

**LARK HALL INFANTS and NURSERY
SCHOOL**

(inc. Lark Hall Centre for Pupils with Autism)

Stockwell, London

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number:100576

Headteacher: Mr D R Gledhill MA

Reporting inspector: Peter Howlett
23744

Dates of inspection: 5th – 9th June 2000

Inspection number: 193367

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Smedley Street Stockwell London
Postcode:	SW4 6PH
Telephone number:	020-7622-3820
Fax number:	020-7627-8820
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Stephen Moss
Date of previous inspection:	18 – 21 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Howlett	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and achievements
		History	How well is the school led and managed?
		Geography	
		Physical Education	
		Equal Opportunities	
Michel Cunningham	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well the school cares for its pupils
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Hilma Rask	Team inspector	English	How well are the pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	
		Under fives	
		Religious Education	
		Art	
Anne Currie	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Special educational needs	
		Design and technology	
		Information Technology	
		Music	
Michael Hymans			Centre for Autism

The inspection contractor was:

WES World-wide Education Service Ltd

Canada House
272 Field End Road
Eastcote
Middlesex
HA4 9NA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an average-sized infant school for boys and girls aged three to seven years old. It has 178 full-time pupils on roll, and 60 children under four who attend the on-site nursery part-time. Six pupils currently attend the on-site Autistic Centre, jointly managed with Lark Hall Junior School.

The school is situated in the London Borough of Lambeth, in an area of considerable deprivation, within the Lambeth Education Action Zone. Pupils have a variety of backgrounds and many come from homes with some degree of social and economic disadvantage. Over 46 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is a high proportion and well above the national average. Many pupils are housed in temporary accommodation and this is a contributory factor to the relatively high proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the academic year. Many of these pupils joining the school have very little English and this has an impact on standards. The school identifies 152 pupils with English as a second language and of these 92 are at an early stage of English acquisition. This is a very high proportion in comparison to the national picture. Fewer than a quarter of the pupils come from the United Kingdom and more than a quarter come from other European backgrounds, mostly Spanish and Portuguese. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery varies, though overall it is well below average. Attainment on entry to full-time education is still well below average. Approximately 30 per cent of the pupils are considered by the school as having special educational needs. This is above average. Seven pupils, including the six in the Autistic Centre, have statements of special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lark Hall School is an orderly and happy place where pupils have a clear sense of community. It provides its pupils with a sound education and its many good features outweigh its weaknesses. However, by the time pupils leave school, standards are still well below average. Teaching is satisfactory overall and the headteacher provides good leadership and firm direction ensuring that the school is clearly focused on raising standards. Taking these factors into consideration the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The provision for pupils in the Autistic Centre is good.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress at Key Stage 1 because of the good provision.
- Teachers are very good at managing pupils, so pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well.
- The school looks after its pupils very well and is very good at monitoring their personal and social development.
- The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.
- There is clear and effective educational leadership from the headteacher and some senior staff.

What could be improved

- Standards in literacy and numeracy.
- Standards in science and information technology.
- Assessment and recording of pupils' progress.
- Management of the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection in November 1996 in addressing the key issues. The Key Stage 1 curriculum is now better in design and technology, history and religious education because the school has appropriate guidance to help teachers in their planning. Planning of work for children under five is also better. However, the development of the information technology curriculum is still unsatisfactory. The school now meets statutory requirements for collective worship, and has improved its provision for pupils' spiritual development. It has taken effective measures to improve pupils' punctuality and reduce levels of unauthorised absence. Standards in English and mathematics have fallen since the previous inspection partly reflecting changes in the composition of the school's intake as more pupils with little spoken English join the school. Nevertheless, the school is firmly focused on raising standards and is soundly placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	E*	E	E*	E
Writing	E	E	E*	E
Mathematics	E*	E	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
Lowest 5%	E*

The table shows that in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, results were well below average in mathematics and very low in reading and writing. When compared to schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds, performances in tests were average in mathematics but well below average in reading and writing.

Comparison of the figures above with the near-average standards of attainment of pupils at the time of the previous inspection should be considered in the context of the increased levels of mobility which are now high and the large proportion of the pupils entering the school at the early stages of English language acquisition. In addition, children enter the nursery and reception classes with levels of attainment well below those typically found nationally. Results in the national tests fell sharply in 1997. Since then there has been some recovery in reading and mathematics, but writing results continued to decline until the present year. The unvalidated results for 2000 show further improvement and indicate that the school has met its realistic targets for the end of key stage assessments.

Standards of work seen in the current Year 2 reflect the test results in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment is much lower than that typically expected at the age of seven. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons, but too little time is given to the subject so overall standards are below average. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in religious education, physical education, music, art and design and technology, and they attain average standards. Standards that pupils currently achieve in history and geography are below average, but represent satisfactory levels of achievement because pupils start school with limited knowledge in these areas. Standards in information technology are low and progress is unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like coming to school and their attitudes to learning are good. The children are responsive and interested, taking part in all the activities provided for them. Most are keen and eager to learn, and work and play well together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and at lunchtimes and break times. Pupils move round the school in a sensible and orderly manner. There are occasional outbreaks of inappropriate behaviour in the playground when the children are not directly supervised. There have been no exclusions over the past few years.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is good. Relationships within the school are good. Pupils are kind and caring to one another.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The rate of attendance is improving and is not far short of the national average. Punctuality is satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall, often good and seldom unsatisfactory. Overall, 52 percent of lessons were good or better and four per cent of observed lessons were unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both the nursery and the reception classes and at Key Stage 1. In nearly all lessons pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Teaching in the Autistic Centre is good. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good and pupils make good gains in acquiring basic skills when taught in small groups or supported in class. Teaching of science and religious education is satisfactory; teaching of information technology is unsatisfactory because there is little direct teaching of skills. Teaching in other subjects is generally satisfactory.

Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and they manage pupils' behaviour very well and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour; this ensures that they can concentrate on their learning. Teachers are conscientious in their planning but they give insufficient attention to evaluating the effectiveness of lessons so as to inform future lesson planning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Provision for under fives is satisfactory. The school rightly gives high priority to teaching literacy and numeracy, but does not give enough time to teach the full information technology and science curriculum in sufficient depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is well managed. The school is effective at identifying pupils with special educational needs. Teaching in withdrawal groups is good and teachers take appropriate account of the needs in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Provision is well managed. Pupils are well supported and make good progress. Through the use of a detailed checklist of levels of language fluency, pupils' progress towards future targets is carefully monitored throughout the school. Pupils respond well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. The school encourages pupils to reflect on their experiences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and has high standards of pastoral care. There are good procedures in place to promote positive behaviour and attendance. Arrangements for the ongoing assessment of what pupils know and understand across the curriculum are unsatisfactory

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory; there are appropriate opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and his positive vision and determined approach give clear direction to the work of the school. He is well supported by some key staff, but subject co-ordinators do not provide the same quality of leadership in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body plays an active part in the management of the school and governors are appropriately involved in planning, decision-making and policy-making. There are well-defined and appropriate committees with clear terms of reference. Governors are knowledgeable about the school but their role in monitoring the work of the school lacks rigour.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher looks carefully at the schools' results in comparison to national and local performance data. The school makes effective use of this information to evaluate the standards achieved, identify the areas of weakness and implement effective strategies for further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management and control are good and the school makes good use of its financial resources. Educational priorities are clearly identified and supported by prudent financial planning. Staffing levels are good and the school benefits from experienced support staff. The accommodation provides a good learning environment and resources are generally adequate. The school monitors its spending effectively and appropriately applies the principles of best value in its decision-making. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Good teaching. • They are confident about approaching the school. • Their children are expected to do their best. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quantity of homework.

Parents and carers are generally satisfied with what the school offers, and are supportive of the school. The positive responses to the parents' questionnaires were for the most part also reflected in the comments at the parents' meeting, though some concern was expressed about the progress of individual pupils. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents. Many teachers make appropriate use of homework to support pupils' learning but practices are not consistent. In particular, there is some inconsistency over the use of home- school reading records.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Over the last three years, the school's results in the Key Stage 1 tests in reading, writing, and mathematics have fallen significantly in comparison to the national picture. Test results in 1997 were significantly lower than in the previous year. Since then, there has been some recovery in reading and mathematics but writing results continued to decline until the present year. In the 1999 national tests, results were well below average. When compared to schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds, performances in the 1999 tests were average in mathematics but well below average in writing and reading. In science, teacher assessments in 1999 indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was below the national average, but in line with similar schools.
2. The unvalidated results of the most recent national tests indicate that the school has reversed this downward trend in writing¹, that standards are rising² and that it has met its targets for 2000. The school's targets were realistic and challenging for the current Year 2 cohort. These results are reflected in the standards of work seen in the current Year 2. Nevertheless, overall standards remain much lower than that typically found at the age of seven. The standards that pupils reach represent satisfactory levels of achievement for most pupils, given the context of the school. Children start school with language and mathematical skills well below those typically found. There are very high numbers of pupils with English as an additional language and a high proportion of pupils with additional learning difficulties, as well as considerable pupil mobility. A large proportion of the pupils who subsequently join the school are also at the early stages of English language acquisition. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons throughout the school and when they receive additional specialist teaching support, pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. However, the school is not able to fully compensate for many pupils' low starting points by the time they leave the school. Many pupils who fail to reach the expected level in the national curriculum tests are pupils who have English as an additional language and have difficulties in expressing their ideas or in understanding complex language.
3. Children's achievement in developing their literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory in both the nursery and reception. However, most children do not attain the expected standards for language and mathematics by the time they are five. Children have limited knowledge and understanding of the world around them before entering the school, and although their achievements are satisfactory, most do not reach the expected standards by the time they are five years of age. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical and creative development and reach expected standards by the time they are five years of age in physical development, though not in their creative development.
4. Standards are low in English, though pupils are making satisfactory progress. Many pupils listen with careful attention and their answers to questions demonstrate understanding, but a significant proportion of pupils have difficulties in fully understanding whole-class discussions. In reading, pupils use a range of strategies to read unknown words and express their opinions on the story line and setting of books. However, most have some difficulties in text comprehension. A significant number of pupils do not yet demonstrate consistent use of full stops and capital letters in their

¹ There is a significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above and a very substantial increase in the percentage achieving the new target level (Level 2B) or above - this proportion equals the 1999 national figures.

² In reading and mathematics, there has been a drop in the overall percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 but a significant increase in the numbers achieving Level 2B or above.

³ The school has provided substantial evidence to show the changing nature of the school's intake: 51 percent of the current reception children have some form of special needs based on the Bury Infant test; inward mobility has doubled over the last three years and is twice the local education authority's rate; and there has been an increase in the number of pupils, Portuguese and Spanish in particular, with little English.

writing, but their written work shows growing awareness of structure. Higher attaining pupils produce written work that is in line with, or above, national standards. Their written work shows consistent use of full stops, capital letters and speech marks and uses a varied structure of language to create lively writing in a range of contexts such as stories, descriptions, letters and biography.

5. In mathematics, standards of numeracy are below average. Although the majority of pupils are working at the expected level in written calculations, a significant minority are not. Some pupils find it difficult to perform mental calculations and do not always have the appropriate range of mental strategies to draw upon. Nevertheless, the use of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact in developing pupils' strategies for mental calculations and pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
6. In science, standards are below average Pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning and their achievements are satisfactory in the areas of science that they cover. However, some aspects of the curriculum are not covered in sufficient depth and pupils' overall knowledge and understanding of science are below typical levels for their age. In information technology, standards are below average, and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because the school's curriculum is too narrow. Some pupils have satisfactory word processing skills, but they do not have enough opportunities to develop aspects of their skills in data handling and control modelling.
7. In religious education, geography and history, pupils' achievements in relation to their low levels of prior attainment are broadly satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress in lessons. In religious education, standards are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. In history and geography pupils' standards are below typical standards for their ages. In art, music, design and technology and physical education there are appropriate opportunities for all pupils to develop their skills, including those with their limited acquisition of English. Standards in the lessons seen were typical of those expected for pupils of similar ages.
8. The school has identified pupils who are likely to gain from additional specialist language support in the school and has created opportunities for small group teaching to support literacy learning in particular. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the support teacher and the teacher for English as an additional Language (EAL) take small group lessons which run parallel to class literacy sessions. These arrangements work well as they provide additional, well-focused help and result in pupils making good gains in their learning and in raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving their targets. These targets are appropriate and are clearly stated in individual education plans. The EAL teacher devotes a high proportion of time during these lessons to the development of pupils' spoken language and she encourages them to ask as well as answer questions. In lessons where there is no additional support pupil's progress is satisfactory, but for pupils with English as an additional language there are fewer opportunities to try out and consolidate learning of new structures of spoken English. Lessons where there is a high practical content provide useful contexts for learning new language, for example in science investigations and art activities.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development

9. The good standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to learning throughout the school have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' attitudes to school are good: they enjoy coming to school and taking part in all formal and informal activities in the classroom and outside in the playground. Their attitudes to learning are positive and most pupils work hard and show interest and enthusiasm in attending school. Staff at the school work hard to promote these favourable responses from pupils.
10. Pupils' behaviour in class and elsewhere, for example in the playground and in the hall during lunchtime, is also good; this is encouraged by a detailed and wide-ranging behaviour policy, and backed up by appropriate explanations and judicious monitoring by staff. During the inspection there was no evidence of any oppressive behaviour, such as sexist or racist or of bullying, and the atmosphere of the school is marked by a strong sense of integration. However, there were

occasional outbreaks of inappropriate behaviour in the playground when the children were not directly supervised. While there is scope for sanctions, and staff appropriately deal with isolated instances of inappropriate behaviour, the school's emphasis on rewards, for example Gold Book mentions and stickers has a positive effect on behaviour generally. Pupils are also very sensitive to the needs of others, for example collaborating in a friendly and supportive manner with one another in class, and evincing respect for the feelings of others, both peers and adults. Assemblies and registration periods are effectively used to raise issues of this sort, to explain their importance, and to propose models. There have been no exclusions for a number of years.

11. The personal development of pupils is good. When opportunities for initiative and personal responsibility arise, for example holding the door open for the class or visitors, or taking the class register to the school office, they embrace them with enthusiasm and pride. Pupils' relationships generally with one another, with staff and with other adults are also good. Personal development is predominantly promoted in a wide range of informal settings by teachers and other staff members: informal opportunities are well taken during the course of the school day to promote and maintain personal development, and there is more formalised support in the form of personal development diaries. These consist of helpful, concise and thoughtfully produced summaries of each pupil's progress. The way in which the school positively recognises and values the home languages and experiences that pupils bring to school supports the pupils' personal development.
12. Pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to work. They enjoy practical tasks and their behaviour is generally good. The quiet atmosphere in the separate teaching rooms helps pupils who receive additional support in small groups. Pupils settle to work and concentrate well. The atmosphere is supportive, with tasks well matched to their individual needs and, as a result, pupils gain confidence, especially in speaking in front of the rest of the group. Pupils learning English as an additional language show good levels of concentration during small group sessions, where they are eager to learn and show a positive attitude towards learning.
13. Attendance is just satisfactory, although it is still below the national average. Attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection and there continues to be an upward trend. The previous inspection identified the high rates of unauthorised absences as a key issue. These are now down and compare favourably with the rates at the previous inspection. Punctuality was also noted as a matter of concern at the previous inspection; this has improved due to the school's efforts, but a few pupils are still late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes. Nine current members of the staff were not at the school at the time of the previous inspection. The overall satisfactory standards of teaching have been maintained. With the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy approaches, there have been improvements in both the coverage and content of these areas.
15. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with good and very good teaching in just over half the lessons observed. Only two lessons were unsatisfactory. This is a substantial improvement on the previous inspection with a reduction in the number of unsatisfactory lessons from 22 per cent to just four per cent. The proportion of very good teaching has remained virtually unchanged at six per cent. Instances of good and very good teaching occurred across Key Stage 1 and reception classes. Some good or very good teaching is evident in music, science, physical education and art when teachers bring good, and sometimes very good, subject knowledge to their teaching. A strength in the teaching of science is the practical, investigative approach adopted in the most successful lessons. The isolated instances of unsatisfactory lessons were due to weaknesses in overall task management, use of resources and lack of pace which resulted in some pupils not fully engaging with the required tasks and, as a result making unsatisfactory progress.
16. The quality of teaching across all areas of learning for the under fives is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. When children in the nursery are encouraged to focus on an activity for

a sustained period of time, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The environment in the reception classes provides consistently purposeful play and learning opportunities. Teachers and support staff work in effective partnership.

17. Specialist teaching of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is good in their small group sessions. Good use of teaching resources and home-made games provides a very tight focus for language learning, and detailed analysis of the language requirements of tasks helps to target new language learning effectively. A good example of this is when three pupils undertook a guided discussion of the content of the whole-class big book on nursery rhyme characters, identifying the characters and key events in the story. This enabled them to make a contribution in the whole class plenary session later on. Pupils with EAL have their needs satisfactorily met in lessons where they receive no additional support, although have fewer opportunities for developing their spoken language in these larger groups. The EAL co-ordinator works hard to support colleagues in meeting the needs of pupils new to English or with continuing English language learning needs.
18. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs in small groups is good. The two teachers are very aware of pupils' emotional and intellectual requirements. Learning targets are well matched to individual needs. A wide range of strategies is used to motivate and help sustain interest. The good, well-focused adult help provided by skilled staff for small groups of pupils with similar learning needs, has a positive impact on pupils' progress. The school took the decision to provide parallel classes in literacy for selected pupils in Years 1 and 2 with special educational needs, as it was felt that the needs of these pupils were not being met in the whole-class sessions. Although this is working well, it means that class teachers and support staff are not given sufficient opportunities and support to develop their own skills. This is important, as pupils are only withdrawn for literacy on three days a week. For the other two literacy sessions and for the rest of the week, including all numeracy sessions, pupils receive little additional outside support.
19. Teaching is most effective when there is additional support either from specialist teachers for English as an additional language or special educational needs teachers. When teachers fully inform classroom assistants about the purposes and expected outcomes for an activity, the assistants are able to offer more focused assistance. This is not always the case, and sometimes opportunities to extend language learning and basic skills are missed and they are insufficiently involved in recording pupils' progress during activities. When teachers undertake lessons, such as the literacy hour, with the whole class, they are less successful at meeting the needs of the full range of abilities than when setting arrangements are in place.
20. Teachers' planning for literacy and numeracy lessons meets the recommendations of the strategies effectively and have already had a positive impact on the pupils' progress. Practical in-service training and support from external consultants are helping teachers gain in confidence to teach literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' learning is enhanced when teachers share the learning intentions both at the start and at the end of lessons. Teachers are not however consistent in sharing the learning intentions with pupils in literacy lessons. Teachers use some of the good strategies for teaching literacy where appropriate in other subjects of the curriculum. This supports language learning for all pupils. Some good teaching of numeracy was observed, with lively pacing, motivating activities and good use of resources, although unsatisfactory teaching took place when weak classroom management and poor use of resources impacted on pupils' learning. Good use of key vocabulary helps pupils to develop mathematical language, and this is of great benefit to pupils who are at the early stages of learning English.
21. Teachers' planning in other subjects is weaker. The school has adopted the new recommended schemes of work for foundation subjects, but teachers' own planning based on these are not yet fully developed. So, for example in science lessons, planning is satisfactory but overall planning in science does not ensure that all aspects of the subject are adequately covered and therefore there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, in physical education teachers plan lessons effectively; this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement and enjoyment.
22. Classroom management strategies are usually highly effective. Lessons start promptly and pupils' behaviour is consistently well managed so they behave well. Pupils know what the teachers high

expectations of good behaviour involve and respond accordingly. They are aware of classroom rules and pupils share resources well together, co-operating well in pairs or on independent tasks when required. Movement between rooms during setting for the literacy hour is particularly efficient and teachers' good timekeeping ensures that pupils who return for the plenary sessions waste no time.

23. Teachers make good efforts to stimulate pupils' interests and provide them with worthwhile activities and make effective use of resources to interest pupils. For example, in geography, teachers used photographs to good effect and pupils were excited when they recognised local features. A strong feature of science lessons was the emphasis placed upon first-hand practical investigation. For example, in Year 2, pupils looked around the school grounds for invertebrates and plants, and in music in Year 1 pupils explored the sounds made by various items. This is one reason for pupils' good response to the subject. The subject co-ordinator takes most of the music lessons. She transmits her good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject to the pupils and, as a result, they are keen to take part and respond well to the opportunities they receive. Teachers have good subject knowledge in physical education and can clearly communicate the skills focus of lessons. This helps pupils make appropriate gains in developing their skills
24. The quality of on-going assessment across the curriculum is uneven. For example, teachers have adopted useful medium and short-term assessment procedures for reading, but this needs to be developed for writing as well. The quality of marking is inconsistent across the school. When undertaken marking is always encouraging, but rarely helps pupils to understand what it is that they need to do to improve the quality of, for example, their written work. Teachers take appropriate opportunities during lessons to observe the performance of pupils and make constructive comments to help them improve. Teachers do not always make effective use of the plenary session in numeracy and check what pupils have learnt. Pupils are not yet involved in their own target-setting and as a result have little idea of their own progress.
25. The use of homework is satisfactory overall, although there is inconsistency over the use of home-school reading records. These are currently only in use for pupils with special educational needs. Homework is not consistently tightly matched to individual needs or targets.

HOW GOOD ARE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES?

26. The overall quality of the school's curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 1 and children under five is satisfactory. However, the need to concentrate on extending pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy from low starting points means that a large part of the school day is spent on these, and there is less time for other areas of the curriculum. As a result, some subjects are not covered in sufficient depth, in particular science and information technology. The curriculum offers a relevant range of experiences to pupils, which captures their interest and meets their needs. For example, in science, the investigative approach and the emphasis on personal, social and health education through work on the body and healthy diets is especially effective in stimulating pupils' enthusiasm, and results in good learning. The school's policy on health education deals appropriately with issues related to sex education and drugs misuse. The school is also beginning to use books in the literacy hour which link to other subjects, such as those on the human body and insects; this makes good use of the time available. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and all national curriculum subjects are taught, including religious education.
27. The school follows the nationally recommended strategies for literacy and numeracy, and the provision is effective. The approach to teaching literacy was reviewed after the first year and appropriate changes made to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 1, who are on Stage 2 and above of the register for special educational needs, are taught in small, separate literacy groups for three days a week. These sessions cover the same text as the rest of the class, but the work is very closely tailored to individual pupils' needs. As a result, these pupils are making good progress in relation to their previous attainment. Similarly, pupils at an early stage of language acquisition are taught in small groups for literacy. This extra support, given through small group withdrawal, enables those pupils to make significant gains in learning, as well helping them gain confidence

and self-esteem. In most numeracy lessons, teachers have a classroom assistant to support group work. This is generally effective.

28. At the time of the previous inspection, curriculum planning in design and technology, history, information technology and religious education was unsatisfactory, and a key issue from the inspection was the development of appropriate schemes. This has been addressed by introducing the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's schemes of work, as they became available, and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. However, there is insufficient monitoring to ensure that pupils undertake enough work to enable them to reach the standards expected, especially in information technology and in science. There is no overview of the curriculum to ensure that relevant links are made between subjects so as to make the best use of time. Planning in the nursery and reception classes has improved in line with recommendations from the previous inspection. In the nursery, planning is referenced to the recommended areas of learning, and in the reception classes it also shows appropriate links to the National Curriculum. However co-ordination between reception classes and the nursery is not effective. A start has already been made on planning for the introduction of the Early Learning Goals in September 2000.
29. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of visits, for example to the National Gallery, the Tower of London and the seaside. The Globe Theatre Company and students from the Guildhall School of Music also visit the school to give valuable extensions to pupils' learning. The school does not offer any extra-curricular activity for pupils. There are satisfactory links with the junior school; there is weekly contact between the headteachers and pupils visit prior to transferring. There are appropriate links with the Centre for Autism with some integration by two of the pupils into the school. Relationships are being forged with local community organisations that provide after school care, but there are few links with local playgroups. The school has useful links with local further education colleges and provides work experience for trainee nursery nurses and initial teacher training students.
30. Arrangements for promoting and achieving equal opportunities are good. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and this ensures that those who receive additional support make good gains in their learning. Individual education plans for these pupils include targets for English, mathematics and personal development, which are clear and manageable. Pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and are integrated well in all activities. The many children from a large number of minority ethnic communities also receive good support both inside and outside the classroom from all members of staff, and they generally achieve good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language have access to the same curriculum as their peers. The current arrangements to withdraw targeted pupils for additional English language support during the literacy hour have been carefully considered and aim to raise standards of achievement for all pupils. EAL staff and teachers plan closely together to ensure that coverage is appropriate, and opportunities are provided for pupils new to English to make connections between their new language learning and written forms of English through appropriate reading and writing tasks.
31. A large number of the Portuguese children currently arriving at the school have little or no English, and there are good structures in place for giving them language and other in-class support; these structures include the presence of Portuguese parents in school to help children with reading. Promotion of the children's own cultural background is also supported by the in-house production of translations of English storybooks. A similar scheme operates for Spanish-speaking pupils.
32. The previous inspection described the school's provision for social and cultural development as a strength of the school, and provision for moral development was also judged to be good. Spiritual development was judged unsatisfactory and the need to improve the provision for spiritual development became a key issue. The school's provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is now satisfactory. Provision in these areas contribute effectively to the good ethos of the school.
33. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' moral development. The school's values and expectations form a sound basis for pupils' moral development. The children have a clear sense of

right and wrong, and teachers take every opportunity to inculcate these values. The school effectively fosters the values of honesty, truth and respect for others. Pupils frequently demonstrate a good understanding of moral values without prompts from teachers or the threat of sanctions. In religious education lessons teachers promote sensitive discussions to encourage pupils' understanding of the feelings of others and the difference between right and wrong actions. Religious education lessons make a sound contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development.

34. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise and demonstrate social skills, and pupils make good use of these as they present themselves. They co-operate well in many areas of school life, they have a sense of fairness and fair play, particularly in playground activities, and willingly help to get classroom materials out at the beginning of the lesson, and put them away at the end. They also respond well to adult models working in the school and visits from students at the Guildhall School of Music.
35. The school presents a broad, detailed picture of the diversity of UK culture and of the cultures represented by the pupils. This diversity is attractively celebrated in a range of displays of textiles in corridors and classrooms, in cooking, in music, in the translations of English books into Spanish and Portuguese, and in outings, for example, to the seaside. Lessons in music, geography and art enhance pupils' cultural awareness. This acknowledgement of multi-cultural diversity makes a notable contribution to pupils' cultural development and broadening of experience.
36. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. At the time of the previous inspection the school did not meet its legal requirement of providing a daily act of collective worship: it does now. Improvement in this area has been assisted by the school's decision to provide opportunities for reflection and for developing thinking skills; for example, assemblies have a few moments of reflection, a 'prayer', and emphasis on consideration on their own values and the feelings of others. Assemblies also contain stories from the Bible. Circle time is marked by structured and spontaneous opportunities for reflection. Lessons, including some in the nursery, contain strong moments of awe and wonder when contemplating the natural environment, when observing and investigating animals, and when listening to some stories. Although there are no links with local places of worship, this improved provision has encouraged a degree of spiritual awareness in the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school has good measures for ensuring the health and care of pupils, and has maintained the good provision noted at the previous inspection. These include a health education policy, capable and caring staff who are able to implement this policy effectively, flexible procedures for looking after children who have accidents or fall ill while on the premises, and the presence on site of two fully qualified first aiders. There is also an appropriate health and safety policy. The headteacher oversees procedures in this area, whereby safety matters related to buildings and other areas are identified, and appropriate actions are carried out. The headteacher capably manages the child protection procedures, and the elements of the policy are imaginatively extended to the school's pastoral work generally.
38. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour are good. The behaviour policy is detailed and appropriate, and it is well understood by staff and by pupils. The contents are backed up by individual class rules prominently displayed in classrooms. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well in lessons, so pupils respond well. At lunchtime and play times, there is a good number of adults in supervision. Procedures for improving attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
39. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' personal and social development. Diaries are kept for each pupil by the class teacher and entries are made as required. At least once a term, the headteacher monitors these and adds his own comments in the light of his own knowledge of individual pupils. Pupils' personal progress and development are well charted and tracked in these personal development diaries. The result is a comprehensive scheme of care and protection, and an institution that is safe and healthy; this makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

40. Procedures for assessing pupils with English as an additional language are good. Assessments are carried out whenever pupils start school and these measures ensure that appropriate additional help is given if required. The co-ordinator for English as an additional language is very active in promoting the interests of pupils in the school. Detailed and accurate information is maintained on the home languages spoken by pupils, together with careful tracking of pupils' development through the stages of language learning over time. Through the use of a detailed checklist of levels of language fluency, pupils' progress towards future targets is carefully monitored throughout the school. Where appropriate, there is also good liaison with the co-ordinator for special educational needs and other agencies. Detailed and well-targeted individual education plans are written for pupils with special educational needs, and they are regularly reviewed to monitor progress. When these pupils receive additional support it is well targeted on their individual needs. There are good links with outside agencies to provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs. For example, the speech therapist attends regularly and there are close links with the school doctor, the nurse and the educational psychologist.
41. Assessment procedures for the children under five have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Then the lack of systematic diagnostic monitoring and shortcomings in targeted adult support were highlighted. In the nursery, specific assessment activities are now carried out; the nursery staff maintain useful detailed daily observations of children's achievements and pass on a summary report to reception class teachers at the time of transfer. When children enter the reception classes a baseline assessment is carried out, together with a development check. The school now undertakes baseline assessment of all pupils, as required, during the first five weeks of entry to the reception class. In addition, the school undertakes the Bury Infant test for diagnostic purposes to help in the early identification of pupils who may have special educational needs. The information is also used to track all pupils as they move through the school to ensure that they are making appropriate progress. At the end of Year 1 staff assess pupils' attainment against National Curriculum levels and make predictions about their likely performance at the end of the key stage National Curriculum tests and assessments. The headteacher uses this information to set appropriate targets and carefully monitors progress towards these targets in Year 2. The school has well-established systems for the analysis of previous national tests results. As a result of last year's analysis, it responded by making the improvement in the standard of pupils' writing a priority. Inspection evidence indicates that it has been successful.
42. However, despite these positive features, there are weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures. Assessment information is not used effectively in planning future work. For example, fuller use could be made of the daily observations in the nursery to inform future planning in a more systematic way, and to target support for nursery children in specific areas of development. Pupils are not made aware of what they need to do to improve because there are limited constructive comments in teachers' marking, and targets for improvement are not set for individuals or groups. The school's procedures for the ongoing assessment of what pupils know and understand across the curriculum are unsatisfactory. In English, assessment procedures are satisfactory; in reading, good detailed records are kept, and in writing there is some regular assessment, but it is not detailed enough to monitor effectively the development of pupils' writing skills. In mathematics, the school is developing a system to track individual ongoing progress towards the key objectives in numeracy. In science and information technology, few detailed records are kept, while in religious education and the foundations subjects, assessment is left to the teachers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents and carers are generally satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. Those attending the parents' meeting that preceded the inspection had mixed views on their children's progress in reading and number, and with the amount and type of homework, but there was strong agreement on pupils' enjoyment of school, on the school's ethos, on behaviour (including the school's reaction to a bullying incident), and the school's response to suggestions and complaints.

44. The quality and range of information to parents is satisfactory. The annual report of the governing body to parents and the school prospectus are informative and readable and meet statutory requirements. While information to parents with children with special educational needs is very good, information about pupils' general progress is only satisfactory.
45. The school has developed a number of valuable initiatives to work in partnership with parents. It makes good efforts to involve parents of pupils learning English as an additional language. The school has built up a number of translated stories into Portuguese, and there are many dual textbooks in the school which celebrate the wide range of languages in the school. Recent funding from the Education Action Zone (EAZ) has enabled the co-ordinator for EAL and the nursery teacher to develop a book bags scheme where books and games are borrowed for the nursery. A family literacy programme is being introduced where parents and children learn together, supported by the skilled specialist EAL co-ordinator. Information leaflets on helping pupils with literacy learning at home are available to parents in a range of home languages and the school provides translators when required for parent-teacher discussions. A Portuguese-speaking parent regularly visits the school to undertake storytelling sessions with Portuguese-speaking pupils. The school makes very good efforts to involve parents of children with special educational needs in formulating individual educational plans and in their day-to-day work. For example, the teacher who works with Year 1 pupils operates a home-school record book so that parents are kept informed of their child's activities and how they can help at home. Parents are made aware of any concerns the school has about their child at an early stage. Parents of children with statements of special educational need are invited to contribute to the statements and to participate in the annual reviews. The school has an appropriate system of home visits, negotiated with parents and takes place before children start at the nursery. The recent addition of a family room, with its own kitchen and toilet, provides a useful facility which is helping the school fulfil one of its aims of working more closely with parents.
46. The previous inspection indicated that the school's partnership with parents was satisfactory and that there were appropriate opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education. The school has clearly made efforts to develop this: these include the home-school agreement which sets out a number of excellent commitments, parents' leaflets on numeracy and literacy (also translated into Spanish and Portuguese), numeracy and literacy workshops with parents, and a range of opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss academic and personal progress, but the degree of response from parents is disappointing. Although some of the EAZ funding is being used well to help parents to contribute, more needs to be done in this direction.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED?

47. The headteacher provides good leadership to the school community; his positive vision and determined approach give clear direction to the work of the school. He is well supported by some key staff; in particular, the co-ordinators for special educational needs (SEN) and for EAL provide effective leadership to colleagues. However, the school does not have a substantive deputy headteacher at present and there are weaknesses within the leadership and management of the curriculum. The governing body is supportive, but does not monitor the work of the school with sufficient rigour.
48. At the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher provided the school with strong and effective leadership. The headteacher continues to give a firm steer to the work of the school; he has a clear sense of purpose and commitment to moving the school forward and raising standards. He has taken an effective lead in addressing the low levels of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and has introduced a number of successful strategies. For example, he makes good use of assessment information to monitor the performance of pupils and sets challenging targets for future performance. To achieve these targets, the school sets all pupils at Key Stage 1 for literacy lessons, using the expertise of the SEN and EAL co-ordinators to teach focused groups. The improvement in pupils' writing skills owes much to these arrangements. This approach is successful because teachers can more effectively meet the educational needs of different groups.

49. Within the school there is a shared commitment to raising pupils' achievements. All teachers work hard to ensure an effective climate for learning and create positive expectations of pupils' behaviour and esteem. They are successful in this: the school is an orderly community where instances of poor behaviour are rare and effective learning takes place in nearly all lessons. The local education authority consultants have provided effective support in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. In addition, the school benefits from the effective support it receives from its Education Action Zone's literacy consultant. The result of this support has been the successful implementation of both national strategies and satisfactory teaching of both literacy and numeracy lessons, helping to underpin the school's efforts to raise standards. During the morning sessions when literacy and numeracy lessons take place, the school provides a very purposeful learning environment in which pupils work hard.
50. The effectiveness of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language and the support for pupils with special educational needs owe much to the good management skills of the co-ordinators. The co-ordinators and other support staff make an important contribution to the ethos and life of the school. The good systems for assessment introduced by the EAL co-ordinator provide good models for colleagues in the school. The special needs co-ordinator effectively manages and monitors the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and ensures that the school fully implements the Code of Practice. Their strong personal qualities and specialist skills also promote the best interests of both pupils and their families through good relationships and communication with staff and parents and ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
51. Staffing levels are good. The school has a good number and mix of suitably qualified teachers to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and to support pupils with English as an additional language. The school employs two part-time teachers, to work with pupils who have special educational needs. They are both well trained with appropriate qualifications. The arrangement works well for the pupils who are selected to receive additional support, and they make good progress towards their set targets, especially in language and literacy. The school employs a good number of support staff, and teachers use them effectively to support pupils working in groups. There is also additional support from learning support assistants in numeracy lessons. The school has an effective programme of professional development with an appropriate balance between meeting the individual professional needs of staff and the priorities of the school. The management makes effective links between the school improvement plan and the staff development programme. This helps the school meet its identified priorities. Procedures for the appraisal of staff are appropriate, and there are sound arrangements to support teachers new to the school.
52. There are shortcomings in the management of the curriculum. The school rightly focuses on the development of literacy and numeracy, but the co-ordinators for English and mathematics do not provide effective leadership. While the headteacher and external consultants have ensured the satisfactory development of these subjects, the co-ordinators do insufficient evaluation of the standards achieved. Given the low standards in these subjects, the co-ordination needs to be strong, proactive and evaluative. Also the high priority given to numeracy and literacy has resulted in low priority being given to the development of other subjects. For example, the co-ordinator for information technology and science is enthusiastic and keen, but does not have sufficient opportunities to monitor provision and bring about change. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching by the headteacher are systematic, positive and constructive though not yet rigorous enough. All staff are observed on a regular basis and receive appropriate feedback. However there is limited monitoring by the English and mathematics co-ordinators, and other subject co-ordinators have few opportunities at present to carry out this aspect of their role. There are also shortcomings in the management of the Early Years provision. Teachers in reception classes work well together, but the overall co-ordination with the nursery is not fully effective.
53. The governing body supports the work of the school and plays an active part in the management of the school. There are well-defined and appropriate committees with clear terms of reference. Governors are appropriately involved in planning, decision-making and policy-making. Governors value the professional leadership of the headteacher, and there is an effective working relationship

between the professional management and the governing body. Governors are knowledgeable about the school, but their role in monitoring the work of the school is unsatisfactory: for example, the designated governor with responsibility for special educational needs does not meet regularly with the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO). The governing body intends to develop this aspect of its role through its curriculum committee.

54. Financial management is good. The school makes good use of its financial resources to support pupils' needs and promote the aims of the school. The school development plan is very comprehensive and identifies the school's priorities in a clear and accessible way. The costs for improvement in time and money are clearly identified; for example, the governing body has made appropriate plans for the use of its large carry forward figure in last year's budget. There is one weakness in an otherwise good development plan: while the range of targets for improvement is appropriate, the school does not set out a sufficiently detailed course of action to fulfil each one.
55. Staff use the computer system for budgetary control satisfactorily. They provide the governing body with up-to-date information that provides them with a broad view on all aspects of the school finances, enabling them to monitor the school's spending effectively. The day-to-day management and administrative systems are effective. The clerical and administrative staff work together very well as an efficient team providing good support for the headteacher, parents, pupils and staff alike.
56. The school uses the funds it receives for specific purposes appropriately. The school effectively uses funds to support pupils with special educational needs and to support pupils with English as an additional language. In addition, it supplements these funds from the school's budget to provide additional support staff for these pupils. There are sound procedures for securing best value for money through competitive tendering for goods and services, and governors are aware of the need to review and evaluate their spending decisions. Co-ordinators are involved in monitoring the quality of spending in their subjects.
57. The school has adequate resources to support pupils' learning, except in design and technology, and teachers make effective use of these resources. The school makes effective use of its accommodation. The teaching areas are of an appropriate size, but because they are open-plan, there is some transference of noise between areas. There are, however, useful bays outside classrooms that staff use well for group work and practical activities. The school has created three additional rooms for use by groups of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language. These are bright, attractive working areas, with a variety of displays to support learning. The library area at the back of the hall provides a valuable resource for encouraging pupils' independent research skills. It is currently underused in this way, but it is utilised as an additional area for teaching small groups. Both the reception and nursery classes have suitable teaching areas with an appropriate range of equipment, and both areas reflect children's work through lively displays. Provision for role-play in the nursery, however, does not fully reflect and celebrate the diverse cultural experiences which the children bring to school or sufficiently exploit literacy and language learning. The nursery unit has a good secure area for outdoor play that includes fixed climbing apparatus and a safety surface, and this helps to promote children's physical development. Children under five in reception classes do not have the same ready access to this outdoor area. The recent addition of a family room, with its own kitchen and toilet, provides a useful facility and helps the school fulfil one of its aims of working more closely with parents.
58. Taking the fact that the pupils enter the school with standards of attainment that are well below those found nationally and that, as a result of the implementation of clear targets to improve their achievements, they make satisfactory progress through the school, the school is judged as providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher staff and governors should:

Raise standards further in English by:

- providing more opportunities for spoken language linked to reading and writing development (paragraph 75);
- ensuring that nursery staff pay greater attention to developing and extending speaking and listening skills (paragraph 63);
- improving pupils' reading skills by developing their understanding of text (paragraph 76);
- developing ways to remind pupils of the technical aspects of their writing (paragraph 78);
- involving pupils in setting individual targets (paragraph 82);
- evaluating short-term planning to inform the next steps in pupils' learning (paragraph 42);
- improving the ongoing assessment of pupils' writing and using marking of pupils' work to indicate to pupils ways to improve (paragraph 42).

Raise standards in mathematics by:

- improving teachers' use of the plenary session to assess pupils' understanding of the lesson objectives (paragraph 86);
- providing guidance for classroom assistants when supporting pupils in group work (paragraph 86);
- evaluating short-term planning to inform the next steps in pupils' learning (paragraph 87);
- improving the procedures for tracking pupils' progress (paragraph 88);
- providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills in other subjects (paragraph 87).

Improve pupils' skills in information technology by:

- implementing fully the scheme of work to ensure progression in the development of pupils' skills (paragraph 111);
- developing appropriate ways of assessing pupils' progress (paragraph 111);
- ensuring there is adequate use of information technology to support pupils' learning in the other subjects (paragraph 110).

Raise standards in science by:

- ensuring that teachers' planning reflects in full the requirements of the National Curriculum (paragraph 92);
- providing sufficient time to teach all parts of the science curriculum (paragraph 90);
- developing ways to improve pupils' recording skills (paragraph 91);
- developing ways of assessing attainment and monitoring progress (paragraph 94).

Improve the management of the curriculum by:

- providing planned opportunities for subject co-ordinators to manage developments across the school (paragraph 52);
- developing the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators so that a clear check can be made on the progress made in developing the curriculum, improving teaching and monitoring standards (paragraph 52);
- ensuring effective co-ordination of the Early Years / Foundation Stage provision and curriculum (paragraph 52).

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Maintain efforts to improve attendance
- Produce an overall curriculum framework to ensure appropriate time for all subjects and to identify appropriate cross-curricular links
- Increase the involvement of the governors in monitoring the work of the school
- Make the action steps in the school development plan more specific
- Maintain efforts to promote the involvement of parents in their children's learning
- Improve resources for design and technology
- Make sure that self-chosen activities in the nursery are supported and monitored

In addition the school should build upon the good provision in the Autistic Centre by:

- making better use of daily record-keeping to inform long-term programme planning, individual assessment and individual education plans;
- adopting a 'thematic' curriculum approach in schemes of work to broaden and reinforce National Curriculum programmes of study;
- training classroom assistants, supporting pupils' integration, to better facilitate independent learning and collaborative working with mainstream peers;
- promoting flexibility in pupils' thinking as part of the social communication curriculum.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	46	44	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	208
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		81

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	49

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	152

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	38

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	26	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	23
	Girls	14	16	18
	Total	33	36	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (56)	52 (58)	83(71)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	20	22
	Girls	14	13	15
	Total	29	33	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63	79	79
	National	82	86	87

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	15
Black – African heritage	38
Black – other	7
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	2
White	53
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	56

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.4
--------------------------------	-----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	603263
Total expenditure	626995
Expenditure per pupil	3000
Balance brought forward from previous year	723100
Balance carried forward to next year	48578

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	237
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	2	5	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	45	5	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	40	20	8	7
The teaching is good.	48	45	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	40	8	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	40	5	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	30	2	2	11
The school works closely with parents.	28	52	0	5	15
The school is well led and managed.	38	50	2	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	50	0	2	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	38	10	2	32

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

59. Children under five are taught in the nursery and in two reception classes. Children enter the nursery class in the year in which they are four; there are two intakes each year, at the start of the autumn and the spring terms. The children are accommodated in a 60-place unit, and all attend on a part-time basis only during the morning or afternoon sessions. The majority of the children transfer to one of the two reception classes when they are about four and a half. A number of children enter the reception classes from other local nursery classes from the age of four and a half, and others start school with little or no previous nursery experience.
60. Children enter the nursery and reception classes with overall levels of attainment well below average, especially in the important aspects of language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Many come from homes where English is an additional language, and a significant proportion of these children have little knowledge of English on entry. The school has maintained the satisfactory provision since the previous inspection and children make satisfactory progress overall. There is insufficient emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills in the nursery, given the low starting point of many of the children. Planning in the nursery and reception classes has improved in line with recommendations from the previous inspection. In the nursery, planning is referenced to the recommended areas of learning, and in the reception classes it also shows appropriate links to the National Curriculum. However co-ordination between reception classes and the nursery is not effective. A start has already been made on planning for the introduction of the Early Learning Goals in September 2000. Children who have attended nursery classes have developed more confident personal and social skills. By the time they reach the age of five, most children are still well below the expected levels for this age, especially with regard to language and literacy.

Personal and social development

61. Children in the nursery are encouraged to make their own choices in selecting activities, and this contributes to the development of independence. Children generally play together confidently, especially when sharing outdoor toys and bikes, and they visit the toilet and wash their hands independently. However, levels of concentration are not yet well developed for a number of children, and more adult encouragement to stay with a task for a longer focus is needed. Children are aware of the routines in the nursery, but need to be encouraged to respect the nursery environment by participating more fully in tidying up as a part of their learning. Nursery children are given good opportunities to be involved in the wider school community by attendance at, for example, birthday assemblies.
62. Children under five continue to gain self-confidence and independence in the reception classes and gain from the opportunities to engage in purposeful play activities where they show sustained concentration on the task in hand and participate fully in tidying up. This helps their all-round personal and social development. Children listen with attention, and those new to English gain from observing and following the well-established routines. Teaching is satisfactory and most children reach the expected level in this area of learning by the age of five.

Language and Literacy

63. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory, and staff provide a sound range of opportunities to promote children's speaking and listening skills, for example, through discussions relating to the focus on minibests and practical tasks linked to this. However, since many of the children are still at an early stage in developing fluency in spoken English, staff need to pay even greater attention to developing and extending speaking and listening skills through clear adult modelling of spoken

language. When the nursery has the benefit of the additional support of a specialist teacher, language learning is enhanced. The nursery provides children with appropriate opportunities to experiment with writing and they have access to a range of books, which they are eager to share with adults. Although still at an early stage of development, the current book bag initiative and parent workshops set up in the nursery, funded by the Education Action Zone, provide valuable opportunities for parents to further support children in their literacy and language learning at home.

64. Teaching is satisfactory in the reception classes. Children continue to make satisfactory progress in developing their literacy skills, and bilingual children who receive additional English language support make good progress. Children have a growing knowledge of simple songs and rhymes. They make constant efforts to follow stories which are read during whole-class and small group sessions. They are starting to understand that print carries meaning. The more able children are starting to write their own names unaided and attempt to form letters and early forms of writing alongside their drawings. However, by the age of five, standards are still well below expected levels for this age.

Mathematics

65. In the nursery, effective use is made of home-made games, such as a board game linked to the story of the Hungry Caterpillar, to develop children's experience of numbers and simple counting operations. The most able children are able to count to six unaided and can identify numbers above this. Children gain experience of mathematical relationships through their work on the relative size of plants and other objects, and they start to build up knowledge of the names of colours and shapes.
66. In the reception classes, children continue to develop their understanding of numbers and mathematical relationships through counting games and other practical activities. They are starting to extend their mathematical understanding through, for example, counting, shopping activities, sorting and exploring the capacity of containers in their play with sand and water. When additional language support is provided from adults, mathematical vocabulary is extended in appropriate ways. Teaching is satisfactory, but by the age of five, the standards achieved by most children are still below the expected levels for their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Teaching is satisfactory, and teachers in both the nursery and reception classes plan joint themes to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. This helps to consolidate new learning and to provide continuity. For example, the current focus on minibeasts provides both nursery and reception class children with valuable first-hand experiences and observations of the natural world, and enhances their scientific and technological understanding in particular. Observations of the growth and development of caterpillars helps children to form simple questions and to express their own ideas. The use of the story of the Hungry Caterpillar and of sequencing cards helps children to understand the process of change from egg to butterfly. Children in the nursery have appropriate opportunities to use the computer, and in the reception class children gain from the good use of Roamer, a programmable robot. They are amazed and delighted when the robot moves to their instructions. As a result of such activities, children make sound progress towards reaching expected levels of knowledge and understanding of the world, though many still do not reach expected standards by five years of age.

Physical Development

68. Provision in the nursery takes due account of the physical development needs of the children and there are regular opportunities to use a good range of large wheeled toys, climbing apparatus and construction equipment in the safe and secure outdoor area. This contributes to the good progress that children make towards the expected levels for their age in this aspect. However, fuller links could be made with language learning during these sessions.

69. In the reception classes, children have opportunities to further develop their skills through the use of the hall space and large and small equipment. They develop their awareness of space and can use different ways of travelling across apparatus using their hands and feet, and show a growing ability to respond to simple instructions. Teaching is satisfactory and by the age of five the majority of children attain standards that are in line with expectations in this area.

Creative Development

70. Teaching is satisfactory in this area and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Teachers plan activities to extend pupils' creative experiences using a range of different materials including, for example, sand and water, popcorn and playdough, musical instruments, a shop and a home play area. Many of the creative experiences provided in the nursery are new to the children and help to extend their imaginative play. The additional support of the classroom assistant is of benefit in this area. However, there are insufficient adult interactions at times in some of these important areas to extend children's language. The nursery nurse makes a useful contribution to children's language development when she has the opportunity to work alongside children, but sometimes has too many activities to supervise at a given time, as children move so rapidly between their self-chosen activities. The nursery teacher needs to monitor children's movements more closely, and consider more effective strategies to encourage more sustained focus during activities.
71. Children under five in reception classes have frequent opportunities to engage in creative explorations in well-structured play contexts. They extend their knowledge and understanding through handling many different types of materials in creative tasks, use a range of untuned percussion instruments from many cultural traditions, and enthusiastically learn a range of chants, rhymes and action songs alongside their classmates. Sand and water play is well focused, and children show sustained concentration during such activities. Adult interactions provide effective models of spoken English to support new language learning through creative activities. By the age of five, some children attain standards that are broadly in line with expected levels, but many children, especially those without the benefit of nursery experience, are still below the expected levels in this area.

ENGLISH

72. Standards of attainment are well below national averages in both reading and writing by the age of seven, and are below those at the time of the previous inspection.
73. There has been a marked decline in results in both reading and writing tests from the average results achieved in tests just prior to the previous inspection in 1996. Results in writing continued to decline though there was some improvement in results in reading. Pupils achieved well below the national average in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1. Results were also well below average compared with similar schools. However, the unvalidated results of the most recent national tests indicate a sharp rise in standards achieved in writing⁴, although a more mixed picture in reading⁵. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls over the past four years. Inspection evidence confirms an improvement in standards of work in the current Year 2, though still below that typical for the age.
74. Given the context of the school, where there are high numbers of pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with additional learning difficulties, as well as considerable pupil mobility, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. When they receive additional specialist teaching support, pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
75. Pupils reach standards that are below average in speaking and listening at the end of the key stage. Many pupils listen with careful attention and their answers to questions demonstrate

⁴ There is a significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and a massive increase in the percentage achieving the new expected Level 2B; the proportion achieving at this level equals the 1999 national figures.

⁵ There has been a drop in the overall percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 but a significant increase in the numbers achieving Level 2B.

understanding, but a significant proportion of pupils have difficulties in fully understanding whole-class discussions. When teachers build on language contributed by pupils, such as moving from the identification of 'chairs' in a seaside picture, to descriptions of 'stripy yellow deckchairs', language learning is enhanced. During plenary sessions, as a part of the literacy hour, pupils' spoken contributions are rarely fully elaborated or extended in structure. Some pupils do not have a broad vocabulary with which to express their ideas. However, most pupils are confident in their contributions and pupils listen well to one another.

76. Overall standards of attainment in reading at the end of the key stage are well below average. The school has decided to adopt setting during some of the literacy hour lessons in order to raise standards of reading skills, and this is helping teachers to target their teaching more closely to the needs of particular groups. Big book texts are usefully exploited during the literacy hour to develop shared understanding. Higher achieving pupils in Year 2 are able to discuss the main characters and the setting of the shared text "Grandma's Bill" with confidence. In their individual reading, these pupils use a range of strategies to read unknown words and express their opinions on the story line and setting of books. However, individual discussions reveal that even the most able pupils have some difficulties in text comprehension when new vocabulary is outside their experience of English.
77. During guided reading sessions, Year 1 pupils talk about the meaning of the story, as well as using their knowledge of sounds to read unknown words together. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their reading during small group withdrawal sessions, and as a result start to recognise some familiar words in simple texts and use their knowledge of sounds to attempt unknown words. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress with their reading, when they have specialist small group teaching which links spoken language with written forms. All pupils are encouraged to take reading books home on a regular basis, but there are no home-school reading records maintained, apart from those maintained by parents and teachers for pupils with special educational needs.
78. The majority of pupils in the school are making satisfactory progress in improving their writing skills, and there is substantial evidence of the ways in which the school has targeted this area in order to raise standards. However, standards reached at the end of the key stage are well below national averages. Higher achieving pupils produce written work that is in line with, or above, national expectations. Their written work shows consistent use of full stops, capital letters and speech marks and uses a varied structure of language to create lively writing in a range of contexts, such as stories, descriptions, letters and biography. A significant number of pupils do not yet demonstrate consistent use of full stops and capital letters in their writing, but their written work shows growing awareness of structure and some instances of liveliness, for example in written accounts of being ill with chickenpox.
79. Teachers support pupils' spelling with reference materials in the classroom, and pupils use their growing knowledge of sounds and spelling patterns in words to attempt unknown words. However attainment is still low. Pupils with special educational needs, and pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, make good progress towards their individual writing targets, when they receive specialist small group teaching support. Although handwriting is consistently taught throughout the school, several pupils still have difficulties with pencil control and letter formation by the end of the key stage. Pupils have opportunities to extend their literacy skills in other subjects; for example, pupils record their explorations of snails in science, write up recipes for different types of salads, and write about the life of the artist Pablo Picasso, linked to critical appreciation in art.
80. The quality of teaching in English is consistently satisfactory across the school, and is good during small group sessions with specialist teachers for English as an additional language and for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers have a sound understanding of the requirements of the literacy hour and are gaining confidence in their delivery of this as a result of the intensive support received from the external literacy consultant last year and the Education Action Zone literacy consultant this year. The decision to organise setting during the literacy hour enables teachers to support the diverse needs of particular groups of pupils. The good practice of bringing the pupils

receiving additional English language support into the main class plenary sessions helps pupils to celebrate work undertaken and helps class teachers to keep track of pupils' learning. Relationships between teachers and children in lessons are good.

81. Teachers use shared and guided reading and writing sessions in an effective way to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of new vocabulary, punctuation and types of texts. Teachers prepare resources well, such as storyboards for retelling a storyline. When teachers share the learning objectives clearly with the class at the start of a session and make reference to this again during the plenary session, learning has a sharper focus. When teachers build on work covered the day before, and use careful questioning to target responses from pupils of all abilities, pupils make progress in their learning. Very little use of information technology was seen during literacy lessons. Where this was used, valuable additional learning took place, for example, when children new to English used the mouse to select items to dress figures in a range of clothing and printed out the finished work to consolidate their learning of new vocabulary for clothing. Pupils behave consistently well during English lessons. During shared text work in the literacy hour, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and answer questions on the text. Pupils in Year 2 are keen to talk about the setting of the seaside linked to the story of "Grandma's Bill", and pupils in Year 1 take great delight in composing amusing rhymes around their own names with their teacher. During group tasks, children share resources sensibly, handle books with care and show sustained concentration and effort. In small group withdrawal sessions, pupils with special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language interact well with one another and persevere with their tasks.
82. Management of the subject has shortcomings. The external support that the school receives has enabled teachers to successfully implement the national literacy strategy. Effective evaluation of assessment data enables the headteacher to set challenging and appropriate targets for the end of Key Stage 1. However, the co-ordinator does not monitor the quality of teaching and standards throughout the school. In partnership with the headteacher, the co-ordinator has recently started to undertake moderation of pupils' work throughout the school. This is insufficient to enable her to have a sound overview of standards and to identify future action. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory in reading and for writing. Teachers maintain good group records of reading; these include both medium-term and individual short-term targets. Effective use is made of the Primary Language Record to annotate dated samples of reading and writing twice a year, and to encourage partnership with parents. The next step is to develop group records for writing, and to consider ways in which pupils might be more fully involved in their own target-setting, particularly for writing. The co-ordinator has built up a range of appropriate resources for use in the literacy lessons. The school library is an attractive area and is well stocked. It has a particularly well-developed range of sets of reading books for use in school. Opportunities to use the library are, however, rather limited as the area is used for teaching purposes and is not easily accessed independently.

MATHEMATICS

83. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below the national average, and below those at the time of the previous inspection.
84. Results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below the national average. Results were average in comparison to those achieved by similar schools. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were judged to be average. However, the inspection took place early in the academic year and results in the national tests at the end of that year were well below average, a sharp drop from the results of the previous year. Since then, results have improved. The unverified results for 2000 continue this improvement⁶. Standards of work seen in the current Year 2 reflect these results. The majority of pupils achieve well and reach, or exceed, standards typical of their ages. However, about a third of the year group are working below expected levels. Many of these pupils are still at the early stages of English acquisition or

⁶ Although a significant proportion of the cohort still failed to achieve Level 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the target level, Level 2B, has increased significantly and matches the 1999 national figures.

have special educational needs and make satisfactory progress in small steps. Average and above average pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make appropriate gains. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in lessons, and their written work shows that they have made satisfactory progress over time.

85. Many pupils enter the school with below average number skills. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils are working at the expected level in written calculations and mental skills. They add and subtract single figures to tens and units and add three single-figure numbers. Pupils order numbers up to 100 and can count in 'steps', for example, in fives, tens and threes. They are familiar with addition and subtraction and with multiplication as repeated addition, and gain confidence in the sequencing of numbers. Pupils carry out regular calculations in solving simple problems with time, money and measures. Pupils can construct simple bar charts and have appropriate understanding of the properties of common geometrical shapes and solids. However, a significant proportion of the current Year 2 cohort do not achieve at these levels. Some pupils find it difficult to perform mental calculations and do not always have the appropriate range of mental strategies to draw upon. Nevertheless the use of the national numeracy strategy is having a positive impact in developing pupils' strategies for mental calculations. So, throughout the school many pupils are becoming confident in quick and accurate recall of basic number facts, including number bonds in Year 1 and the beginnings of multiplication tables in Year 2. Many Year 2 pupils use a variety of strategies in their mental calculations and explain how they get their answers.
86. Teaching is satisfactory. Many lessons seen were good, but one lesson was unsatisfactory. All teachers have at least a secure understanding of the national numeracy strategy and how to implement its recommendations. In all the lessons seen, teachers' planning was satisfactory. Teachers conduct mental mathematics sessions at a brisk pace with good questioning. Effective and focused questioning enables pupils of all abilities to participate fully in the daily class sessions of mental arithmetic. Pupils have positive attitudes, and during the mental mathematics sessions they are keen to give answers. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, explaining concepts well using appropriate language. This allows teachers to provide clear explanations to help pupils to understand that there are frequently several ways to solve a single problem. Group work is generally managed well. Pupils also enjoy the variety of tasks set and are keen to do well. Teachers manage their pupils' learning well; they organise the groups efficiently, select work well matched to the needs of the pupils, provide appropriate resources, and challenge pupils through careful questioning. When moving from the introductory session of the lesson to the practical tasks, pupils' behaviour is generally sensible and they are able to work very well together using resources in a responsible manner. However, in one less successful lesson, the group task was not properly explained, so the pupils wasted some time because they were unsure of what to do. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is sound. However, when working with small groups, support staff miss opportunities to extend pupils' learning through targeted questioning. Teachers make some use of information technology to support learning in mathematics, but the organisation of groups for computer work is not properly planned as the numbers involved can be too large. The less successful part of numeracy lessons is the plenary session. Teachers do not always make effective use of this session to consolidate pupils' learning and check their understanding. Teachers mark written work conscientiously, but seldom add additional comments to help pupils improve.
87. The successful implementation of the numeracy strategy has helped ensure a balanced curriculum. Teachers have had some in-service training in connection with the numeracy strategy and support from the local education authority's consultant; this has helped to improve their teaching. There is a consistent format for weekly planning, but there is an absence of effective evaluation, of what works well and what does not, to help inform future planning. The school's policy and guidance procedures are out of date and do not reflect recent developments. Teachers do not take sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' mathematics skills in other subjects. For example, there is no evidence of pupils' use of data handling programs in science or geography.
88. The headteacher takes the lead with staff in setting targets for the national tests at age seven. These targets for the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level are realistic, set appropriate

challenge and are based on effective use of assessment information. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and with the headteacher has undertaken some monitoring of numeracy lessons. This monitoring has included support from the local education authority's numeracy consultant but the school's arrangements for monitoring teaching and the quality and range of pupils' work are not rigorous enough. Management of the subject by the co-ordinator is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator does not have a good overview of standards and provision within the school and therefore she is not in a position to undertake effective evaluation of standards achieved so as to identify areas of weakness and implement strategies for further improvement. On-going assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. The school has class records to indicate overall achievements but does not yet have an agreed system to track individual on-going progress towards the key objectives in the numeracy strategy. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory in range and quantity and are of good quality.

SCIENCE

89. Standards are below average by the end of Key Stage 1. Teachers' assessments in 1999 indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was below the national average, but in line with similar schools. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in some aspects of the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection, for example in the understanding of living things, including plants, animals and humans. In other areas pupils have not covered the work in sufficient depth to enable them to reach the standards expected. The emphasis on the investigative aspects of the subject has, however, been maintained.
90. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment was reported as average, but since then there has been a decrease in the amount of time allocated to the subject because of the school's need to concentrate on raising standards in English and mathematics. The majority of pupils start school with knowledge of the world that is well below that found nationally and many do not have the language skills to express their ideas clearly. During their time in the school pupils gradually build up their knowledge and expand their vocabularies. They make clear gains in their learning and make satisfactory progress in lessons. Higher attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, progress at appropriate rates for their abilities.
91. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of the basic survival needs of plants and humans. Pupils describe the main properties of materials, such as wood, plastic or metal. They understand the changes that occur when substances, such as chocolate and water, are heated and cooled and they know that some changes to other materials can be reversed and others not. Pupils have a good understanding of the human body and explain how the main organs work in simple terms. Pupils develop a good appreciation of the natural world around them. However, there are areas of weaknesses. Pupils have insufficient knowledge of simple electric circuits and of how forces can make things speed up and slow down, or change shape. In Year 1, there is very little recorded work to show what pupils know and understand. Pupils have limited written skills, but more use could be made of well-targeted worksheets, to help develop pupils' recording skills. The scientific vocabulary they use is limited.
92. Teaching is satisfactory. The main shortcoming lies in the inadequacy of teachers' longer-term planning. Lesson planning is satisfactory, but overall planning in science does not ensure adequate coverage of all aspects of the subject. Teachers have too much freedom in their choice of what to teach, concentrating on those aspects of the science curriculum that they feel most confident with. However, teaching in the lessons seen was good overall. A strong feature was the emphasis placed upon first-hand practical investigation. For example, in Year 2 pupils looked around the school grounds for minibeasts and plants and in Year 1 pupils explored the sounds made by various items. This is one reason for pupils' good response to the subject. Pupils talk very enthusiastically about their work and they are keen to share books, which give them more information. Pupils in Year 2 worked well, often without adult supervision, during a lesson where they were finding out about plants and animals in the local environment. This included a very enthusiastic group which was observing snails using magnifying glasses.

93. In lessons, teachers provide pupils with a good variety of activities, well resourced to enhance their understanding. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and behaviour is good in lessons. Teachers generate considerable enthusiasm for the subject, so pupils show good attitudes. They time their introductions well so that pupils get to work quickly without losing concentration. Teachers show good questioning skills to get pupils to think for themselves, to extend their vocabulary and to check pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. There is no evidence however, that this information is used in planning the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils' work on insects has been particularly successful and illustrates an efficient use of the time available by using a cross-curricular approach with good links made through the use of related big books in literacy sessions. Pupils extend their writing skills by making books to show what they know. Teachers do not take sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' mathematics skills. For example, there is no evidence of pupils' use of data handling programs. Teachers make some use of information technology to support pupils' learning. For example, in Year 2 pupils use CD-Roms to carry out limited research on the human body. In Year 1, the teacher uses a tape recorder to record voices and sounds for pupils to identify, and a computer program that requires pupils to match the sounds they hear with the correct picture.
94. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. While the co-ordinator has secure subject knowledge, she does not have sufficient opportunities to develop the subject, because of other priorities in the school. She does not monitor the work that pupils do and therefore is not able to evaluate standards or ensure that pupils receive a balanced curriculum. The work that teachers plan is not monitored rigorously enough to ensure that new work is progressively introduced to build on what pupils already know and understand and that there is sufficient coverage of all areas. In consequence, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. To address this the school is adopting the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory as there are no formal assessment procedures to build up an accurate picture of what individual pupils know and understand. Resources to support pupils' learning are adequate.

ART

95. Standards of pupils' work are in line with expectations for their ages. Work on display throughout the school is of a good quality. Pupils show increasing confidence in their use of materials, such as paint, chalks, three-dimensional constructions, printing inks and collage, and by the end of the key stage, observational drawings show close attention to detail. Pupils' sound achievements in art have been sustained since the previous inspection.
96. Year 2 pupils learn about the life of Picasso and consider the ways in which he used colour to express his mood. They create their own paintings in this manner, and make useful links with literacy when writing biographies of Picasso. Year 2 pupils also explore different ways of making seaside paintings, using sand or adopting the style of Pointillist painting. They also experiment with the colour magic program on the computer to create landscapes.
97. The quality of teaching is consistently sound and sometimes good. When teaching is good, teachers make clear the learning objectives for the lesson, provide well-organised and challenging activities and make good use of quality resources. Good lessons are well planned and organised and pupils sustain good levels of concentration in a purposeful atmosphere and try out new techniques. Pupils show pride in their achievements, collaborate well when sharing resources and handle materials with care during lessons. Teachers use a range of good quality reproductions of the work of artists, and textiles from a range of cultural traditions to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding in art. For example, pupils throughout the school have contributed to an exploration of printmaking based on textiles from Zaire, Morocco and Nigeria and have undertaken paste resist work based on African textiles. In one lesson the teacher incorporated the use of a paint program but pupils showed limited information technology skills.
98. The co-ordinator brings much subject enthusiasm to her work and her interest in textiles and three-dimensional modelling has particularly enhanced the curriculum provided within the school. Work undertaken in art makes a valuable contribution to pupils' overall cultural development, through the celebration of diverse art forms across many different cultures. The school has a clear scheme

of work and appropriate assessment guidelines are in place. However, at the present time insufficient use is made of assessment and only informal monitoring of teaching takes place.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Standards are in line with those seen in most schools and are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The satisfactory attainment reported at the time of the last inspection has been sustained, although pupils now have fewer opportunities to practise their skills, because less time is devoted to the subject. Pupils gain appropriate experiences in working with different materials. Pupils develop a satisfactory level of skills in cutting, joining and finishing as they make a range of products such as decorated pots, pop-up books and swimming goggles. They create their own designs and use a range of materials such as clay and fabric. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own designs.
100. No specific lessons were observed in design and technology, but in some classes art and design technology activities were integrated together during an afternoon session. Evidence from these and other sources show that standards are typical of those found in other schools. Evidence also suggests that pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy these activities.
101. Younger children are taught specific skills, which they will need to make products from basic materials, such as paper. They learn how to do paper weaving, pleating and fringing as well as how to use tape, staples and glue to join pieces of paper together. Good links are also made with work in other subjects. For example, as part of their topic ominibeasts, pupils make models of snails by folding and making strips of card into spirals. The teacher working with pupils at an early stage of language acquisition used the opportunity well to develop pupils' vocabulary by encouraging them to talk about what they were doing, as well as about the comparative sizes of the snails. Links are made in Year 2 with work on healthy eating when pupils make salads.
102. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, and informally gives help and advice to colleagues but she does not monitor standards or the quality of provision. The curriculum is satisfactory and the school is beginning to implement the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work. There is a limited range of resources, with insufficient tools for woodwork and a lack of suitable construction equipment, such as kits containing pulleys, in Year 2.

HUMANITIES: HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY

103. The standards that pupils achieve are below expected levels for their ages in both subjects. In relation to the findings of the previous inspection, standards in history are similar but they have fallen in geography. However, since the previous inspection the composition of the school's intake has changed. Pupils enter the school with below average knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils' achievements in relation to their low levels of prior attainment are broadly satisfactory, and they make satisfactory progress in lessons. However, their books provide very limited evidence of progress in acquiring the expected levels of historical and geographical knowledge. This is because much of their work is oral and not recorded, so the development of investigative skills in history and map skills are less secure.
104. In geography lessons, pupils' knowledge and understanding of environmental issues are below those expected for their ages. Pupils know some of the human and physical features of their immediate environment and locate them on a large-scale map of the local area. They have a basic understanding of the uses of different buildings. They draw maps of imaginary islands and routes taken by characters in their favourite stories. In food technology their knowledge of places beyond their own area is helped when they look at cooking in other lands, for example, a Greek village salad and a Caribbean fruit salad. In history pupils have a basic understanding of times past and can discuss some similarities and differences between seaside holidays now and in the past and between old and new toys. They know about some famous people of the past, like Florence Nightingale.

105. The quality of teaching of both subjects is satisfactory. Lesson planning is sound and there is a clear geographical or historical focus to lessons. Learning objectives are clear and pupils have a sound understanding of the purpose of lessons. Management of pupils is good and children behave well. Teachers make good efforts to stimulate pupils' interests and provide them with worthwhile subject specific activities. Teachers make effective use of resources to interest pupils. For example, teachers' good use of photographs and focused questions helps pupils appreciate some of the human and physical features in their local environment. Year 1 pupils were excited when they recognised local features. In one lesson, the teacher's high expectations, clarity of purpose and stimulating questioning had all the class eager to answer questions on seaside holidays, past and present. Pupils' responses in these lessons were good. Pupils' learning is satisfactory because teachers are clear on what pupils are likely to achieve and have chosen relevant resources. Although teachers choose appropriate activities they do not identify the opportunities that these subjects offer for the development of literacy, numeracy or information technology skills
106. The humanities co-ordinator is keen but the subject has a low profile and developments have been limited. The school has not developed a detailed scheme of work for both subjects. There is a broad list of topics that helps ensure that pupils receive a balanced curriculum, but the lack of detailed schemes means that skills are not sufficiently built upon. Consequently, there is a lack of clear progression of knowledge and skills. The school intends to review these schemes in the light of the new Curriculum 2000. There are no whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress or for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

107. Standards are below expected levels, because there is too little direct teaching and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in data handling and control modelling.
108. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils were judged to be making satisfactory progress and standards attained were broadly in line with national expectations, although the school did not develop pupils' skills in data handling and control modelling. There has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection and the same weaknesses in curricular provision remain and the majority of pupils do not reach the appropriate standards. By the end of Year 2, some pupils have satisfactory keyboard and word processing skills. They also use drawing packages competently, showing satisfactory mouse control and they are familiar with a range of features to enable them to create a variety of pictures and print out their work. Pupils make steady progress in these areas because they have regular opportunities to develop their skills. Most pupils do not reach the standards expected across the rest of the curriculum. There is no evidence of handling data by using a simple database, and the work using the programmable floor robot is at a basic level. However, higher attaining pupils, and those who have computers at home, combine text and pictures and know how to save their work unaided. They also use a music program to create simple tunes, played on a variety of instruments.
109. During the inspection the only evidence of direct teaching was a 30-minute lesson when pupils were shown how the programmable floor turtle worked and some pupils had the opportunity to control the robot by themselves. The teaching was very good, with clear instructions and explanations given to help pupils understand what they had to do. The session was well organised and controlled. Pupils responded with great enthusiasm and they were all keen to have a go.
110. Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Although there was little direct teaching during the inspection, observations of the range of opportunities that teachers plan and offer, provide a sound basis for judging the quality of teaching. Not all teachers are confident with the subject and their planning is unsatisfactory. There is no evidence of the use of computers for data handling in mathematics or in science. There is insufficient teaching of the skills required and pupils do not have enough opportunities to reinforce their skills. Teaching strategies are not always effective; for example in one numeracy lesson, the organisation of groups for computer work was not properly planned, as the numbers involved were too large. In consequence, too many pupils were making little progress. However, teachers are beginning to use information and control technology across the curriculum and pupils use computers at various times throughout the day. They are keen to

have their turn and they work together well in pairs. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to use tape recorders, for example, in science to help with their work on sounds and in literacy to listen to stories. Pupils use computers for word processing and for drawing pictures. Pupils are gradually being introduced to the use of CD- Roms and the Internet for information retrieval, for example in science when Year 2 pupils found out information about the human body.

111. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Due to difficulties with recruitment, there has been no co-ordinator for the last year, although a member of staff has offered help and support to colleagues and is undertaking training in preparation for taking over this role in September. Currently, there is too little monitoring of what is offered to pupils. To address the weaknesses in the curriculum, the school is introducing the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work to ensure that all areas of the information technology curriculum are appropriately covered and new work builds on what pupils already know. However, this scheme is not yet fully in place. Assessment practices are unsatisfactory. There are no formal procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do, or to track their progress. The school has recently updated its computers and is gradually extending the range of software. Staff have enrolled on courses through the National Grid for Learning scheme to extend their subject knowledge and confidence.

MUSIC

112. Standards in music are in line with those seen in most schools and are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Pupils gain appropriate experiences in appreciation of music and in performance.
113. There are appropriate opportunities to listen to music from a variety of cultures in assemblies and whole-school singing sessions. When singing, pupils retain the tune and rhythm of the music, showing good awareness of others singing with them. They have an increasing repertoire and recall the words of songs from memory. Pupils use untuned percussion instruments correctly when repeating simple rhythms. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils successfully progressed to singing in a four-part round. They went on to compose a short piece of music which four children performed, using different instruments.
114. Teaching is satisfactory overall; teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons seen and often good. The co-ordinator takes most of the music lessons in the school. She has good subject knowledge and uses appropriate vocabulary with the pupils. She has great enthusiasm for the subject, which she transmits to the pupils and, as a result, they are keen to take part and respond well to the opportunities they receive. She organises lessons well and has good control, so pupils co-operate well with one another when sharing or exchanging instruments and they listen attentively when others are performing. Lessons are carefully planned to provide a good balance of experiences, especially in performing and composing.
115. Provision is effectively managed and the school offers pupils a broad music curriculum. The school makes effective use of the good subject knowledge and expertise of the co-ordinator. There are sufficient resources, which include a good range of instruments from other cultures. Students from the Guildhall School of Music visit the school and give pupils the valuable opportunity of listening to a variety of music, for example, from a woodwind quintet and a percussion workshop. As the co-ordinator takes most of the music lessons she has a sound understanding of the overall standards in the school but there are no formal assessment procedures. Nevertheless, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. Standards in lessons seen were at expected levels for pupils' ages. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
117. In gymnastics, pupils travel in various ways on hands and feet, learning how to move in different 'pathways' and exploring ways of moving across surfaces with different parts of their bodies. They explore ways of travelling using hands and feet to roll, zig-zag, jump, balance and climb. Pupils

plan and create sequences on the floor, exploring ways of moving, balancing and twisting. They use apparatus appropriately, learning to move and carry equipment safely and successfully adapting their movements to work on apparatus. Pupils use space appropriately and show sound levels of control and co-ordination. Pupils are less able to make judgements regarding their own or others' performance in gymnastics.

118. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons effectively which has a positive impact on pupils' achievement and results in pupils trying to do their best. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high and their good pupil management strategies mean that pupils behave well. Teachers clearly communicate the skills focus of lessons to their pupils, and through sound demonstration give pupils a clear idea of what is expected. This helps them make appropriate gains in developing their skills. Teachers' good subject knowledge and awareness of health issues ensure that pupils know to warm up and warm down before and after exercise and use equipment safely. Teachers take appropriate opportunities during lessons to observe the performance of pupils and make constructive comments to help them improve. Pupils respond well because lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, so that learning is enjoyable and productive. Teachers try to encourage pupils to analyse one another's performances, but pupils show reluctance to do so. In consequence, despite the good teaching progress is only satisfactory.
119. The curriculum for physical education is satisfactory. Only lessons in gymnastics were observed during the inspection but scrutiny of teachers' plans indicate that pupils receive an appropriate range of physical education activities. There is sound guidance to help teachers in their planning. Physical education is not a current school priority and the school has not allocated time for the co-ordinator to monitor the effectiveness of planning and teaching. The school does not have any formal assessment procedures so the co-ordinator is not in a position to identify ways of improving provision or raising standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. The school has maintained standards since the previous inspection and pupils' attainment broadly meets the expectations in the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2. Due to timetabling arrangements, only two lessons were observed during the week of the inspection. Inspection judgements are also based on the scrutiny of work, records of work undertaken and evidence from classroom displays.
121. During a focus on the study of Christianity, Year 2 pupils show a genuine interest in stories from the life of Jesus and stories from the Bible. They have a satisfactory understanding of some of the main events in the life of Jesus, and whilst sharing together the story of the Good Samaritan are able to reflect upon values such as kindness and caring for one's enemies. Pupils in Year 1 think carefully about special places and personal rules during a quiet circle time and following discussion. Pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs generally contribute less during whole-class discussions, as some of these pupils have considerable difficulties in following the discussion, although when direct simple questions relate to a story, their participation is better. Much of the work undertaken in religious education is in the form of oral discussion rather than recorded work, although evidence was seen of Year 2 pupils' writing linked to the story of Easter undertaken in Year 2. An attractive display also reflects work linked to a focus on Islam. The co-ordinator has undertaken small group teaching with groups of children from each class in the school, and recorded work on display indicates thoughtful work on the story of David and Goliath which this promoted.
122. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in both lessons seen. Teachers maintain good discipline and good relationships with their classes. They prepare lessons appropriately and provide appropriate time for pupils to reflect. In both lessons teachers promoted some sensitive discussions to encourage pupils' understanding of the feelings of others and right and wrong actions. However, the discussions went on too long. Although pupils contributed well, they sat for too long on the carpet. Pupils' learning would have been enhanced by some simple recording task. In one lesson, the teacher provided additional support for pupils with little English and for pupils with special educational needs through the use of a good quality picture story and the scribing of key words

from the discussion. This helped these pupils make satisfactory progress. Lessons make a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

123. The school has adopted the locally Agreed Syllabus and a detailed scheme of work is in place. This is an improvement from the previous inspection, which identified as a key issue for action the need to develop a scheme of work. However, little direct monitoring of teaching takes place and the school has yet to develop assessment procedures. The co-ordinator is not therefore in a position to identify ways of improving provision or raising standards. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator has satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject and is aware of the need to develop a broader evidence base of work undertaken throughout the school. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, but need to be organised more efficiently to improve access for staff and pupils.

THE AUTISTIC CENTRE

124. The infant school is part of the designated centre, in conjunction with the junior school (on the same site), in the London Borough of Lambeth, for the integration of autistic pupils. Lark Hall Autistic Centre comprises 3 classes (of 19 pupils in total) in the adjoining but separate junior school and the Early Years Class (otherwise known as Silver Class) of 6 pupils in the infant school. The centre supports pupils with a range of autistic spectrum disorders, from those with limited understanding and use of language, together with associated disruptive and challenging behaviour to those who are quite talkative and have good understanding of language. However, the common feature is that all pupils have quite short attention spans, poor listening skills and difficulties with turn-taking. They are also resistant to changes in routine and need to be reminded about the 'social rules' of group dynamics and interactions. In order to achieve the level of integration that was observed during the inspection the school has had to make effective provision to meet a wide range of difficulties associated with the disabilities outlined.
125. The quality of teaching and learning in Silver Class is a strength. The class teacher has received appropriate prior training, and is undertaking ongoing training, which enables her to work safely and effectively with the autistic pupils in the class. The nursery nurse and classroom assistants have received 'on-the-job' and 'in-house' training. This means that all staff are competent Makaton⁷ users and deliver a modified version of TEACCH⁸ with related positive contingency behaviour management programmes. It also means that pupils' confidence and independence are built up as their skills develop through the individual learning programmes prepared for them on a daily basis and as their social skills improve. The pace at which this is achieved is a tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of all the staff involved in their education – especially as the class teacher has only been in post for just over three weeks. Meticulous daily planning and excellent liaison between class teacher and support assistants give each pupil the best possible opportunity to fulfil his true potential. The evident trust that the staff have in each others' expertise results in a high level of flexibility, with regular planning meetings taking into account changes in individual pupils' attitudes, new likes or dislikes and progress made in specific areas.
126. Pupils make good progress towards achieving the daily lesson objectives, assisted by the class teacher, classroom assistant and nursery nurse. Each pupil has a statement of special educational need but these have not generally been translated into up-to-date and well-written individual education plans with clearly determined and achievable targets. However, a daily record of pupils' progress against lesson objectives is recorded and signed by staff: this should be matched with individual education plan (IEP) targets. This log also shows pupil progress against annual review targets, but these targets are not always specific enough nor do they indicate how they are to be measured or resourced.
127. Two of the six pupils, who are of Year 2 age, are integrated into the same Year 1 literacy class four days a week. A third pupil, of Year 1 age, benefits from integration into a reception class for information technology. All pupils in the unit benefit from attending whole-school assemblies and

⁷ A simple signing system

⁸ Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children : a programme for cognitive behaviour

eating in the main hall at lunchtimes with their mainstream peers. They are also joined by a small number of mainstream peers at morning break for drink and biscuits. In these respects the provision is an integral part of the school and it is a good example of what can be achieved when all staff are committed to the integration of all pupils. The level of integration achieved is successful to the extent that the pupils and their 'mainstream' peers are able to work together in the same group, and the behaviour of the pupils from the unit is very good, albeit that there is room for improvement with regard to their attention, concentration and listening skills. Staff in the receiving classes are also very tuned in to the needs of pupils from the centre and take great care to ensure that these pupils are able to participate as fully as possible. Staff also adopt the same management style as the centre staff for all their pupils and this has positive effects for all pupils. However, the pupils integrating from the unit are still over-reliant on the unit support staff, who do not fully exploit opportunities for the pupils to work collaboratively and interact socially with their mainstream peers.

128. One illustration of the way in which integration works reasonably successfully was during a literacy hour session, about Little Red Riding Hood, where two pupils from the unit were taking part in the same Year 1 lesson. During the group work each pupil worked in a different group of 4 with a classroom assistant, and, although there was little interaction with peers, they engaged in dialogue with the adults and completed the written activities. During the plenary, both pupils sat alongside their mainstream peers. They spontaneously volunteered to answer questions; the teacher leading the session checked with classroom assistant from the unit on the way of asking questions that would provide successful answers – both pupils succeeded. One of the two pupils was also able to speak publicly in front of the whole group about a character from Little Red Riding Hood and he was able to answer some supplementary questions.
129. Timetabling to achieve this degree of integration is complicated and based on the availability of classroom assistants both within Silver Class and for the mainstream classes. The unit staff :pupil ratio is 1:2 and this has to be maintained wherever possible due to the range and types of disorders within the group. Curriculum mapping also has to be considered. This is why two pupils have been integrated into the same class with one classroom assistant supporting and use being made of the classroom assistant in the receiving class. This leaves 4 pupils with the unit class teacher and the nursery nurse. The integration happens when the mainstream class is also participating in the literacy hour. The school endeavours to ensure that there is always backup for individual pupils by having them work with the class teacher and different support assistants throughout the day and, for those integrating, the same will apply. This also helps the pupils prepare for change and for working with different adults.
130. The Teacher-in-Charge is also Head of Lark Hall Autistic Centre. The Centre, previously known as Lark Hall Unit, expanded its provision from twelve to twenty five pupils, with an Outreach Service, in September 1997. The Teacher-in-Charge is knowledgeable and has a clear vision of just how autistic pupils should be integrated and valued for the whole persons that they are. She has been reasonably successful in turning that vision into reality. She works very closely with the headteachers of both infant and junior schools in the management of the Autistic Centre. She has yet to establish a close working relationship with the new class teacher of Silver Class but she does have a good working relationship with the special educational needs co-ordinator of the main school.
131. Due to the very many staff changes in the centre it is difficult to assess her leadership qualities. Also there are not up-to-date records supporting the administration of the unit in achieving its aims and objectives. However, her prepared documentation illustrates that she has begun to put the needs of these pupils at the forefront of provision and planning. The literacy strategy was implemented from the spring term 1999 and the pupils have responded positively to the structure of the strategy. A scheme has been written to include social communication in speaking and listening – this is a crucial developmental area for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. An adaptation of the numeracy strategy and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme for science have been implemented since September 1999 with 'topics grids' and adapted planning

sheets. There is an agreed format for medium-term planning and for daily planning and record-keeping for each pupil. It has been agreed that the individual education plan format, adoption of schemes of work for other curriculum areas including personal and social education are priorities for development within the three-year Development Plan since the last OfSTED inspection. Long-term curriculum and programme planning as well as individual pupil assessments are also significant weaknesses. Furthermore, it is not clear how the daily record-keeping activities are informing planning.

132. There are good links with pupils in the mainstream junior school and with pupils in the junior autistic classes: for example, one afternoon a week is spent with all 4 autistic classes visiting a community adventure playground. This is important as many of the pupils in Silver Class will transfer to the junior unit. Those who integrate will also probably still be spending some time in a junior unit class before fully integrating into the main school. Links with parents are not very good, which may be in part due to Lark Hall not being the local school for their children. As a result, placement in local mainstream schools for autistic pupils who are ready for full integration will be a challenge for parents, pupils, schools and the local education authority.
133. The support of outside professionals, such as a clinical psychologist, occupational therapists, speech therapists and the school educational psychologist, has contributed to the success that is being achieved. On the advice of the clinical psychologist for example, one pupil is taken on short messages after the circle time session, as he finds sitting for any length of time difficult: the objective is that he will gradually extend the length of time he can stay in the group. The speech and language therapists also provide the class teacher, nursery nurse and classroom assistants with programmes of activities for all pupils, which ensures that their input has greater impact than would be the case if the pupils were totally reliant on the termly visits they are able to provide.