other's efforts and achievements, for instance, by spontaneously clapping a poetry recitation during a Year 6 class assembly.

22. Generally, pupils behave well throughout the school day. In most lessons pupils understand and comply with set routines and codes of conduct ensuring that behaviour is good. In a few lessons, particularly at Key Stage 1, where the teaching lacks pace or fails to sustain the pupils' interest, children misbehave. They become restless, distracted and occasionally noisy and fail to make progress. Although behaviour around the school, in assemblies, at lunchtime and in the playground is also generally good, pupils say that there are lapses.
23. A particularly impressive feature of the school is the wide range of carefully structured opportunities provided for the pupils' personal development. Pupils respond very well to these and this makes a major contribution to the very appropriate levels of maturity and confidence most of them possess by the time they are eleven. From the Centre for Early Learning upwards, pupils enjoy taking responsibility for such things as returning registers, helping younger ones to read or managing the school office at lunchtime and they perform these duties conscientiously and with pride. The serious and sensible way pupils participate in the school council is an important factor in the development of their autonomy and the initiative shown by many of them.

24. Although overall attendance has improved considerably since the previous inspection, it is still very low in comparison to the national average and the rate of unauthorised absences is above the national average. Attendance at Key Stage 2 is better than at Key Stage 1. Most pupils are punctual but there are always some who arrive up to ten minutes after the start of the school day at 9.00am and a few even later. A small number of pupils are frequently late. This results in missed opportunities and is detrimental to their progress.

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

25. The quality of the teaching is very good overall. It was found to be at least satisfactory in 96% of lessons. Teaching is very good in the Foundation stage and Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stage 1. Over 40% of teaching is very good and excellent and over 75% is good or better. This represents a slight improvement on the previous inspection.
26. The consistently very good teaching in the Foundation Stage results from the teachers' thorough knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and the rich and varied activities they plan. There is a strong emphasis on teaching English as an additional language and there are very high expectations for all aspects of learning and behaviour. This helps the children to have positive attitudes to learning and school. They work hard and well because they find the activities interesting and stimulating.
27. There are significant strengths in the teaching that permeate most classes. Teachers' planning is very good. It is always focused; there are clear objectives for learning which are shared with the pupils and referred to in plenary sessions, and show very strong links to the school's schemes of work. Behaviour management of the pupils is a strength. Staff take very good care to ensure that all are included in the activities. This is achieved by making sure that the tasks match the needs of the pupils. They are clear and have an explicit purpose, which is effectively shared. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is very good through the school. The planning reflects the national strategies though these have been particularly well adapted to meet the needs of Argyle pupils.
28. The EMAG teachers provide a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching. Their work is very well planned, and integrated into whole class objectives. The six staff work in close partnership with the class teacher. This makes a strong contribution to the pupils' progress in learning.
29. The teaching is underpinned by a fundamental belief that all pupils will succeed. Staff ensure that age-related objectives for each of National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies are not watered down for pupils who have little English or are new to the school. These very high expectations are subsequently rewarded by outstanding achievement and learning in which teachers ensure that all children progress rapidly.

30. Teachers are adept at linking planning across the subjects to provide very good relevance for the activities being taught. Design and technology, history, English, and in particular, information and communication technology (ICT) teaching and learning are effectively integrated. In addition, very good opportunities are taken to reinforce basic skills across subjects and the inspection found that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are very well supported and taught.
31. There is little difference in the quality of teaching of any subjects. Most subjects have high proportions of good or very good teaching at each key stage. The exception is the teaching of physical education where no good teaching was observed. Here, the staff, within the context of satisfactory teaching, over-emphasised the behaviour management of the pupils and provided too little emphasis on the improvement of the quality of the work being undertaken. This results in slowing children's progress because they do not have a good model of how to improve their performance in gymnastics and games. The specialist teaching of both ICT and music is having a positive effect on the standards obtained in these lessons. Both specialist teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject. They successfully ensure that all pupils participate effectively and they support pupils very well in their learning.
32. The support staff make a particularly strong contribution to the quality of the teaching. In the Foundation Stage, for example, the bi-lingual support workers for both Somali and Bengali speaking children are particularly effective. They support the children in their home language and use very good techniques for drawing English language from the children – including those who only have a few words of English. They enable these children to feel safe and secure, they offer a very positive role model and encourage them to feel included in the life of the school. This is equally the case with the nursery nurses and the learning support assistants. Throughout the school these staff focus well on developing the pupils' learning and their work is very well planned together with teachers. They each take direct responsibility for the pupils with whom they are working and make a strong contribution to the very high levels of achievement gained.
33. Teachers know the individual strengths and weaknesses of their pupils very well and use assessment information very effectively to check their progress. This ensures pupils are very productive and do not become frustrated in their learning. This is particularly apparent in lessons taught by the EMAG teachers who set learning tasks at just the right level to challenge pupils to think hard, knowing that the answer is in their grasp. This is helped by the very supportive and positive climate in which pupils feel able to try out their ideas and take risks.
34. Homework is used very effectively to re-inforce learning in a number of subjects. The homework club enables pupils to be able to do this work in school. A few parents were concerned about the consistency and range of homework being inappropriate. The inspection does not support this view.

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

35. The quality of the curriculum is an outstanding strength of the school and hugely surpasses national curriculum requirements.
36. Pupils are provided with a curriculum of exceptional quality. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection where some weaknesses were found in the curriculum for history and geography. National Curriculum requirements are greatly exceeded with pupils being given a first rate range of planned opportunities to extend their learning in virtually all subject areas. Careful consideration has been given to designing a curriculum that is stimulating, interesting and very relevant to the pupils. It fully reflects the diverse community from which they come as well as giving them many useful insights into the wider world they live in, both past and present. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught in a systematic and well-structured way that builds on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding and successfully leads them on to the next level in their learning. There is a very appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and the school has been careful to adapt the National Literacy Strategy to meet the specific needs of its pupils. As the large majority of the pupils have English as an additional language the school places a very high emphasis on the need to make the rapid acquisition of speaking, reading and writing skills in English a top priority. This is achieved with spectacular success by interweaving and linking all subjects of the curriculum with work in literacy to constantly improve and reinforce these skills. For example, when pupils in Year 4 study the Ancient Greeks they write play scripts in their literacy lessons about Theseus and the Minotaur to further their understanding of Greek mythology and at the same time improve their writing skills. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been very well implemented, is firmly in place and proving effective in raising standards. The provision for personal, social and health education, which includes citizenship, has been firmly established in the school for many years and is of excellent quality.
37. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils' needs are identified early and there is a good range of curriculum support provided both through ensuring that lessons match their needs through very good planning, and also through the pupils' individual education plans which are well-conceived and met in practice.
38. The curriculum committee of the governing body meets regularly to approve policies and discuss future strategies and initiatives. There are designated governors for literacy, numeracy and special needs who take a keen interest in these areas and give the school great support. Subject leaders present their policies to the governors for their approval and keep them fully informed about developments and standards. All subject-monitoring reports, by both the school and local authority, are shared with governors to help them assess the impact of their spending decisions on standards attained. All policies, including those for sex and drug education are in place.

39. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school enabling them to benefit from the multitude of learning and social opportunities provided. The principle of equal opportunities is firmly embedded in every aspect of the school and is clearly stated in all policies. At present the school is actively seeking to improve its excellent practice even further and is investigating all facets of its work to make sure that no area is overlooked. Argyle is a school in which all pupils and staff are greatly valued and given every opportunity to thrive and grow successfully.
40. The curriculum is enhanced by a superb range of visits to places of interest that are closely linked to pupils' studies. Already this term pupils have been taken to the British Museum, the Science Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Museum of Zoology and the Great Fire of London Museum. Other visits this year have also been made to Hampstead Heath, The Globe Theatre, London Zoo and the Thames Barrier. Year 5 pupils went on a residential visit to Essex which included many good quality educational and adventurous activities as well as giving pupils many opportunities to develop socially and to learn to live harmoniously in an environment away from home. All of these carefully planned educational visits make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The school welcomes many visitors to the school each year to help enliven and extend the curriculum. Visiting musicians, including music students from the Royal Academy, play for pupils to improve their knowledge of music and stimulate their interest in live performances. As many as 50 volunteers from local businesses support the pupils' reading development each week and, as well as helping improve standards, provide valuable role models from the outside world. This work is developed as an integral part of the school's programme of literacy development.
41. The school provides a very good range of additional clubs and out-of-school activities. These include football, Arabic, Somali, French, Bengali, homework, basketball, choir, recorders and a breakfast club. These activities are coordinated by members of staff who give unstintingly of their time to ensure that the pupils are given as many good quality opportunities as possible. For instance, she helps any talented footballers in the school improve by taking them to coaching sessions at a local premier league football club. Classes are also held after school to help Year 6 pupils prepare for their National Tests.
42. The school has built up a staggering number of links with local businesses and other organisations that have an outstandingly positive impact on the curricular provision. As well as the reading volunteers from local businesses there are extremely well established links with the community and other organisations such as the Camden Play and Leisure Service, Chadswell Healthy Living Centre, The Metropolitan Police Junior Citizenship Project and the Kings Cross Neighbourhood Association. Pupils also correspond electronically with children from other countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Canada. These 'e-pals' help pupils learn about life in areas much different from their own. Links with local secondary schools are also excellent. Teachers liaise closely with each other on various aspects of the curriculum and Year 6 pupils

are invited to the secondary schools to help ease their transition. Master classes are held in some subjects such as mathematics, design and technology and science to help extend the gifted and talented pupils.

43. The provision for spiritual development is excellent. Spirituality is effectively promoted through the strong ethos, which is reinforced by the school's assemblies. There are good opportunities within the curriculum, in assemblies and class prayers to promote knowledge and insights into values and beliefs. For example, in the Foundation Stage, children were delighted when harvesting potatoes in the garden: they were struck with awe that they had grown so well. Pupils are encouraged to respond sensitively and reflect on what they have heard or experienced. The uniqueness of individuals and the promotion of their self-esteem are given a very high priority by all adults.
44. Pupils' moral development is very well promoted. Principles of the recognition of right and wrong underpin the published policies for behaviour and are supported by the excellent schemes of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and for citizenship. Opportunities are very regularly taken to promote suitable moral values as caring and respect for each other, courtesy and fairness. For example in the summer term the school had a very successful Refugee Week in which all the pupils considered the plight of refugees. Many pupils wrote most eloquently about their own personal experiences, for example, the Albanian-speaking pupils described their plight when forced to leave their homes and country.

45. There are excellent arrangements for promoting the pupils' social development. There are many opportunities provided for all pupils to take on responsibility, show initiative and develop an understanding of living in a community. For example, all new pupils are provided with a class "buddy" who looks after them and helps them to understand the routines. Older pupils regularly support younger children's reading. The taught programme for personal and social development takes a very high priority with an allocation of 30 minutes taught time available at Key Stage 1 and approximately 45 minutes each week at Key Stage 2. This curriculum has a powerful and positive influence on both the pupils' moral and social development. Pupils are actively encouraged to support a range of charities. Last term, pupils collected money for three separate charities. The School Council provides an excellent opportunity to support the pupils' social development. Furthermore, the school takes part in the Camden Schools Debate, and last year they held the Borough Council to account for not developing Argyle Square as agreed. As a result, the pupils develop a very strong sense of social justice: they are assertive, sensitive and very socially aware.
46. The promotion of the pupils' cultural development is outstanding. The school places a particularly high emphasis on the development of the performing and visual arts. There is a very strong emphasis on teaching pupils to appreciate a range of cultural traditions through both curricular provision, extra-curricular activities and also on-going school themes, such as Refugee Week. The rich arts curriculum supports pupils' cultural development including placing a good emphasis on UK traditions and culture, not least through the myriad of visits to and from theatre groups, museums, art galleries and art events. Within the last year, for example, pupils visited the Victoria and Albert Museum to study chairs by Ron Arad; they held a drawing workshop as part of Black History Month with Osi Audu; visited the British Museum Africa gallery to study pottery; and participated in a number of exhibitions at the October Gallery including studying art from Benin. In addition, pupils took part in an art workshop led by a professional artist; had visits from 10 separate musicians from the Royal Academy of Music; and there are arrangements in place to link with the Royal Academy's life drawing workshops. Although the school does not have a sports field, good opportunities are provided for games developments including linking with a local premier league football club.

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

47. The school has maintained the very good provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils that was found at the last inspection. There are now some outstanding strengths in this area. The school has successfully addressed the minor issues raised in the previous inspection in respect of the quality of records and providing a drugs education policy.
48. The school provides a safe and very supportive environment in which pupils can concentrate upon their learning. Assessment information is well used to ensure that they receive suitable work and that their progress is supported at all times. Most staff, especially the more established teachers, have a good

knowledge of the pupils as individuals. All pupils, whatever their circumstances, are provided with personal support that recognises their individual needs. The programme involving learning mentors is especially good at supporting pupils with potential difficulties. There is a very supportive atmosphere throughout school. The positive climate is conducive to encouraging learning. The site manager, administration staff and mid-day supervisory staff relate well to the pupils. They provide good support during lunchtimes. This has a positive effect on behaviour and safety. Pupils are happy at school, and confidently turn to adults when they need help or advice.

49. Governors and staff have proper regard for the health and safety of pupils and effective supervision ensures that they are protected at all times. First aid arrangements are good. The school's procedures for dealing with accidents are secure, and full records are maintained. Fire safety arrangements are satisfactory, and no significant health and safety hazards were observed during the inspection.
50. Child protection arrangements are very good. All members of staff understand their duty to be aware of the need to be vigilant. They undertake this responsibility conscientiously. The school follows local authority guidelines for child protection. The headteacher is responsible for and liaises closely with the social services. She undertakes regular training and ensures that all staff, including those new to the school, are kept appropriately informed. Staff are sensitive to child protection issues and are quick to alert her of any concerns.
51. The school employs a good range of strategies for promoting attendance. The core management team and two school employed home-school link officers work closely with parents to ensure they understand the importance of regular attendance and do not keep their children away from school without good reason. Pupils are encouraged to attend by the award of best class attendance cups and individual good attendance certificates. Registers are checked regularly and the education welfare officer counsels the parents of any pupil whose attendance is a cause for concern. Although attendance has improved since the last inspection, governors are not complacent. They have the ultimate target of 95% attendance by all pupils and constantly explore new ideas for promoting attendance. Four new initiatives to promote attendance which are beginning to impact positively are the intensive mentoring support for reluctant attendees; the appointment of home-school link offices to liaise with parents; the development of a breakfast club, and a strong plea to parents to take extended leave during the school holidays. Scrutiny of this term's registers suggests that these measures may be working but it is too early to gauge their full impact.
52. The measures in place for checking and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. They are consistently applied and new staff are inducted into their correct use. Almost all teachers have secure classroom management strategies. Just occasionally, newer teachers fail to deal properly with inappropriate behaviour as it starts. The emphasis on improving teachers' classroom management skills is very good. The 'star' strategy for rewarding good behaviour is applied fairly and has proved to be



effective in promoting and supporting good behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are well understood and accepted by pupils.

53. The school's arrangements for the checking of pupils' personal development are very good. Formal arrangements, including teachers' records and the summaries in pupils' annual reports, are good. Non-academic successes are rewarded through such measures as swimming certificates. Arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are exceptionally good and innovative practices like the use of learning mentors are of great benefit to pupils experiencing difficulties. Where pupils have more complex needs the new learning support unit is able to offer effective specialist support.

54. The use of assessment information to plan suitable work to meet the needs of all pupils is a particular strength and is excellent. Target setting for individual pupils is carefully undertaken. Teachers are expected to undertake daily evaluation and assessment of their classroom teaching and pupils' learning in numeracy sets. The use of assessment to support planning and learning is good in all subjects. A suitable series of annual tests is in place from which it is possible to check attainment and track pupils' progress. Extensive analysis of test data has been done, with targeted action taken to improve attainment. The school uses work scrutiny effectively to monitor standards and progress. Subject portfolios of levelled work are also effectively used to gauge progress and attainment. For example, staff focused on the progression in pupils' drawings and carried out a whole school moderation exercise based on drawings of pupils' shoes. In writing and ICT, the staff have a good portfolio to show their interpretation of the finer graded levels of attainment.
55. The school has outstanding assessment procedures in place for pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils are targeted for support on the basis of the assessment results and their progress is regularly monitored. End of key stage test results are analysed by ethnicity to track achievement by the different groups in the school. The procedures for assessing the language needs of new arrivals are of exceptional quality and help to meet their needs well. Clear procedures are in place for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are provided for pupils on the school's special needs register, and these are of good quality.

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

56. This is an outstanding strength of the school. The very good links with parents reported in the previous inspection have been further strengthened by the appointment of two home-school link officers. They continue to have a beneficial impact on the pupils' quality of learning and their personal development.
57. Most parents have very positive views of the school. They believe it provides a very good all round education in a welcoming, supportive and purposeful atmosphere. They feel it keeps them well informed about its work and that of their children. They applaud the provision for their own education because they say it enables them to support their children's education more effectively. They also like the fact that all members of the school community are respected as individuals and their views are valued. Inspectors found these judgements to be well founded.
58. Parents are kept well informed about the school's work in general via the prospectus, information leaflets, regular newsletters, and notices displayed around the school. There are daily opportunities for more informal exchange of information between parents and teachers particularly at the Foundation Stage. Sheets outlining the topics their child will be studying each term are sent to all parents. These, together with regular work exhibitions, ensure that parents have a good understanding of the curriculum and how it is taught. The

school continues to make vigorous efforts to supply information in all community languages, so that no parent is disadvantaged in supporting their child's education.

59. Parents are very carefully introduced to the school and its routines and expectations. These are explained to parents of children entering the Centre for Early Learning during a home visit. Parents are then invited to bring their child into the school before they start so that they can become familiar with it in action and ask any further questions. At induction meetings parents are made aware of the entry-to-school assessment procedures. The results of these are carefully analysed and the findings are shared with them. This is all good practice because it helps parents to know how they can help their children at home and leads to greater progress. Parents of all older entrants to the school are interviewed and shown round the school.
60. Most parents are very satisfied with the main school's arrangements for keeping them informed of their children's work and progress. They appreciate being able to discuss their child's targets and learning about 'next steps' at formal consultation meetings each term. In addition, they feel able to approach staff at any other time to share concerns about their child's education as they find most teachers very willing to listen and to help. They also value the pupils' annual reports. These are positive and encouraging. They give details of the pupils' personal and social development as well as an indication of their achievement and effort in each subject of the curriculum. The best examples give clear details of the pupil's attainment in terms of the National Curriculum, their progress and how they might improve. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss their child's report with teachers should they wish. If it is thought that a pupil might have special educational needs or would benefit from learning mentor support, parents are informed at the earliest opportunity. They are then involved at all the appropriate stages so that they are aware of the learning targets and how they can best help their child to achieve them.
61. The school considers it essential that parents become involved in their children's learning. It works hard to support them in this. Mindful that many parents do not speak English or have little knowledge of British education, it provides a range of courses for them. Parents who attend these classes find them invaluable in boosting their confidence and hence the quality of support they give their children. The family numeracy class is particularly effective in this respect. Parents of children in the Foundation Stage are given careful guidance on helping their children to read, and are encouraged to listen to their children reading at home. Many parents or sometimes an older sibling, do so. Most parents also respond positively to the school's requests for them to monitor their child's homework. In the Centre for Early Learning, the school provides a toy and book library that is used well by parents.
62. Parents are helped to feel very welcome at the school. There is a parents' room where they can meet to discuss issues or learn new skills. During the inspection, for example, some mothers were learning to sew and paint with the ultimate aim of providing cushion covers for the school, whilst others were sharing recipes. The home-school link officers play a pivotal role in this provision by interpreting and helping the parents organise their activities. Parents play an important role in the life of the school. For instance several take advantage of opportunities provided for them to participate in discussions

about school policies. Others contribute by serving as governors. Many enjoy attending class assemblies, special services and concerts with their children.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The leadership and management of the school are excellent and exemplary. There is an overwhelming ethos of purpose and positive inclusion within the school that is under-pinned by a fundamental belief that all pupils and staff will succeed. The outstanding successes gained are recognised and celebrated very well. The school is a learning organisation that is deeply mindful of the power of self-reflection and evaluation as a route to further success.
64. The headteacher provides absolutely outstanding leadership. She is the pivot around which the whole school operates. She is sharply analytical about the school's needs and direction, and ruthlessly pursues all avenues to ensure that the school continues to improve. She is deeply sensitive to and supportive of the needs of all the school community and, most of all, she has unlocked the learning and development power in the pupils, staff and parents. This does not mean that the school's success is dependent upon one person. There have been very significant improvements in the good leadership and management since the previous inspection. Whilst the head has driven that improvement, she has done so through ensuring that all the staff in the school are provided with excellent opportunities and very high expectations to fulfil their leadership and management roles very successfully. Working closely with governors, there is now outstanding leadership and management in all aspects of the work of the school.
65. The school has a clear and explicit set of aims and values that are met fully in practice. There is a deep commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion that results in developing the confidence and self esteem of both the pupils and staff in the school. The commitment to inclusion is evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils are carefully listened to and their ideas and feelings are incorporated into policies. This happens formally through an active School Council and whole class discussions and debates. In addition, the excellent scheme of work for personal, social, health education and citizenship formally establishes the children's role in the decision-making processes of the school. In addition, pupils have many informal opportunities, through discussion with staff, to influence how the school is operated. Parents are similarly involved. Every year the school, as part of its Best Value process, surveys both pupils' and parents' views about aspects of school life.
66. The school has the most securely embedded and exemplary processes for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Each year, the head produces a highly detailed analysis of relative strengths and weaknesses of the pupils' progress and attainment. In addition, the governors are provided with an Annual Evaluation Report on the strategic development priorities that is a deeply reflective evaluation of all subjects and aspects of the life of the school. This evaluation is produced by all staff with responsibilities and is the outcome of the year's rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. These two documents provide a strong steer for the strategic development priorities for the future.

67. All subject leaders provide regular written evaluations of their curriculum plans to all year groups on a regular basis. These evaluations, that offer helpful advice for consideration by teachers, are supported by regular observations of teaching and learning. Direct action plans for all subjects are identified and progress reports provided on each of the identified priorities for the previous year. Taken together, the monitoring and evaluation processes provide a stunning example of how constructive reflection can help to enhance further the quality of teaching and learning to improve the pupils' achievements. The quality of subject leadership is very good across the school.
68. There are excellent performance management processes in the school. All staff have clear targets for improvement which are realistic and time constrained, and provide a strong series of entitlements to development as well as targets for improvement. This highly effective system enables each member of staff to be clear about what is to be done in the following year.
69. Taken together, the monitoring and evaluation processes, supported by the stated aims and values of the school help to determine priorities for the future which are written into the school's excellent strategic development plan. This document embodies all the attributes of effective development planning. It is clear, comprehensive, achievement and quality focussed and stems from rigorous evidence-based evaluations. It has attainable targets with identified resources and time lines. It is inclusive, in the sense that it enables all to take part, and yet focussed in supporting the school's carefully considered strategic objectives. In addition, the process of constructing the plan, which is owned by the governors, enables all to be involved, commencing with a staff and governor residential conference in which key priorities are established. Views of support staff and groups of pupils also contribute to the formulation of the strategic objectives.
70. The governors provide excellent support to the school, as well as effectively holding the school to account. They are very well organised and managed, are deeply committed to the school and provide a very good and wide range of expertise. The governing body includes many parents, representatives from business and local and national politicians. They bring a quality of expertise and skills that contributes well to the success of the school. Governors know the school very well. They have a strong understanding of the relative strengths and needs of the school and remain in very close contact with staff and pupils.
71. Financial management processes are very good. On a year-by-year basis the school balances the budget well. It is prudent in its use of resources. The priorities for development are linked closely to the budget plan.
72. Long term financial planning is good and responds swiftly to the school's urgent needs. The financial procedures are clear and set the tone for very good financial management. The previous report described the credit balance in the school's budget account as 'massive'. It is still very large but has been halved during the course of this year by the purchase of extra staff. The

Headteacher and Governing Body use the credit balance to form the basis of funding for the three-year 'Development Fund' that ends in 2002. These arrangements are appropriate. The school's finances are enhanced by the Headteacher's flair for, and dedication to, gaining extra funds.

73. The school receives a significant amount of additional funding as part of the Government initiative *Excellence in Cities*. Camden LEA has been selected to pilot this initiative in primary schools. The school has been provided with grant funding to develop three strands of work. These are provision for the gifted and talented; learning mentors and a Learning Support Unit. The school has made excellent use of the additional funding for gifted and talented pupils and learning mentors and there are indications that the Learning Support Unit, which opened in the week prior to the inspection, is making a good start. The school is able to demonstrate substantial additionality to its overall achievement as a result of these funds.
74. The school receives additional Government grant and further funding as part of the Kings Cross Single Regeneration Budget Education project. This project is having a very positive impact on achievement in the school. There is a New Projects co-ordinator, who also has responsibility for the EiC work, and at present there are 12 separate projects. Each of these projects is very well conceived, well organised and the activities stemming from the plans are in operation.
75. The school also receives significant additional funding for minority ethnic pupils. This grant is used to outstanding effect in securing high attainment for the 90% of pupils who have English as an additional language.
76. In the current year, the school has received additional grant of £396,297 as a result of the three areas taken together. There are good evaluation strategies in place that suggest that the targets set from all the projects are being met. Given the overall outstanding achievement of the school, the very positive relationships with the parents and community, there is strong evidence that the school is making best use of the additional funding that has been provided. The school is ideally placed to make the very best use of additional project funding because it has an almost limitless capacity to embrace such projects, embed them into the school's overall provision and to integrate their leadership and management into the school's excellent structures.
77. The Headteacher and Governing Body have high regard for the principles of best value. The policy for financial management incorporates cost-benefit criteria for all expenditure. The policy is reviewed annually. All expenditure is related to the improvement of the learning environment and to the raising of standards of attainment. The school consults widely in setting the school development plan. The school is acutely aware of the context in which it works and the need to share the decision-making process. The Governors annually evaluate the quality of services that are bought in from the local education authority. All purchases of agency staff, goods and services are the subject of competitive quotes.
78. The school makes very good use of new technology for administrative purposes. All pupil records and data, including financial data is, stored



electronically. Excellent use is made of ICT including staff communicating with each other by email.

79. Teachers are suitably qualified by training and experience for the age group and subjects that they teach. However, there is a considerable difficulty in recruiting and retaining the service of suitable teachers. The Headteacher and Governing Body work constantly to overcome this difficulty, and as a result, there is little negative effect on standards. The school has a policy to employ significant numbers of overseas teachers from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The school has nine new teachers from the beginning of the autumn term, who hence had been teaching in the school for less than one month. Of these, two are UK qualified and the other seven are from overseas. In addition, there is a further teacher, from South Africa who has taught in the school since January 2001. There is an excellent induction procedure for Commonwealth teachers, all of whom are experienced in their home country.
80. The policy for staff development is exemplary and its implementation is thorough and efficient. Its aim is to retain the services of good quality teachers. The school recently gained the *Investors in People* quality standard, and had very little work to do to achieve this prestigious award.

81. The school's accommodation is in good condition given its age. The building is well cared for, the public passages, stairs and corridors are well kept, though there are some parts of the building that would benefit from refurbishment. Learning resources are at least good for all subjects.
82. Outdoor accommodation is very limited, but excellent use has been made of the available space. There is a very good environmental area and recently a new garden area has been developed. This is a particularly exciting initiative because it incorporates some outstanding landscaping, ingenious waterways and a range of different surfaces, pathways and corners.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

83. The governors, headteacher and staff should continue to strive to improve the rate of attendance. (*see paragraphs 24 and 51*)

### **ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

84. This is an area of outstanding quality and a strength of the school.
85. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) constitute 90% of the school's roll. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) team of seven teachers, a nursery nurse and two bilingual support assistants support pupils. The major groups are Bangladeshi and African children, but there are significant numbers of East European and other refugees (making up 25% of the school). Of those that enter the Nursery, most speak no English and there is a high turnover throughout the school. For example, 24 out of the current 57 Year 2 pupils entered the school after the start of the Foundation stage. Progress is rapid and by Year 3, those pupils who have been through the both Key Stage 1 years are moving towards being fully fluent in English.
86. Attainment of EAL pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 meets national expectations in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Bengali speaking pupils exceed LEA averages and African pupils equal them. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in 2000 met national expectations and in 2001 significantly exceeded them in English, mathematics and science. Bangladeshi pupils exceed the LEA average and African pupils equal it, even though most of the Somali children in Year 6 had had less than 2 years schooling. This represents outstandingly high achievement and demonstrates the exceptionally rapid pace of learning.
87. Pupils of all abilities, both girls and boys make excellent progress in relation to their stage of language acquisition. These pupils' relationships to each other and to the teachers and support staff are excellent. Able EAL pupils made very good progress across the curriculum. They were able to engage in investigatory work in science, to make very good use of computers and to use English to express high-level concepts and make hypotheses.



88. There is a range of reasons why these pupils achieve such spectacularly high standards.
89. First, teaching by EAL/EMAG staff is very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, 90% was good and 40% very good or excellent. As well as supporting individual and groups of pupils, EMAG teachers were observed taking whole classes for maths and technology, special booster groups and parent sessions. They have outstandingly high expectations of the pupils. This is based on the central and critical view that even though pupils at an early, or even middle stage, of English language acquisition do not yet have the competencies to confirm their understanding of, for example, mathematical ideas through either expressive language or writing, the pupils do understand the concepts being taught. In addition, teachers understand the needs of the pupils and make very good provision for the teaching of basic skills, especially literacy and numeracy. Planning is excellent and supports individual needs. It is very carefully conceived to ensure that whatever the stage of language acquisition the overall class objectives, particularly in mathematics, are not watered down. The content of the maths is the same for all pupils, though the access is enhanced and supported by imaginative teaching resources.
90. Behaviour management is very good for the minority of pupils, who have particular frustrations or emotional needs. As a result, learning is very good in those classes and groups supported by the EMAG team. The pace of work is good and the practical dimension, such as making model shelters, is very beneficial.
91. Second, the EMAG team and the mainstream teachers make very good attempts to develop spirituality and social and cultural awareness, such as valuing each other's cultures (eg in food and dance), raising money for a range of charities and coming to terms with the refugee experience in creative writing. The school has particularly good links with the Bangladeshi and Somali communities and uses the links to raise achievement both through Bengali and Somali story telling and a range of helpful clubs and activities for children and parents.
92. Third, the range, quality and depth of the curriculum and its assessment are both excellent. In all cases, the practical curriculum, particularly in science, technology and art is very good, thus maximising the opportunity to raise self-esteem through promoting interest and use of language. Within the EMAG team, assessment of pupils is thorough and the information is very well used to provide the best support possible and to guide learning. This helps the pupils' needs to be analysed and pinpointed.
93. Fourth, the EMAG staff are excellently managed and all the staff that work in this area (teachers and classroom assistants) are committed, hard working and act as a team. New staff are very well inducted and there are excellent relationships and cooperation with mainstream teachers. The team is well aware of differences in attainment between ethnic groups and is following a

range of strategies to raise the already high achievement - such as literacy and numeracy classes for Somali and Bengali speaking parents.

94. The work of the EMAG team makes an outstanding contribution to standards at the school. The main strengths flow from the commitment and the close teamwork between teaching and support staff. This includes the excellent work of the Centre for Early Learning as the first welcome to both children and parents, the induction programme for later entrants to the school, the credibility of EMAG teachers as classroom practitioners, immaculate assessment, targeting and tracking of pupil achievement and need. In the last inspection, Section 11 teaching and learning was judged to be good. The EMAG team have made very good improvement from a high baseline.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	33	32	18	4	0	0
Percentage	5	36	35	20	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40	349
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	220

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	82

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	300

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	59
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	111

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.5	School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.2	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 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	30	27	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	20	26
	Girls	24	22	25
	Total	46	42	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (74)	74 (82)	89 (82)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	23
	Girls	24	26	22
	Total	48	52	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (77)	91 (87)	79 (79)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	25	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	15
	Girls	19	22	23
	Total	30	34	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (63)	77 (53)	86 (75)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	14
	Girls	19	19	22
	Total	28	29	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (68)	67 (56)	84 (77)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	53
Black – other	4
Indian	1
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	196
Chinese	1
White	54
Any other minority ethnic group	14

*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: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	23.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	29

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

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	427.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	80
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	19
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	1452871
Total expenditure	1517973
Expenditure per pupil	3667
Balance brought forward from previous year	529991
Balance carried forward to next year	464919



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	380
Number of questionnaires returned	137

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	11	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	20	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	80	17	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	66	20	9	1	3
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	17	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	18	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	16	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	80	15	2	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	84	11	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	80	19	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	83	13	0	1	4

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

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

95. The provision in both the nursery class and reception class is very good and a strength. The children make good progress in each of the areas of learning; they behave well and have a very positive attitude to their learning in almost all activities. This represents an improvement on the good teaching and provision in the previous inspection.
96. The provision for the Foundation Stage is in a self-contained unit which is called the Centre for Early Learning (CEL). It consists of a large open plan area, four separate classroom spaces and an outdoor area. The staffing consists of four teachers, two nursery nurses and two bi-lingual support workers, one for Bengali and the second for Somalian children. The unit currently has 70 children on roll: there are 30 children in a reception class and 40 full time nursery. In January, a further reception class will be opened and an additional cohort of 30 full time nursery children admitted.
97. There are some very strong features of the CEL which, when taken together, ensure that the children's achievements are very good.
98. First, the staff works very well together as a team. Although a "key worker" scheme is operated, all the staff take joint responsibility for all the children. This inclusive approach permeates the whole of the CEL. One good example of this in operation is when the Somalian bi-lingual worker was leading some children in a mathematical activity using their home language. Two Bengali speaking children joined the activity and were welcomed and successfully engaged in counting activities focusing on developing mathematics vocabulary. Here the practitioner was very skilful in managing the inclusion of all the children.
99. Second, the curriculum and its planning are very good. It provides a very good balance between adult and child initiated activities; direct teaching and opportunities for the children to pursue their own interests. There is also a very good emphasis placed on the personal, social and emotional development of the children, which is absolutely essential given that very few of the children enter the CEL with any English or previous structured experiences in pre-schools. Furthermore, staff take the opportunity to encourage the building of the children's self-esteem, to provide every opportunity for the children to thrive and succeed and then to celebrate that success.
100. Third, the quality of the teaching is very good. It is seldom less than very good and on occasion is excellent.
101. Fourth, parents are very successfully embraced and their contributions are encouraged and appreciated. There is a strong recognition that parents are children's first educators and staff work hard to ensure that their involvement has a positive impact on their children's learning. For example, each

Wednesday the CEL holds food activities at which parents are asked to come and prepare their favourite simple foods with the children. During the week of the inspection, this included making Paratha, herb bread, vegetable soup, stuffed fish and Bur Sh-iil, which is a Somalian fried biscuit. In this session, there were 15 adults working with the children.

102. Fifth, the leadership and management are excellent. Under the guidance of the Foundation Stage leader, there are excellent arrangements to induct the children into the CEL, including a range of home visits and visits to the setting; excellent entry assessment processes in which each child's abilities and interests are carefully profiled; and the establishment of a very strong inclusive atmosphere and ethos in which all are valued whatever colour, race or creed. He ensures that the staff have a thorough understanding of the children's rapid development and the role of the CEL in securing such learning. Practitioners are developing a strong, shared vision of how their children learn most effectively and the role of the adults in that learning.
103. The children enter the nursery with very poor levels of attainment. A large number of the children live in over-crowded homes, including a substantial number who are in bed and breakfast accommodation. Of the 70 children on roll in the CEL six have English as their first language. In total, 12 of the children are refugees. Many of the children have weak speaking and listening skills in their home language, and are not used to operating in a community setting, having very poor social skills and had very limited learning opportunities. However, owing to the range of strengths in the CEL, children make good progress. They leave the reception class with below average abilities in personal, social and emotional, creative, and communication, language and literacy areas of learning. In these areas of learning a minority attain the early learning goals. In the area of knowledge and understanding of the world, almost all attain the early learning goals associated with the use of information and communication technology. Almost all attain the early learning goals for physical development. Above all, the children are helped to become very confident and secure, they have high self-esteem and they are keen to learn more. The children with English as an additional language make very rapid progress in English acquisition. The CEL provides an excellent springboard for the children's move to Key Stage 1.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

104. This is an area of strength in which the quality of the teaching is never less than very good.
105. Children settle quickly at the beginning of sessions and even though the inspection occurred only four weeks into the term, the children showed a good understanding of the nursery's routines. Almost all the new nursery children are confident enough to be separated from their parents. They have formed good relationships with their key worker and some with each other. However some, particularly Bangladeshi children, are at a very early stage in forming

attachments to members of their key worker group. Despite this, even the youngest children are confident enough to join singing games. Even though very few of the youngest children understood, or had heard of Ring-a-ring-a-Rosie, they very happily joined in the circle in the outdoor area. They felt secure enough to join in, though some needed support from practitioners. The older children are very patient and supportive of the youngest children and this enables all to quickly understand the routine of the singing game even though they were not all aware of the language being used. At snack time, the children enjoy sitting and chatting with their friends. Outside, they take turns with some of the more popular large toys often without guidance.

106. The bi-lingual practitioners are very skilled in supporting children in this area. They build the children's language effectively and help them to develop their English language in a range of well-planned activities. For example, the Bengali practitioner used a computer very well to help the children to feel confident in a counting program. She ensured that the children had good opportunities to explore and investigate the program whilst at the same time helped them to develop their confidence in use of the computer. These children were supported in gaining a positive approach to this relatively new experience. This is an important stepping-stone towards helping children to gain confidence and to continue to be interested in learning opportunities.
107. The children are successfully taught the importance of managing their own personal hygiene. When undertaking food activities, even the youngest children understood the need to wash their hands before handling food, and they were confident enough to do so without adult support. In this session, the teaching was very good and helped all the children to be involved, making choices about which herbs to use and taking turns at using different tools.
108. The oldest children in the reception class, even though in the fourth week of the school year, settled particularly well and had a good understanding of routines and what constitutes acceptable behaviour. When they enter the classroom in the morning, they greet each other and the teacher cheerfully, place their books in the right place and take their place on the mat. The teacher has high expectations of the children's behaviour and she is very skilled at encouraging the more reticent children to join in. There is a strong sense of caring and supportive relationships in the classroom.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

109. The teaching and learning in this area is very good, though few children attain the early learning goals at the end of the reception year.
110. There is a suitably strong emphasis placed on developing the children's communication skills. This is essential, given that almost all the children have English as an additional language. The children are encouraged by all the staff to speak, even though their expressive vocabulary is very limited. Teachers are very skilled at developing vocabulary and involving all the children in activities. For example, the reception and EMAG teacher, when

working with all the reception children, were focusing on initial sounds using a range of artefacts. During this excellent lesson, expectations were very high and the staff skilfully involved all the children. There was an expectation that some children, who have very little English, would learn and speak the word “key”, whilst others would identify and say the initial sound and a further group of children were expected to name the letter “k” and to trace it in the air and write in on a whiteboard. This very clever teaching enabled all to participate in the lesson and to meet the very broad range of individual needs. This work was made particularly relevant because it built on from the literacy session in which the children enjoyed the story *Jasper’s Beanstalk*.

111. The staff are adept at drawing out the pupils’ speaking and listening skills when involved in activities. The children respond well to the effective, well targeted questioning which helps them to share ideas and answer further questions. For example, when preparing fish, the teacher helped to extend the children’s vocabulary very well and to help the children’s confidence by affirming their efforts, The children enjoy books, handle them carefully and know that print carries meaning. They have an enthusiasm for reading and use the wide range of books very well. Parents reading with them at home further develop this enjoyment.
112. The children enjoy listening to favourite nursery rhymes and they join in with gusto, even when they do not understand the language being spoken. Some of the youngest children are secure and confident enough to start a conversation, for example, when using the computer to match numbers to shapes.
113. The children are provided with very good opportunities to draw and paint, and the youngest children are able to say what they have done, occasionally in their home language. The free choice activities are helped by very good interventions from staff who take care to make sure that they discuss each individual work and to draw meaning from the children’s earliest attempts at mark making. Good context is provided and the children are constantly encouraged to talk about their paintings and drawings. The oldest children are encouraged to use different forms of writing, for example, they made labels for the vegetables that they were harvesting in the garden. The staff act as scribes for children and draw from them some of the sounds that are being written. The very strong sense of teamwork in the CEL helps the children’s learning because the nearest adult always takes time to help the children to develop writing skills.

### **Mathematical development**

114. There is particularly strong provision in this area. This is a focus for all children and routines are regularly used to reinforce their understanding. Older pupils in the reception class are encouraged during registration to count the number of children present. This enables them to consolidate their understanding of number and counting.

115. Children doing food activities were supported through planned mathematical language development. They were asked to count the number of bay leaves they pulled from a stalk to chop, the number of eyes and fins on the fish being stuffed and the number of children sitting round the table. Older children were asked to count on from the 10 bay leaves ready to be chopped and this enabled their developing needs to be extended and for them to be included in the activity. The constant reinforcement supports both the children's mathematical language development and their acquisition of English because it is provided in a supportive and appropriate way.
116. One teacher, when sharing a book with a group of children called "Big Brother, Little Brother" used the text very successfully to focus on extending the children's understanding of little and big and small and large. As the children's enthusiasm developed, she quickly used some big and small toy elephants, tomatoes and trucks to emphasise the teaching point very well. She then developed a singing game that the children thoroughly enjoyed as it extended their vocabulary,
117. As well as building on the children's own initiated activities to extend their mathematical development, there are focused teaching sessions for each group. In the YR class, for example, there was an extended activity on counting. There was a good introductory session in which the teacher got the children to clap hands, touching shoulders and counting. Those not joining in were encouraged by the nursery nurse to do so. Good resources were used, including number fans, which helped to capture the children's interest. There was a very good range of follow-up activities that were well matched to meet all children's needs. There were number puzzles, number snap, sorting by colour and counting, magnetic numbers to make a line to 10 and computer programs.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

118. Children are given a wide variety of rich, first hand experiences to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are developing an understanding of the scientific aspects of this area of learning. The children have planted seeds and vegetables to explore features of different foods. The children were able to use a wide range of herbs and vegetables for food activities. They were able to explore the differences between the trout and red mullet being cooked and they were able to see the change in the fish in cooking. Close examination of the fish led to great delight when the children were asked to look carefully at the scales and the reflecting colour of the skin. The children learned a great deal from the experience.
119. The nursery and reception children enjoy the weekly food activities. Parents come in to prepare their favourite dishes, and during the inspection the range of food activities was very extensive.
120. There is very good provision using information and communication technology. The youngest children, who had only been in the nursery for four weeks, could control the program by using the mouse to click. In a counting game they were

able to drag across the screen when matching colours to shapes. They understand the idea of discarding and bin when building block towers. The older children are able to dress, in sequence, a teddy bear and click and drag. They use the shift keys successfully. These children, in YR, already achieve the early learning goals for this area of learning.

121. The nursery children are timetabled to use the school's ICT suite on a weekly basis. Here the children's achievements are very good. The children are able to develop their mouse co-ordination skills and most are able to enter some text and discover at least the first letter of their name. The most able can print and save. The children are in line to achieve the early learning goals.
122. The good provision includes opportunities for the children to investigate a number of old listening centres and radios. They used a good range of different screwdrivers and the teacher emphasised the vocabulary of screws, screwdriver, broken, sizes, big/small, big/little, long/short very well. This led to extending the children's vocabulary of the technical world. It developed further personal skills such as picking up things that drop. In addition, the children's physical manipulative skills were developed.

### **Physical development**

123. Teachers make optimum use of the space available to enhance children's physical development within the classroom and in the outside areas. Children move confidently, are aware of their own and others' spaces, follow simple commands and respond to a range of signals. The rich range of activities in the indoor space provides good learning opportunities for the children to develop manipulative skills through handling paint, small tools, toys, games, and puzzles. Children were helped, for example, when painting and printing, by the nursery nurse asking which hand the children preferred to hold the paintbrush. Their handling and control skills are also developed well through activities such as cutting, sticking, drawing, and using pencils and glue.

### **Creative development**

124. Children are given a wide and rich range of creative development opportunities often within cross-curricular themes as when they use paint and various artefacts for printing. There is a variety of stimulating activities that are well planned to match the age and maturity of the children. They carry out creative tasks sensibly, handling potentially messy materials with care. The CEL is rich with colourful displays indicating that pupils' creative efforts are valued. There is a good emphasis on exploration and use of imagination in dance and role-play. The children happily model the supermarket, using the till and baskets to very adeptly total the cost of fruit bought in the shop. The shopkeeper is suitably assertive and the shoppers responsive to her demands for money! The children frequently use their home language and they communicate effectively with each other and have very good levels of concentration.

## **ENGLISH**

125. In the 2000 tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attained standards in line with the national average and at the end of Key Stage 2 they reached standards above those expected. When compared to similar schools the pupils' attainment is well above that expected. The test results in 2001 for pupils in Year 6 were remarkable with over 90 per cent of pupils attaining the nationally expected level and 30 per cent of pupils exceeding it. As well as placing the school's English results as being outstandingly high for similar schools, in comparison with all schools, the results are well above the national average. To achieve these outstanding results the school has worked extremely hard and has put in place a whole range of measures designed to help pupils make spectacular progress. Every aspect of the English curriculum has been most carefully scrutinised and debated to find the best way to move pupils on to the next level in their learning as quickly as possible. This is most clearly seen in the links the school has identified and established between English and the other subjects in the curriculum. By providing pupils with a range of extremely well planned opportunities to practise and improve their skills in English whilst studying other subjects, the school has managed to raise standards most successfully. This clear focus has resulted in pupils improving their skills in speaking, reading and writing in a meaningful and enjoyable context. The good and very good teaching seen in many classes has also had a considerable impact on standards as has the additional well-structured support given to pupils who have particular needs. The quality of support given to such pupils in class is excellent and is instrumental in helping them to make exceptional progress. As the majority of the pupils have English as an additional language, it can be seen that the school has successfully found the key to unlocking their full potential.
126. Pupils' listening skills are good. They are attentive in class and listen to instructions carefully. Listening to stories on tape whilst following the text in a book helps pupils develop their listening skills considerably. The high level of adult support in the classrooms also helps those pupils who are at an early stage of language acquisition in English. Support teachers and assistants sit with such pupils and ensure that they fully understand what is being said to them during the course of each lesson. Speaking skills for pupils in years 1 to 3 are less well developed as many have only a limited vocabulary in English and lack the confidence to express their views in class discussions. Teachers are extremely sensitive to this and give them a great deal of encouragement by helping them formulate suitable responses to questions. By the time pupils leave the school all pupils speak with confidence and willingly contribute to debates and discussions. They ask relevant questions and listen attentively to the questions asked and answers given by other pupils. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson the pupils were using London Underground maps to work out journeys and were extremely willing to explain their routes clearly to the rest of the class who followed their directions on their own maps. Pupils are given many useful opportunities to address an audience. The Year 6 class assembly seen during the inspection was a good example of how confident the pupils become in speaking. All the class spoke clearly and with good expression, particularly one boy who said a poem with such great sensitivity



and feeling that the whole audience of parents, staff and pupils was very moved.

127. Reading is a particular strength of the school. By the time pupils leave the school they have attained good standards in reading with the majority able to read both fiction and non-fiction books with good understanding. Given the very limited skills that most pupils have in English when they enter the school, this is a considerable achievement. From an early age they are taught letter sounds and the sounds made by various groups of letters. Using these skills they can read unfamiliar words although they do not always have an understanding of the meaning. Pupils of all ages thoroughly enjoy reading books and take them home regularly for pleasure and to improve their skills. They can talk animatedly about their likes and dislikes. For example, one Year 2 pupil loves amusing books such as 'The Hodgehog' whilst a Year 6 pupil preferred the Harry Potter series. Pupils use the local library, both with the school and independently, to give them access to an even wider range of stories and information books. The school also supplements the books used for research by the pupils in class lessons such as history, by borrowing boxes of suitable books from the local loan centre. Following careful teaching, the pupils effectively use the Internet and CD ROMs both in class and in the computer suite to find interesting and informative texts to use in their work and this adds a further dimension to the reading they undertake in school. Unfortunately, due to the installation of the computer suite, the school has no library at present although there are firm plans to make a complete research and study unit by extending the suite to include a library. The weekly one-to-one reading sessions which the school has arranged for younger pupils with up to fifty adult volunteers from local businesses are particularly effective in raising pupil confidence in reading. Booster classes for pupils needing additional help are also particularly effective in raising standards. A class for some Year 6 pupils to improve their phonic skills was of excellent quality and progress in learning was particularly rapid. Of special note is the time and effort the school has put in to ensure that the texts used in literacy lessons are meaningful to the pupils and of the highest quality. They have chosen suitable texts most carefully to interest and inspire pupils to want to read more and to ensure that they are able to study a book in depth rather than using shorter texts that have no relevance. For example, Year 6 pupils have recently been reading 'The Secret Garden' and, by reading the book and watching excerpts from the film, have gained a deep understanding of both the story and its characters.

128. Standards attained in writing have improved considerably since the last inspection when writing, including handwriting, was a Key Issue for the school. Pupils of all ages take a pride in their handwriting and by the time they leave the school it is very well formed and often a pleasure to see. The handwriting seen in displays in classes and around the school is very good and encourages all pupils to do their best. Improving standards in writing has been a main focus of the school and has been most successfully addressed. The whole school curriculum has been scrutinised to identify areas that will support and extend the opportunities for pupils to learn to write in a variety of styles.

These links are very well used by teachers to improve writing and pupils enjoy the relevance of the work they are given. For instance, Year 6 pupils wrote letters to a local Member of Parliament about the problems in the local area. They wrote with considerable insight and clearly outlined their concerns, adding some novel solutions of their own. In science pupils write clear reports on their work and use literacy lessons to deepen their understanding. Year 6 pupils were seen writing good quality non-chronological reports about various species of animals from their own notes. Year 5 pupils successfully took notes of a video programme outlining the life of Henry VIII. These notes then formed the core of written profiles. Throughout the school pupils are taught to write in a wide variety of ways and for different audiences. They successfully write newspaper articles, poetry, imaginative stories, factual accounts and instructional texts. At the age of eleven they are able to write at length with a wide range of appropriate vocabulary to add interest. They write with generally correct grammar and spell words accurately. Punctuation is also good with pupils using question marks, exclamation marks, commas, apostrophes and quotation marks correctly.

129. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and more often good or better. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when one in five lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers have very good management skills and pupils can concentrate on their work without interruption. The calm and purposeful atmosphere created in classrooms is a significant factor in helping pupils to make excellent progress. Pupils respond very well to this and have very good attitudes to their work and behave well. The planning of lessons is of the highest quality. They are imaginatively planned by teachers in each year group together with support teachers for pupils with English as an additional language. This enables teachers to share their ideas and expertise and ensures that the work is suitable for pupils of all abilities. Teachers use assessment very well to help them plan future work and to know exactly the ability levels of their pupils. They set appropriate targets for individual pupils and older pupils know exactly what is expected of them if they are to reach the next level in their work. Marking is good and helps pupils know how to improve their work as well as encouraging them in their efforts.
130. Leadership in English is excellent and has been instrumental in raising standards. The monitoring of planning, teaching and outcomes is exemplary and ensures that all pupils receive a first class education in the subject. Assessment procedures are also of the highest order with individuals and groups of pupils being carefully monitored to identify areas for further improvement. Individual targets are set for pupils and their progress towards these meticulously tracked. All the information gleaned is used to guide not only the planning of the curriculum, but also to assess the level of support and intervention required to maximise the learning of every pupil. The standards attained in English are a particular strength of the school and a strong indication of the very high expectations teachers have of the pupils in their care.

## MATHEMATICS

131. The results of the 2000 national tests, taken by pupils at the end of Year 2, show that the large majority attains the national standard of level 2 and that almost one-quarter attains the higher level. Overall, the results are in line with the national average but well above those of schools with similar intakes. Prior to 2000, results indicated a marginal decline in average attainment. The unpublished results for 2001 show that the recent improvement has been maintained. The trend is now upward. The results are remarkably good for a school where English as an additional language is the norm.
132. Attainment is sustained and enhanced in Key Stage 2. The results of the 2000 national tests, taken at the end of Year 6, show that the majority attains the national standard of Level 4 and that one quarter attains the higher levels. The results indicated a significant improvement upon the previous year. Overall, the results are well in line with the national average and well above those of similar schools. Prior to 2000, results were variable. The unpublished results for 2001 show a very substantial improvement in attainment and indicate that an upward trend has been firmly established. Test results are carefully analysed so that areas where pupils achieve less well may be addressed through carefully planning and target setting.
133. The inspection findings at Key Stage 1, based upon lesson observations, scrutiny of work and conversations with pupils, confirm the test results of 2000. Most pupils attain at least average standards and some attain above. All pupils achieve their highest potential. Pupils make very good progress in learning about number, shape and measure. They learn how to apply number to simple problems in money. Pupils learn how to collect information and how to illustrate it. For example, one class showed the popularity of various kinds of crisps on a colourful bar chart. By the end of year 2, most pupils count sets of objects reliably and use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20. Pupils respond well to mental arithmetic and are eager to show that they know the multiplication tables for 2, 5 and 10. Pupils apply their knowledge satisfactorily and calculate change from 10, 20 and 50 pence. They are less confident in working with odd numbers. Pupils tell the time on the hour and the half hour, although uncertainty with language makes the distinction between a quarter to and a quarter past hard to understand. Pupils know the names of many 2D and 3D shapes and accurately describe their properties. Pupils know about millimetres and centimetres. They estimate the length of everyday classroom items and compare with the actual measurement. Pupils use the language of mathematics quite well but sometimes have difficulty in forming number statements and this impedes understanding.
134. The inspection findings at the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils are in year 6, confirm the test results of 2000. Most pupils attain at least average standards and a significant number attain above. Pupils continue to make very good progress and they achieve very well. Most pupils have a secure grasp of place value and the four operations of number. Many pupils are able to express themselves in mathematical language and to explain what they are doing. This

greatly enhances progress. Pupils measure accurately and senior pupils know where to place the decimal point in metric measurement. Lower attaining pupils are given the opportunity to practise measurement on body parts and accurately measure the distance from shoulder to finger tip, for example. Older pupils are confident in their knowledge of fractions, factors and multiples. A scrutiny of last year's workbooks showed a good knowledge of averages. Pupils understand the difference between the mean, mode and median. Pupils investigate symmetry and illustrate reflection. Pupils know and understand co-ordinates and how they are used to position a point. Older pupils have too little practice in investigative work and, therefore, not enough opportunity to work on their own and to form their own conclusions. Overall, pupils are prepared well for secondary school.

135. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are given excellent support in acquiring basic number skills. The skilful use of mathematical equipment often helps to overcome language difficulties. Pupils gain skills and self-esteem rapidly.
136. Numeracy skills are used well in other subjects. In history, pupils use a timeline to chart historical events and in geography pupils use their knowledge of co-ordinates to read maps. In music, pupils beat time and count out the number of beats in a bar. Knowledge of number and measure is well used in science. For example, pupils in Year 2 are able to use a Venn diagram to classify forces. In Year 6, pupils use their knowledge of graphs to make predictions about the outcome of experiments.
137. The quality of teaching is more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. Overall, teaching is good and it has many very good features. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed, the teacher over estimated the abilities of the pupils who consequently became restless because they could not do the work. Generally, pupils are very well managed. Clear targets are set, against which pupils may measure their progress. Help is always at hand from the teacher or the learning support assistant, so that pupils may progress at their own rate. Teaching is sequential and precise. Pupils are clear about what they have to do and this helps their confidence. The learning environment is good. Questions are open ended and well spread so that all pupils have a chance to contribute. Good emphasis is placed upon the use of key words and this helps understanding. Relationships are very good and are based on mutual respect. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions. Their answers are valued. Lessons move at a stimulating pace so that the pupils do not become bored. Attainable targets are set and progress towards them is very carefully monitored.
138. The subject is very well managed by a teacher who has a clear vision for future development and an action plan that will ensure that the goals set are achieved. Teaching is regularly monitored and good practice is shared. The subject is well resourced and a good stock of mathematical equipment is well used to aid pupils' knowledge and understanding. Class and support teachers together have established a strong and positive learning environment. Jointly, they have enabled the pupils to achieve remarkable results.

## **SCIENCE**

139. Standards at the end of both key stages are above the national average. This shows a significant improvement since the previous inspection when there were shortcomings in both the provision and standards attained in science. The improvements are a result of the considerable investment by the school in developing further the curriculum, teaching and learning of science and having a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision. The pupils' achievements in science are outstanding.

140. Standards in the 2000 science teacher assessments of nationally set tasks showed that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well below the national average in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools they were broadly in line. This was due to the relatively weak recording skills evident in some pupils' work because almost all the pupils have English as an additional language and many are at an early stage of English acquisition. There was a significant improvement in the 2001 tests from 79% to 84% of pupils gaining the expected level. These results support the inspection findings that pupils' attainment is above average, particularly in the area of experimental and investigative science
141. National test results in 2000 for pupils aged 11 were average in comparison to all schools and well above average in comparison to similar schools. Overall since 1996, standards have generally been better than the national average. However, the 2001 tests showed a significant improvement. Only three children in the year group did not attain the expected level and two of these were absent at the time of the test. The overall result of 96% gaining the national expectation is exceptional. There has been no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
142. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of science from the well below average levels of attainment when entering the school. This is because the teachers' well-thought-out plans ensure lessons have a good range of activities that are well suited to the stage and rate of learning of all pupils. The science curriculum is cleverly organised to ensure that other subjects are included. For example, in one very good Year 1 lesson where the theme was art, the teacher enabled the pupils to classify a range of materials by texture and then to place them into different sets. This work was linked effectively to the science topic and helped pupils to extend their learning of classification by selecting materials by characteristics. By Year 2, pupils are able to classify materials and relate them to physical characteristics, natural or synthetic. The good quality activities help to strengthen the children's understanding of science. The most able Year 2 pupils have a strong understanding of investigational work and they can successfully make predictions and provide reasons based on sensible reflection such as melting ice, testing strength of paper, water proofing and using magnets. Compared with pupils' abilities and experience, achievement is very good especially in oral understanding.
143. Throughout Key Stage 2 all pupils achieve well, as the result of the very good planning by teachers and the effective support from EMAG staff and helpers. Pupils make very good use of resources and approach the subject with a high level of interest, enthusiasm and confidence. In a very good Year 3 lesson, where pupils were planning an investigation on plant growth, pupils held paired discussions, which generated some very good ideas and enabled their language to be extended. Pupils were encouraged to use appropriate scientific terms such as "predict, classify, variables". They were able to record their ideas for an investigation on a common format sheet and as a direct result of the activity all the pupils were able to make predictions and many were able

to coordinate two variables. Throughout the lesson, the pupils were thoroughly engaged in the work and were very enthusiastic.

144. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have developed a high level of skill in making comparisons and predictions and devising fair tests. The most able pupils undertake detailed investigations in studying, for example, parachutes, plant growth and cooling curves that shows high levels of understanding. This includes strong numeracy skills where good use of averages, repeat measures and high level graphical skills support the science learning. They have good explanatory skills in using previous knowledge and predictions and the use of process skills in concept learning. They use symbols, including electrical symbols, accurately. All the pupils demonstrate good levels of scientific knowledge across the range of the science curriculum.
145. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are fully involved in practical investigations and are well supported. The EMAG teachers make a significant positive contribution to the standards attained by pupils with English as an additional language. In addition, the provision for gifted pupils, which has included a Master Class led by local secondary science teachers ensures that these pupils make rapid progress in their learning.
146. The quality of teaching is good, with 40% of lessons being very good or excellent. Eight of the ten science lessons seen were good or better with one lesson being unsatisfactory.
147. Teachers plan lessons very well throughout the school. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use appropriate scientific vocabulary and expect the pupils to model the targeted words. There is a suitably strong emphasis on the development of science skills through a sharp focus on investigation with work that is very well matched to suit the pupils' individual needs. In an outstanding Year 4 science lesson the teacher, focusing on a growth survey, helped the children to understand the need for graphs to present data. Data was shown on an OHP and pupils were questioned very well to help them to be able to interpret the table and to draw out patterns of growth. This lesson was highly successful because the teacher grasped the children's interest by having such high expectations of what they could achieve and she had a very clear understanding of both the science underpinning the objectives of the lesson and the mathematical concepts being used in the graphs. Numeracy is consistently well taught in science, and ICT frequently used by teachers to promote pupils' understanding. Teachers consistently focus on language in a way that promotes learning in science and raises achievement. Very good opportunities are provided for discussion between pupils which is a strong point in developing understanding.
148. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in science lessons are good. Younger pupils are particularly enthusiastic in practical activities that occasionally limited their learning because they wanted to see, touch, feel and to talk immediately, before they had learned to take turns and to listen to others. As

they become older, pupils' independence in practical work increases appropriately and there are many examples of pair and group discussion that greatly enrich pupils' thinking about science.

149. Science is very well managed; resources are very good as is the scheme of work. There is strong consistency in following the plans and maintaining the balance of investigative work. Assessment is very good. Excellent use is made of the school grounds, which are now a rich natural habitat.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

150. Only two lessons of art were observed during the inspection so judgements are based on talking with pupils, examining their work, photographic evidence and discussions with teachers and looking at their plans.
151. This evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils in the school is in line with the national expectation at age seven and above at age 11. By the time the pupils leave the school at eleven, they have experienced an exceptionally broad range of challenging work including two and three dimensional art and design using a good range of appropriate media.
152. Teachers have very successfully encouraged pupils to express themselves through art in many creative ways. Year 6 pupils are currently working on landscapes of the local environment, focusing on establishing different viewpoints. Discussion with pupils reveals that they have a very good understanding of this work, and some very good use of digital photography shows above average abilities. The pupils have been appropriately encouraged to study both Canaletto and Monet's views of the Thames as part of this module. All pupils have the opportunity to work in pastels, watercolours, collage, clay and textiles to develop their art and design skills. Art is frequently used in a cross-curricular way as shown in Year 1 where the pupils were dying socks using fabric paints to link to other work on teddy bears. Pupils use ICT to support their work, through both the digital camera and also paint related programs as well as finding out information about other artists. There is art work posted on the school's own web site. Year 2 pupils have been studying 3D paper techniques and produced good work in folding, twisting, spiralling pleating and rolling paper.
153. All art and design work is well displayed in classrooms and around the school, often very imaginatively. Items hang from the ceiling, for example in a year 3 class where there is a very large woven paper hanging collage. All this care and attention shows how much pupils' work is valued and appreciated.
154. The curriculum for art and design is outstanding. It based on the QCA guidelines but goes substantially beyond the requirements of the national curriculum because it is deeply enriched by a wide range of further opportunities to extend and enrich the pupils' art and design experiences. Teachers' planning for art is excellent and effectively integrates the work into other subjects as well as providing a strong craft and creative based separate



teaching programme. There are excellent arrangements for assessing the pupils' art and craft abilities.

155. The school places an exceptional emphasis on the visual arts as a stimulus and means through which pupils are able to develop not only their artistic abilities but also to promote their spiritual and emotional development. Outstanding opportunities are provided for the pupils to express themselves creatively. For example, in Year 4, following a visit to The Victorian and Albert museum to study Ron Arad's chairs, the pupils drew sketches as homework of chairs in their home. This significantly developed their observational drawing skills. There has been a huge array of opportunities for pupils to work with professional artists, to take part in gallery exhibitions, particularly with the October Gallery as part of its Outreach Arts Programme and installations at Kings Cross Station with Martin Shaw. In addition there are excellent opportunities to study and work with minority ethnic artists from Africa and Asia. This helps to celebrate the heritage and work of these artists and to boost the self-esteem of pupils in the school. In the last year this has included Saleem Arif, a Bangladeshi ceramicist, and as part of Black History Month, a drawing workshop operated by Osi Audu a Benin artist. There are arrangements in place for the pupils to be taught by students at the Royal Academy and for them to take part in life drawing workshops at the Academy in Piccadilly. Year 5 gifted pupils' abilities have been catered for through Art Master Classes at South Camden school.
156. Even though the school has had three co-ordinators for art and design in the last three years, each has made a distinctive and important contribution to developing the subject. The current co-ordinator has only been in post since the beginning of this term but she has a clear vision of how she will build on the already outstanding contribution that the subject brings to the pupils' education.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

157. Standards in design and technology meet national expectations in Key Stages 1 and 2. In the last inspection report standards in technology were criticised in Key Stage 1. There has been good improvement since that time which is due to good teaching and the significant strengthening of the curriculum.
158. The work seen showed that the pupils have a good understanding of the design process and pupils successfully produce annotated plans and evaluations as well as effectively constructed models. Pupils are able to make their own designs and their practical and oral skills are above average. Although their written skills, at this early stage in the term, are lower, they still meet national expectations. Work seen from the last school year includes all aspects of the design and technology programmes of study, including mechanisms, electricity and control technology.
159. The youngest pupils are able to distinguish between foreground and background in the making of pop up books (with adult help). Year 2 children

are able to try out various ways of fixing axles to model cars as a preliminary to a design and make task, which developed their skills in handling resistant materials and using tools. Good use of focused tasks builds up the children's repertoire of skills, which are then put use in the design process.

160. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' progress in their learning is good. Year 3 pupils were purposefully engaged in designing packaging, while Year 4 pupils were able to test various ways of joining materials including gluing, stapling and different forms of stitching, as a preliminary to making purses, with a historical theme. Year 5 pupils made good quality designs for musical instruments using a variety of sources for inspiration. In Year 6, pupils made prototypes of models of shelters with a very good pace of work and an understanding of the strength of structures including arches, struts and ties and a combination of rigid and flexible materials.
161. The pupils' attitudes to design and technology are very good. Whilst the younger pupils are sometimes difficult to handle in practical activities as they become older, pupils' independence in practical work increases. In all age groups there was great interest in technology. In Key Stage 2, in particular, pupils' social skill increased and there are many good examples of collaborative work.
162. Teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers organise the lessons well, plan very well and have a good understanding of the processes involved in technology teaching. Staff focus sharply on both skills and the design process and pay good attention to the development of language. Work is always very well matched to pupils' abilities which helps all pupils to have success based on their capabilities and this, in turn, helps the positive attitudes in the subject and supports the good progress in learning.
163. The curriculum is very good and a particular strength. The medium term plans ensure that technology work always has a good context, and frequently is made more relevant by linking it to other themes being studied such as the science of sound, Tudor toys and the science of materials. There is strong consistency in following the plans in practice and maintaining the balance of design and evaluation. Staff have access to well-organised and good quality resources.
164. The leadership and management of the subject has been a particular strength, although the subject co-ordinator has recently left the school. She ensured that the curriculum was strengthened, resources upgraded and most of all provided very good evaluations of teaching and planning through a rigorous monitoring process. This has led to improvements in the subject through the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY (HUMANITIES)**

165. During the inspection history lessons were observed in every year group but only one geography lesson was seen. Standards achieved in history and

geography in both key stages are in line with the national expectation with some above average features at Key Stage 2. History and geography are inter-related as two units within Humanities Studies. Pupils study each subject on half-term blocks of learning.

166. Attainment of seven year olds is in line with national expectations. As pupils enter school with below average attainment in literacy, teachers are mindful to ensure that very good opportunities are provided to enable them to show their knowledge and understanding orally. The pupils' written records in history and geography do not match the standards reached in oral expression of what they know and understand. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Younger pupils use simple maps and diagrams to find their way about their local areas. They are able to compare the differences between the local shop and the supermarket. Older Key Stage 1 pupils successfully make simple records of past events and happenings and they have suitable understanding of cause and effect. For example, pupils explain that the Great Fire of London in 1666 spread quickly because the houses were close together and built of wood.
167. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs and those supported by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant make good and very good progress respectively in relation to their attainment on entry to school. This is because teachers take great care in inducting new entrants to the school. There is an eight-week induction to welcome all new entrants to school who are not from Britain. The programme begins with four geography lessons during which pupils make a tour of the local area, draw simple maps and pictures of places of special interest and label them in English. Displays of their work provide evidence of outstanding achievement.
168. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in their learning. One of the key reasons for this is that learning in the humanities is enriched through visits to museums, libraries, and shopping malls. This helps the pupils to learn about people, places and events. For example, younger pupils explore the locality around school, enjoying real life experiences as they buy fruit from the shops or borrow books from the library. The rate of progress is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 when pupils 'catch up' in history and geography. Pupils construct time-lines sequencing influential people and significant events over a period of time in a chronological order. They have a sound factual knowledge of the periods studied. Pupils can conduct an historical enquiry researching information from a range of sources using artefacts and pictures confidently. They present findings in a variety of ways. For example, pupils in a Year 6 class gave a multifaceted presentation of life in Victorian times to the whole school at a morning assembly. Their skilful interweaving of historical facts into a riveting performance of music, dance drama and poetry speaking informed and entertained their audience of adults and younger children. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils analyse and draw conclusions from geographical information collected from a range of sources in a variety of ways. For example, pupils explain how Bangalore is the "silicon city" of India where business people have highly developed skills in computers and information

technology. For many pupils in school this is a positive image to promote of achievements of Asian peoples.

169. The pupils have very good attitudes to their learning in the humanities. This is because the teaching and the curriculum are brought alive and provided with relevance through trips and visits and offers good opportunities for the pupils to collaborate together in their learning. In addition, the tasks set match pupils' needs at all levels of attainment. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of their pupils and provide equal opportunities for all to learn well. This too, supports the children's positive attitudes and good behaviour to learning.
170. The quality of the teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Over both key stages teachers have sound background knowledge of their subject and employ a variety of teaching strategies to encourage pupils' learning and enhance their understanding of the topics studied. Opportunities to consider, discuss and reflect upon current events are used profitably by teachers to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world and the people in it. Teachers' planning, which ensures full coverage of the programmes of study, is very good.
171. There are some very good features to the teaching at Key Stage 2. There is a strong emphasis on developing enquiry skills. As a result pupils become independent learners developing a variety of ways to record the historical evidence they discover and the outcome of their geographical investigations. For example, teachers of Year 6 very cleverly provided a good context for investigating river systems in different localities by comparing and contrasting these with their knowledge of the River Thames, which was partly gained through a visit.
172. The broadly based curriculum provides opportunities for all groups of children to be included within the programmes of study that encompass a wide range of topics. Teachers adapt the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines to meet the particular needs of their pupils. The alternating studies of history and geography are planned to ensure that pupils have a well rounded approach to changing environments and events in the past that influence the way people live, travel and communicate with each other.
173. Very good use is made of information and communication technology to support the pupils' learning in both history and geography. For example, in one lesson a video was used to provide a framework for the study of Henry VIII. Some material that had been downloaded from the Internet supported this.
174. Residential field trips to the Isle of Wight provide pupils with opportunities for cross-curricular studies which broaden their learning and strengthen their understanding of the wider world outside school. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The teams of learning support assistants, learning mentors and EMAG teachers are conscientious in helping pupils to harness

their developing skills in literacy and numeracy to their studies in history and geography.

175. Assessments for both subject areas are exemplary. Assessment is conducted half termly and learning objectives reviewed to check that these have been achieved satisfactorily. Very good use is made of these assessments which inform teachers' planning and the strategies they choose to improve pupils' performance overall. Ongoing assessment is good at both key stages because pupils' books are marked conscientiously with helpful comments indicating what pupils have done well and what they could do better to improve the quality of their work. Resources are very good; topic boxes in classrooms provide pupils with pictures, photographs, artefacts to enhance their learning. Teachers take full advantage of Schools Library Service for additional resource material.
176. Leadership for the subject is very good because it ensures clear educational direction. The co-ordinator for history and geography is newly in position although she has held this job previously. She has clear ideas of steering the team of teachers to ensure continuity year on year and so achieving a raised level of performance from all groups of children.
177. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when there were some weaknesses identified by inspectors. Overall provision for pupils' enhanced learning in history and geography is continuing to improve.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

178. The standard of pupils' work is good and is above national expectations at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2. Standards were below those expected nationally at the end of both Key Stages when the school was last inspected so the school has made remarkably good progress since then. Pupils including those with special education needs are presently making good progress. Those with English as an additional language make good progress in Key Stage 1 and very good progress in Key Stage 2. There has been a very significant improvement in the subject. This is due to the priority that has been given to developing information and communication technology including the recent development of a computer suite and the appointment of a skilled specialist teacher.
179. All but the most recently arrived pupils can name items of computer equipment, such as the mouse, keyboard and printer. They use a keyboard to type simple text. They place gaps between words using the space bar, and most pupils introduce capital letters and full stops into their writing. A significant minority, mostly newly arrived pupils, however, need support in identifying the correct keys to use in producing their work. Higher attaining pupils correct mistakes in their spelling by using the backspace key. They also rotate icons to change the position of items on the screen. Some have learned to use the spell-check facility. Even the youngest pupils know how to access the menu to print their finished work, although again, some newly arrived pupils in each age group do

not yet do this independently. Pupils are assigned partners with whom to work. An effort is made to pair new arrivals with others who speak their home language so that they quickly learn their way around the computer and feel comfortable with modern technology. Girls and boys work together well in pairs, and the level of co-operation and the will to succeed in the set tasks are very high.

180. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have good skills in word processing and the use of simple data processing. They have experienced controlling floor robots. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are competent and many are reaching standards above expectations in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils change the font, colour and size of their work, and can move text from one place to another. They know how to minimise work and how to open other programmes and take their work across to the new programme.
181. Pupils make good progress in their learning throughout Key Stage 2. They develop their understanding of spreadsheets and Year 6 pupils know how to put in a formula to control each column. They are aware of short cut keys and the quickest methods of accomplishing their goals. They also evaluate the use of the computer compared to skilled mathematicians attempting the same tasks. Pupils use the mouse accurately to produce various forms of artwork, and merge pictures into their text. They investigate ways of reproducing traditional techniques such as woodcuts through experiments with art packages. Younger pupils produce effective items for display using a variety of skills such as using bold text and changing the font. Pupils have experience in using a floor turtle to produce the required movements. Older pupils have experience of simulations such as the Crystal Rainforest. Year 2 pupils have begun to access the Internet to find information about subjects like the Great Fire of London. Pupils have opportunities to develop their skills in monitoring external events. Older pupils have e-mail partners in schools in Hong Kong while younger ones have them in other schools in the local area.
182. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good and one excellent lesson was seen with the Year 6 pupils. All teachers are keen and enthusiastic, and communicate this to pupils. They work as a team with the specialist teacher in the ICT suite and benefit from his expert guidance. The computer room is in full use all day and a good and much improved range of resources is provided as well as regular lessons for all classes including the nursery. Through very careful preparation of lessons, together with the specialist expertise, the teaching provides pupils with excellent learning experiences. Teachers provide clear and careful instruction on how to use equipment and computer programs. As a result all pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding.
183. In the excellent lesson seen in Year 6, the specialist and class teacher both had very secure subject knowledge. They paced the lesson briskly which kept pupils involved and concentrating. Expectations of pupils are very high, and they make good progress as a result. Staff made particularly effective use of the master computer and involved pupils in the demonstrations of spreadsheets and graphic representation of the entered data. Pupils' progress benefits greatly from this as it makes instruction clear and pupils fully understand what they are to do. Pupils were able to title their graphs and input full explanations of their work thanks to the well-prepared support materials provided at two levels of difficulty. Pupils respond to the excellent teaching by showing very good attitudes and behaving well. They listen carefully, and, even though a few lack confidence, they settle well to all tasks. Teachers

provided help and support throughout the lesson at just the right level to extend pupils' developing understanding of the tasks. A particular feature of this and other teaching seen throughout the inspection was the way tasks were related to real life situations, such as graphing the level of slope ideal for comfortable wheel chair use. Pupils understand from an early age how useful computers are in solving problems and modelling various possibilities.

184. Resources for information and communication technology have improved drastically since the last inspection. The school has purchased equipment to provide for the teaching of more advanced skills and to develop pupils' knowledge of the Internet. The provision of computers in classrooms is good and many of these are networked. The computer suite is very modern with the latest screens at pupils' height; it is light and comfortable with air conditioning. Pupils use skills learned in the computer room well in relation to other subjects in the curriculum. The specialist teacher has effectively used and modified national guidelines to develop the scheme of work for the whole school. All areas of work are covered in an imaginative and innovative programme. Pupils have helped devise a school website and have gained valuable experience helping local businesses to evaluate theirs as they are developed. They have also worked with the local community in a cyber café that enhances their sense of being a part of the local area, even though many have only recently arrived themselves.

185. The co-ordinator is keen, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He has a clear vision of how to continue raising standards and develop the subject. He supports his colleagues informally as well as holding training sessions for them and the school is far advanced on the government's plans for training teachers in computing skills. However, as staff turn over is high there is a constant need to introduce new members of staff to the latest skills. Ongoing assessments of pupils' skills are made and built on appropriately. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills, although the use of computer assisted spelling programs is under developed. Computer work also has a good impact on pupils' numeracy skills, such as graphing and seeing patterns in numbers. Pupils enjoy computing and they are very keen participants in the computer clubs. Equal opportunities are well maintained with staff monitoring to see girls get equal access to the boys. The subject adds to pupils' knowledge of the wider world and helps develop their social skills through the paired working system.

## **MUSIC**

186. Pupils at both key stages attain the standards expected nationally for their age group. Pupils enjoy a good range of music-making activities. The school places strong emphasis upon performance and as a result the standard of singing is good and, in class work, sometimes exceeds the standard expected nationally. In assembly, pupils sing with great enthusiasm and respond particularly well to action songs. They learn the rudiments of performance quickly and, in one assembly, the entire school learnt a new song in fifteen minutes. Pupils are learning how to pitch notes correctly and how to sustain a phrase.



187. Pupils have the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument of their choice and are taught by skilled visiting teachers. There are flourishing recorder groups. Pupils play regularly in assembly, which helps to develop performance skills and confidence. The school choirs gave a delightful performance in assembly. The steel band is an accomplished group of players who will give their first public performance at the end of term. These pupils exemplify the enthusiasm of pupils for performance music. They are eager to learn and eager to play. There is a carefully devised programme of music for listening that gives pupils a good opportunity to experience and enjoy a wide variety of musical styles from around the world.

188. Pupils make very good progress in Key Stage 1. Many have little previous experience of music and are initially unsure in their approach. However, confidence rapidly grows as they learn that all may become music makers. Pupils sing *Hello* and all shake hands. Pupils tap out the rhythm of their names. They sing songs as a three-part round and are delighted by the opportunity to share music with others. They are fascinated by the wide range of percussion instruments available and enjoy exploring the way sounds are made. Pupils distinguish well between loud and soft and confidently accompany themselves as they sing.
189. Pupils continue to progress very well in Key Stage 2. They clap increasingly complex rhythms. They know the names of the notes on the keyboard and are familiar with quavers, crotchets and minims. They learn about simple chords and how to improvise a short composition on keyboard and percussion. They play to each other and older pupils constructively evaluate each other's work. Pupils use a simple graphic score to write down their composition and how to play it back.
190. The teaching by the specialist teacher is always at least good and has many very good features. Pupils are very well managed and sympathetically taught with a warmth that encourages the creative spirit. The pace of lessons is very well judged. Pupils have the time to make and enjoy music. Lessons are well structured. Pupils find lessons exciting and stimulating and most are eager to join in. Those with special educational needs and English as an additional language are given very good support. Expectations of work and behaviour are high and nearly all pupils rise to the occasion.
191. Music has retained its position as a strength of the school since the previous inspection. The scheme of work is very good and includes provision for work with computer programs. Assessment is developing well. Pupils' musical experiences are enhanced by visits from groups of musicians, including Indian dancers, African drummers and Indonesian gamelan performers. This provides an excellent celebration of the multi-cultural heritage of the school's pupils, parents and staff and serves to provide very positive images of minority ethnic groups. The school choir also gives performances in the local community and joins in with the local education authority's music day. Taken together, these combined experiences serve to significantly enhance the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. The teaching environment is ideally suited to the appreciation and enjoyment of music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

192. Standards attained in physical education are as expected nationally. Only gymnastics and games lessons were observed during the inspection but, from looking at teachers' planning, photographic evidence and talking to pupils, it is clear that all other aspects of the subject such as dance, swimming and athletics are also taught. As they move through the school pupils make sound progress in developing their skills and the extra-curricular provision for games gives further opportunities for talented pupils to make very good progress and

attain standards higher than expected. The provision for swimming is good for all pupils and the majority of pupils reach the national standard of being able to swim twenty-five metres and have confidence in water by the time they leave the school. Indeed, last year about 40 per cent of pupils exceeded this standard and gained certificates for swimming fifty, a hundred and even four hundred metres. All pupils are fully included in physical education lessons and those with special educational needs or English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates.

193. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand the importance of correct warm up activities at the start of each lesson and learn the beneficial effects of exercise on their bodies. In gymnastics lessons they use space well and can travel safely in different directions using imaginative combinations of feet and hands. In Year 3 pupils throw and catch a beanbag with reasonable accuracy and control, working together successfully in pairs. Year 5 pupils travel over apparatus in gymnastics lessons showing symmetrical and asymmetric shapes. They do not, however, refine their actions sufficiently to improve their performance during the course of the lesson. During the inspection pupils in Years 4 and 6 were having swimming lessons with a specialist instructor at a local pool and, as can be seen from the certificates they receive, make good progress in this aspect.
194. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with one lesson being less than satisfactory. As the inspection was in the fourth week of a new school year the teachers were appropriately concentrating on establishing routines to ensure safety in lessons. For example, in a Year 2 gymnastics lesson the teacher insisted that the pupils stopped on command and worked in silence when requested. The pupils responded well to this and worked safely and sensibly. A brisk and appropriate warm up session at the start of each lesson is followed by the main learning activity that is planned to build on the prior attainment of all pupils. Where teaching is less effective the teachers' management of pupils is weak and a great deal of lesson time is spent waiting for pupils to respond to instructions. Some teachers' subject knowledge is insecure and they are unsure how best to help pupils who are having difficulty in performing a set task. Time is not always used efficiently when pupils are inactive through having to queue for their turn on the apparatus. In most lessons behaviour is satisfactory and pupils enjoy the activities. They dress correctly for lessons and teachers address all health and safety issues.
195. There is a good range of clubs for pupils to attend including specialist football training at a local Premier League club. The school holds an annual sports day that is well supported by parents and much enjoyed. Pupils take part in local dance festivals outside school and also perform dances in assemblies. A group of Year 6 pupils successfully performed a well-thought-out 'train dance' in an assembly about Victorian times.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

196. Standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 are average. At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment is above national expectations and pupils have a good understanding of the principles of love, trust, respect, humility on which the four religions studied are based. Pupils make good progress in their learning and they achieve very well. This is because of the very good teaching in Key Stage 2.
197. Younger pupils make good progress though their recording of their ideas is heavily dependent upon their progress in acquiring basic literacy skills and applying these skills effectively to record their understanding of the religious faiths being studied. There was a good example of this in a Year 2 class where pupils were studying Judaism and the epic story of Moses leading God's people to freedom through the parting of the seas. Pupils discussed this orally, beginning to understand its implications but did not have the literacy skills to record the story. The teachers are mindful of ensuring that they focus their assessments on the pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education rather than their level of English acquisition. This supports good progress in learning. Pupils use the appropriate vocabulary to name the artefacts and sacred books for example Torah, Koran and Bible.
198. Based on a scrutiny of pupils' work in the past year and in the lessons seen, teaching is good overall, with some strong features which leads to good progress in learning in Key Stage 2. The teachers are skilful in drawing views from the pupils which helps them to understand the issues being taught. For example, a Year 6 class was studying Judaism and focusing on the Mitzvoth - the rules of the Jewish religion. Pupils compared these to the Ten Commandments as the cornerstone of the Christian religion. They were given good opportunities to speak about their findings from research into Judaism using books, pictures, artefacts and information technology. One boy was genuinely perplexed and asked "With all these rules why do people kill one another?". The teacher very cleverly took the opportunity to broaden the discussion into a sharing of values, morals and spiritual issues. The pupils' response was lively, independent, and perceptive as they debated which were the most important rules. In the end they all agreed with a Muslim boy who said the most important rule was 'to show respect for all religions and all races'. This open-minded approach characterises the teaching throughout the school feeding into pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Several assemblies were observed when pupils were challenged to reflect upon spiritual and moral issues. For example the headteacher told a story, universal for all faiths, about the child living under the sea who bears the scars on his body for the pain of the whole world. Pupils were reminded that 'all of us have to work to make the world a better place'. In this teaching the ethos and aims of the school are reflected so that the pupils understand they share a common purpose to improve in every way.
199. The curriculum is broadly based and teachers follow the Camden Agreed Syllabus. Different year groups study Judaism, Buddhism, Islam or Christianity. There are good resources available to enhance pupils' learning. Artefacts and books are displayed in all the classrooms. For example, a book in a Year 3 classroom called 'The Prince who became a Beggar' tells the story of Buddha in language that pupils can understand, identifying different words so that meaningful learning is accessible for younger pupils. Pupils are given an insight into festivals special to other religions. For example at school assemblies pupils celebrate Eid, Ramadan, Divali, Yom Kippur and Chinese New Year. Pupils are given opportunities to talk about experiences they have enjoyed on visits back to their country of origin. This provides significant celebrations for the majority of pupils in the school whose faith is not Christianity and makes a powerful contribution to the school's commitment to inclusion.

200. The co-ordinator for religious education has only been in post for three weeks but she is well qualified with a degree in Biblical Studies and the Science of Religion. She has clear priorities for leading this flourishing department to further success through professional development for the teachers and more rigorous procedures for assessment of pupils' work.