

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S PRIORY RC INFANT SCHOOL

Haringey, London

LEA area: Haringey

Unique reference number: 102147

Headteacher: Mrs M Parsons

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 26-29th March 2001

Inspection number: 194707

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Nursery

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hermitage Road
Tottenham
London

Postcode: N15 5RE

Telephone number: 0208 800 9229

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Hibbert

Date of previous inspection: 13-16th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3639	A C Davies	Registered inspector	English Art and Design Design and Technology Physical Education The Foundation Stage of Learning English as an additional Language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and children's achievements How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9010	G Ellisdon	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Children's Attitudes, behaviour, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16761	M Hemmings	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and Communication Technology Geography History Special Educational Needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to children? How well does the school care for its children?
11472	M Beale	Team inspector	Music Equal Opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's Priory is a Roman Catholic Infant school with a nursery. There are 211 children on roll with 39 of these attending the nursery on a part-time basis. All children transfer to the adjoining Junior school in the academic year after they are 7. The school has large numbers of children (67 per cent) who have English as an additional language with 18 per cent at very early stages of English acquisition. There are 30 different first languages spoken by the children, which gives the school an international Catholic dimension. There is a large percentage of Black African or Caribbean children in the school as well as 24 asylum seekers or refugees. Just over 35 per cent are entitled to school meals free of charge which is an above average number, reflecting the level of social disadvantage in this area of London. The number of children on the special needs register is above average although only 2 have statements, which is below the number expected for a school of this size. When they first start school the ability level of the children is wide, with many having limited experience of communicating in English. Overall, their personal and academic skills when they start school are well below those expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is now an effective school where the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. The headteacher has worked dedicatedly to turn around a school that less than four years ago was failing to give the children an adequate standard of education. Her strong leadership has resulted in staff having clarity about their role and giving greater emphasis to children's learning. This has helped children to achieve well and thereby raising standards. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher has created a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff and all are dedicated to raising children's standards.
- The strength of the teaching helps all children, including those with English as an additional language, to be confident in speaking out in front of the rest of the class.
- Teachers help children to read with expression and to develop a real sense of enjoyment and love for books.
- There are effective systems in place to help staff manage children, especially those who have the potential to cause disruption.
- Support staff, including those with special responsibility for English as an additional language or special educational needs, work effectively with class teachers.
- The staff are very sensitive to the range of ethnic and cultural diversity of the children and work hard to ensure that positive images of different languages and cultures are prominent about the school.

What could be improved

- Standards of handwriting are unsatisfactory and the presentation of work in books is often too untidy.
- The marking does not help children see what it is they need to do next in order to improve.
- The limited number of computers available in classrooms is making it difficult for children to develop their information technology skills.
- Due to the many staff changes that have occurred recently, not all teachers are in a position to have a good overview of the foundation subject that they co-ordinate.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997 when it was considered not to be providing an adequate standard of education for the children. Since that time there has been remarkable improvement. The school has dealt effectively with the major weaknesses identified in leadership and teaching. The key to much of this success was the appointment of a headteacher with vision and belief that the children were capable of so much more. This has helped the teaching staff to gain in confidence and to be clear about their responsibility in helping children to achieve better. Four subsequent visits by inspectors confirm that the progress made has been very good. The quality of teaching and learning is significantly better now than in 1997. Children's behaviour is now good and parents are very supportive of the actions taken to improve the provision for their children. There is still more work to be done but there is a positive picture with the school having made great strides and believing it can move even further to improve standards.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	D	B	D	A
writing	C	B	C	A
mathematics	C	B	D	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The standards in most subjects have steadily improved over the past few years although this is not necessarily reflected in test results. It is difficult to compare one year group with another because the range of children from different backgrounds varies so much throughout the school. There has been improvement however, and it is at its best in English especially since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy with staff giving more attention to the basic skills of reading and writing. This combined with the additional attention to children's speaking skills has helped to improve the confidence levels of children in reading with expression and in speaking out in front of others in class. Children who are early stages of English acquisition and those with English as an additional language have benefited most from this focus. In writing, children are confident in explaining events but tend not to use descriptive language and their presentation is unsatisfactory.

In mathematics, although there has been improvement it has not made as much impact on standards overall. Children are confident in their number work. They do, however, have greater difficulty in representing their work in a variety of ways and especially in the form of graphs and in answering mathematical problems. There has been an issue with the performance of Black African boys in mathematics but this has been recognised and steps taken recently have helped to improve their performance. Standards in science are in line with that expected for their age but children have limited skills in information and communication technology.

When considering the skill levels that children have when they start school they make good progress in the foundation stage of learning although many are not likely to meet the learning goals identified in the six areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. Very good progress is evident in their personal and communication skills as well as in creative development. In Years 1 and 2 they continue to make good progress in reading and writing so that the present Year 2 is attaining in line with the level expected for their age in these areas. The progress made in mathematics is satisfactory throughout Years 1 and 2 with present Year 2's attainment matching that of the previous cohort, which is below that expected for their age. Children with English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well as do children identified with learning and behavioural difficulties.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children are happy to come to school and are proud of their achievements. Younger children, in particular, show that they are prepared to concentrate for long periods when not directly supervised.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Despite the fact that there a number of children in each class who have the potential to be difficult, the vast majority are delightful children who are happy to comply with the school's reasonable rules. Behaviour is also good in the playground and the dining area.
Personal development and relationships	There are many opportunities for children to work collaboratively, especially in science. Most show that they are able to organise their own work and come to sensible conclusions based on conversations with others.
Attendance	Too many parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly enough and arrive on time for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is very good in 16 per cent of lessons, good in 32 per cent and satisfactory in 52 per cent. It is never unsatisfactory. There are particular strengths in the nursery and reception classes. This is due to the staff in the foundation stage of learning being able to strike an appropriate balance between outdoor and indoor play. This helps to give good attention to creative development and to creating stimulating environments. Highly organised resources ensure that children are challenged, even when adults do not directly supervise them. The quality of children's learning through play is particularly impressive.

Throughout the school there is good attention to helping children gain a love for literature and in helping them to read with expression and enjoyment. Although teaching is satisfactory for mathematics, teachers are less successful in using the mental and oral sessions to help children improve their response to mathematical problems. Support staff are well deployed and there is good use made of

their expertise. Careful joint planning enables the specialist teacher who has responsibility for children with English as an additional language to work effectively in classrooms. This has helped to raise the confidence levels of children who are at early stages of English acquisition. All teachers manage children, including those with the potential to be difficult, well. Teachers are consistent in sharing with children the learning intentions at the start of each lesson but their marking is not as successful in helping to set targets for future improvement.

Within each class the ability range of children is very wide. This, together with large numbers of children who need support in communicating in English and a larger than average number of children with special educational needs, puts pressure on teachers to meet the needs of all children. However, due to careful joint planning and to good support from a range of adults they are successful in helping all children to move their learning forwards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Appropriately, literacy and numeracy are prioritised with additional attention given to developing oral skills of children who are early stages of English acquisition. The younger children are provided with a very effective curriculum with high priority given to outdoor activities. A lack of appropriate resources is reducing opportunities for children to use information and communication technology effectively in other subjects.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The school successfully identifies children with learning difficulties at an early stage. There are good links with outside agencies to help these children and achievable targets are set aimed at helping them improve.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	There is much emphasis on giving children confidence to ask questions and make contributions in front of the whole class. All staff are very aware of the needs of children who are at early stages of English acquisition and this helps them to achieve well.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school plans very well for spiritual awareness with assemblies and the gathering together in each class at the beginnings of the school day playing an important part in this. The school gives much emphasis to ensuring that children are clear about what is and is not acceptable behaviour. The wide range of visits and visitors organised for them help with their social development. The range of images of different cultures and languages around the school helps children to respect each other's background.
How well the school cares for its children	The staff show high levels of care for all children and child protection issues are well known to all staff. There are very good systems in place to check on children's behaviour, which is in contrast to the lack of systems for encouraging full attendance.

The parents are very supportive of the school and particularly like the way the international dimension that it has is used in a positive way to encourage friendship and care. They like the way teachers are always available to talk to them and appreciate how much work has been done to improve the school in the recent past. Annual reports to parents about the progress made by their children are detailed and do include specific remarks about what they need to do next to improve their work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has successfully turned this school around by helping all staff to have a clear vision of the way forwards and getting everybody to be committed to helping children to achieve as well as they can. When considering the continued staff changes that have occurred this makes this achievement even better. Some co-ordinators are new to their role and have not yet had time to develop their management skills.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have been very involved in helping the school move from a position of difficulty to its present position. There is an excellent flow of information between the headteacher and the chair of governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very good procedures to help check on the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very effective in this role. Good evaluation of the school's test results has helped the school identify areas of potential weakness and put in measures to help improve areas requiring attention.
The strategic use of resources	Additional resources to support children who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are used effectively and help them achieve well. The governors and senior staff ensure that they get value for money from their purchases and link their spending decisions to raising standards.

The expertise of support staff is very well used to help provide as much support as possible for all children. Learning resources are generally adequate but there are an insufficient number of computers for the needs of all children. The school has a good range of books, which represent many cultures and backgrounds. The accommodation is just about adequate but there is little additional space for developing a library or working with a small group of children.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The way the school has improved in the recent past. The effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The '15 minute reading session' that occurs each morning. Standards of behaviour. The values that the school stands for. 	<p><i>A few parents commented that they would like to see:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework arrangements improved. More apparatus on the playground. Children heard to read more frequently.

The parents are clearly aware of how much has been done to improve the quality of work carried out in the school. The leadership has had a major influence on this. There is a strong spiritual and moral dimension to the school and this has helped to improve the behaviour of children. The staff do everything that can be expected to help develop children's reading skills and are successful in helping children read with expression and enjoyment. The intermix of teaching reading skills and listening to

children read is just right. The school has already put in place plans to improve the provision for the playground. The school's arrangements for homework are adequate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and children's achievements

- 1 Although standards are not necessarily high when compared to national averages, there is good, and sometimes very good, progress being made by children throughout the school. It is in the foundation stage of learning and in English lessons where the greatest impact on what the school provides is made on the standards attained by the children. In mathematics, there is good achievement by children but this is not having such a positive impact on the standards attained by 7-year-olds in the national tests. The present Year 2 is attaining standards in reading and writing that are in line with those expected for their age. In mathematics, this is not being matched with the levels of attainment not being in line with those expected for their age.
- 2 It is difficult to compare one year group with another because of the ability range of each group is wide and varied. For example, the cohort that took the national tests in 1999 was an exceptionally bright group compared to preceding ones and the 2000 cohort. The variation is due to the numbers in each group who are at very early stages of English acquisition and those who have special educational needs being so different from one year to the next. What is consistent is the positive impact that the teaching is having on children's learning and therefore on the achievement of children of different ability.
- 3 A deeper analysis of the national test results reveals that there has been an improving trend in all subjects over the past few years. In reading, children display good expression and choose from a range of books by the time they are 7 years of age. They have developed a love for poetry and can discuss maturely the difference between the methods used by the poets being studied. Children who are early stages of English acquisition and those who have English as an additional language have made very good progress and many are reading at the levels expected for their age by the time they are in Year 2. Good attention to developing these children's spoken vocabulary is mainly responsible for this. The 2000 national test results show that the school's results mirror those noted nationally although the overall results are slightly below average. When compared to similar schools the results are well above average. The stronger cohort that is currently in Year 2 should improve further on this position. There is little variation noted in the performance of boys and girls, which is not the case nationally with girls performing much better than boys. The good range of reading materials and good attention to the needs of boys in the foundation stage of learning has helped to improve boys' performance in reading.
- 4 In writing, although the national test results are slightly better than for reading there is greater variation in the children's skill level. The content of their written work tends to lack imagination and the presentation is unsatisfactory. The 2000 national test results show that the school's results match the national average but are well above average when compared to similar schools. Children in the present Year 2 are a stronger group than the previous one and are likely to improve on the previous set of results. The most able children use good punctuation and are not inhibited to try new words when writing. However, each ability group has elements of untidy work and presentation skills are disappointing. The good progress made in children's speaking skills is partly responsible for writing standards being in line with the national average. Girls are performing slightly better than boys but not by the margin seen nationally.

- 5 In mathematics, there is evidence of satisfactory progress being made by children but there are some inconsistencies in the way children acquire oral and mental skills. Number work is generally stronger but they have problems in representing their work in the form of graphs and dealing with mathematical problems. There has been good attention given to working out the strengths and weakness noted in children's standards and last year the weaknesses associated with standards attained by Black African boys have been appropriately dealt with. In 2000, the school's results were below the national average but above average when compared to similar schools. The present Year 2 is attaining at approximately the same level. Boys are performing slightly better than girls.
- 6 In science, teacher assessments for 2000 show that attainment is about in line with that noted nationally. When compared to similar schools the teacher assessments show that the children's performance in 2000 was well above average. There are a good percentage of children attaining at the higher levels but slightly fewer than average attaining the expected level for their age. The present Year 2 is attaining slightly better than the previous cohort and should therefore maintain this good position. When taking account of the complexity associated with the use of appropriate language for the large numbers of children who have English as an additional language this indicates good performance by that group. Good attention to children's investigative work has helped to improve standards when compared to the previous inspection.
- 7 Children start school with personal and academic skills that are well below those expected for their age. The variation in children's attainment is very wide however, with some children showing mature skills in personal development and others who are at very early stages of English acquisition. During their time in the nursery and reception there is good and sometimes very good progress being made. This results in children attaining the anticipated learning goals in two out of the six areas of learning by the time they are ready to start Year 1. In both physical and creative development the majority are on course to meet the learning goals anticipated for children by the time they finish the reception year. In the case of creative development this represents very good progress and is as a direct result of the very good teaching, which puts great emphasis on learning through play. In each of the other four areas of learning the children are not on course to meet the learning goals anticipated. This is despite the very good progress that occurs within the foundation stage of learning for communication, language and literacy and the good progress that occurs in each of the other three areas. Children who are at early stages of English acquisition or who have English as an additional language make very good progress with effective emphasis being placed on their ability to communicate at better levels and use a wider range of vocabulary as they get older. Children with special educational needs are identified early and provided with good levels of support to enable them to make good progress. The more able children are sufficiently challenged, especially in the play environment. They are provided with opportunities to take a lead in play and to develop their reading and writing by being required to record what they have seen, done and heard.
- 8 As children move into Year 1 the good progress is continued. The effective concentration on developing children's speaking skills is having an important influence on the standards being attained in writing. The continued emphasis on the development of children's expression in reading and the focus on enjoyment are having a very good impact on their reading standards. This results in the majority of children, including many who have English as an additional language attaining standards that are in line with those expected nationally by the time they are 7. In mathematics, the progress in Years 1 and 2 is not quite at the same level although it is satisfactory. This means that many children do not attain the level expected for their age by

the time they are 7. In science, standards match the expected level for their age, which indicates good progress throughout Years 1 and 2.

- 9 Children with English as an additional language achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Although the very good progress made in the foundation stage of learning is not maintained at the same level, there is none-the-less very good work happening in Years 1 and 2. The impact of the specialist teacher for children with English as an additional language is helping these children improve their learning. Children with special educational needs continue to make good progress due to the good level of support provided for them. More able children are effectively challenged and also make good progress.
- 10 Many children do not have the necessary confidence in writing to enable their skills in this area to make a full impact on work in other subjects. More able children are able to write using good description and with some confidence but most children are still at early stages of ensuring that their work follows a sequence and that their spelling is appropriate. However, the additional confidence gained by most children in speaking is helping them to participate much more actively and fully in discussions. This is helping to raise their knowledge and understanding in science and history. Numeracy skills are not being used as widely as they might in other subjects. This is as a result of children having limited confidence in representing their work in the form of graphs or in participating in problem solving activities.
- 11 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are not high enough. There are limited number of computers to enable children to develop their skills appropriately and this leads to children having limited keyboard skills as well as limited width of experience of different programs. ICT is therefore not being used appropriately to support work in other areas of the curriculum. In other subject where it was possible to make an overall judgement on standards, children's attainment is in line with that expected for their age with good progress evident in history.

Children's attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 When children first start school, in either the nursery or reception, many have poor personal skills and a number of children need help to adjust appropriately to school routines. However, they soon settle and show positive attitudes to work and behave appropriately. A few require specialist support as they have problems related to their behaviour and can be disruptive. The calm and expert way the staff deal with these children is a major reason why children are able to settle quickly.
- 13 The previous inspection reported that the children's good attitudes towards learning and good behaviour in the nursery were not being maintained in the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. Children in these classes were found to be inattentive, unruly and discourteous, whilst a great deal of time was wasted as teachers struggled to keep control. Through much improved teaching and more consistent and skilful application of discipline, the school has made very good progress with the key issue to 'improve children's behaviour and their attitudes towards learning'. These aspects are now good. The school is more organised and orderly with a positive atmosphere for learning.
- 14 Children enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. This was very evident, for example, in the way Year 2 children spoke enthusiastically about their lessons and other school events, such as

the up-coming Passover meal, and the pleasure Year 1 children took in answering questions about their chosen toy in a history lesson.

- 15 In most lessons children respond well to the teachers' high expectations of them to behave well. They take an interest in their classroom activities, concentrate well and work hard until tasks are completed. When Year 2 took part in the 'Passover' meal led by the Parish priest the behaviour and attitudes of all were exemplary. During this lengthy session children showed respect and responded appropriately to each part of the service. The staff understandably felt proud of the way the children conducted themselves. The conduct of the children was a far cry from the sometimes unruly behaviour outlined in the previous report.
- 16 In nearly all classes children now understand and follow set routines and codes of conduct ensuring good behaviour that impact positively on standards of attainment. For instance, as soon as they enter their classroom in the morning Year 2 children take out their books and read quietly. This ensures the registration period is a constructive learning time save only for the disruption caused by some latecomers. In most lessons children take turns to answer questions and listen to their teachers and peers well. There continues to be a proportion of children who find good behaviour difficult, and they often try to distract others. All teachers now deal very effectively with such situations, for instance by ignoring the individual and not being drawn into disruptive action themselves. An excellent example of this was seen in a reception class when a boy indicated he would not participate in paired work. The teacher merely said, 'I see you don't want to join in – have a little rest.' and took no further notice. The boy remained quiet and his classmates were able to continue with their learning without interruption. Behaviour in assemblies is now very good indeed. Children remain quiet and respectful throughout. They become fully involved and respond appropriately to all its aspects; they pay rapt attention to the 'story', sing hymns with meaning and show due reverence during the reflective parts. There is a real feeling of sincerity, community and care. Children's behaviour at break times is good. They mostly talk quietly in small groups or run about 'letting off steam'. A few boys 'play fight' and some children are boisterous, but such incidents are not extensive or prolonged. At lunchtimes behaviour is also good with children displaying appropriate social skills. A few children who find it difficult to comply are quickly coaxed back to conformity by supervisors. Children generally move about the school in an orderly fashion though this is often only under fairly close supervision. One boy was excluded for poor behaviour in the year prior to the inspection, but this was an exception.
- 17 Relationships within the school are good. Children representing a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds mix well, playing and working together harmoniously. They work constructively in pairs and small groups, for example in making models of minibeasts. Generally children are mutually supportive and show care and consideration for one another. There were several examples of spontaneous applause for children's efforts and a Year 1 boy was seen befriending a reception class child at break. During the inspection no incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour were seen though children say they do sometimes occur. This was not an issue raised by parents.
- 18 Children mostly relate well with staff and are warm and welcoming towards visitors. Only in a few instances do children show a lack of respect for their teachers. These incidents are dealt with very quickly leading to very little disruption in lessons.
- 19 Through the strong Christian ethos of the school and various well-executed facilitating activities, children now effectively learn about the feelings and values of others and how their own actions might impact on them. For example, in Year 1 'circle time' activity children talked

about how they had helped someone else, whilst in assembly the headteacher invited children to reflect on the feelings of those less fortunate than themselves.

- 20 Opportunities for children to take responsibility have also increased. In all classes children perform routine jobs such as returning registers, taking fruit round or tidying up. Older children are entrusted with more complex tasks like helping the younger ones at breaktimes or counting the money collected for the Lenten charity. Children respond well to these chances to develop autonomy and in the main undertake their duties conscientiously and with pride.
- 21 Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. Whilst in primary schools in general overall attendance has gradually increased over the last three years, the school's has remained fairly static. In the last full reporting period it was well below the national average, and too many parents fail to ensure their children arrive promptly for the start of the school day. This results in missed opportunities for children and is detrimental to their progress. Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning session and again in the afternoon. They are marked accurately according to local authority guidelines and returned immediately to the school office. Most recorded absences are for common childhood ailments. However a significant minority are due to parents removing their children for holidays and extended trips 'home' during term time.
- 22 Clear details of attendance are given in the brochure and the governors' annual report to parents and on the children's annual written reports.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

- 23 There is much evidence of teaching of a very good quality, especially in the foundation stage of learning and in English. When compared to the previous inspection there has been a major turn-around in the quality of teaching and learning. During this inspection teaching was very good in 16 per cent of lessons, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 52 per cent with no unsatisfactory teaching being evident. This compares with 51 per cent of unsatisfactory teaching at the time of the previous inspection with no very good teaching seen. A combination of clear direction by the headteacher, which has included a very good programme of monitoring of teaching and learning, and good levels of support to enable teachers to improve, have been responsible for this major turn-around.
- 24 In the foundation stage of learning, where the teaching and learning are good overall, there is much evidence of very good teaching. In the nursery, for example, there is very good use made of play to improve children's learning. This experiential approach is helping the youngest children in the school to have practical opportunities to develop skills in creativity as well as communication. One of the better examples saw a group of children use the outdoor environment to good effect when 'working' in the garage. The children are repairing a car, which has been set on a ramp. A very good range of resources is used to make this as 'real' an experience as can be possible. In this situation the teacher's intervention, which is kept to a minimum, is most effective. A simple question asking when 'her car can be seen' prompts children to find the diary and make the necessary appointment. It also prompts good levels of discussion amongst the children who try to work out the best time for the car to arrive. The environment itself has been created to make the experience as stimulating and meaningful as possible. Children have visited a local garage and this has resulted in many children being able to replicate what they had seen in the play situation. The activity does much to improve children's learning in communication and also in working together. The teacher's involvement and intervention was timed 'just right' to 'move on' the learning that was happening.

- 25 In another example in the nursery, the modelling of the play by the teacher enables a more able child to take over a prominent role later with the group. The three bears' cottage has been set up so as to give children opportunities to consider differences in sizes of the resources used. One child directs the re-enactment of the story after she has seen the teacher take on a role. The more able child is able to involve another quite shy individual to good effect as the play continues. In this instance the children are learning to act out stories they have heard and are also developing their personal and social skills when working as a team.
- 26 This very good quality of teaching is continued into the reception class where one of the teachers leads a session known as the 'noisy phonics' game. The game gives the teacher every opportunity of linking a stimulating and enjoyable experience with one that helps both children's reading and communication skills. It enables children to recognise the initial sounds associated with the letters and also helps with the children's pronunciation. In the same session the teacher uses a very effective rhyme of 'good eyes looking and good ears listening' to bring the class to order whenever she wishes. After the introduction involving the noisy phonics game the same teacher then moves on to read from a big book. During this session she uses very effective methods to help children with their expression in reading. The explanation of words like 'fierce' by the teacher helps the children to further their enjoyment of the book being read and to be able to join in with the correct intonation and expression. As children move away from the whole class activity a sense of calm and good organisation is prominent. This is because the teacher uses appropriate strategies to help to manage children.
- 27 One of the strongest features of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is the way in which there is a consistency in the way literacy is handled. This is particularly impressive when considering that two of the four class teachers are temporary to the school having travelled from New Zealand. In many of the lessons seen the teacher with specific responsibility for the children with English as an additional language works in unison with the class teacher. When this happens there is a very good level of teaching and learning taking place. The most impressive feature of these lessons is the way in which the teachers involved have planned and prepared together so that each can take the lead at any stage. The advantage of having the specialist teacher is felt when she picks up on words that may be confusing to children who have English as an additional language.
- 28 One of the reasons why the teaching of literacy is strong is because there is good attention to sharing with the children exactly what the aims of each lesson is. During one literacy lesson in Year 2, the children were reminded about the aim of reading with intonation and expression and this resulted in the second reading being much more expressive than the first. The other feature is the way teachers help children gain a love for literature. In both Year 2 classes the teachers successfully enabled children to talk about authors and poets and to discuss their particular way of setting out text. Teachers give much attention to specific skills, such as 'reading on' to find meaning, and this helps children to read more effectively.
- 29 Children who have English as an additional language are helped to communicate appropriately. All staff who work with them are focussed on helping them with pronunciation and with explaining words, which they may find confusing. The specialist support of the teacher with English as an additional language has helped all staff to be secure in this area. When reading, teachers are quick to work out which words are likely to cause confusion and introduce them in good time so as not to interfere with the flow of the story. There is also good level of support for children with learning or behaviour difficulties. Their needs are recognised early and there is appropriate support provided for them from nursery onwards. This is supported by

good individual plans which set out what the teacher and the individual child need to do in order to help them improve.

- 30 Although the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory it lacks the strength that exists in the teaching of literacy. The children are able to make progress but there is a lack of application of their mental and oral skills to problem solving activities. The teachers are not as successful in developing children's mathematical vocabulary and this sometimes leads to some confusion existing. In general, the teachers are not as confident in handling basic mathematical skills although there are areas of strengths noted, especially the ability to handle the needs of the most able children.
- 31 There is very effective use of resources, both equipment and human. In the foundation stage of learning there is effective use of the outdoor environment to create appropriate play areas and to give children a chance to use large scale equipment which matches the activities they have been engaged with indoors. There is effective use of a range of materials from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds throughout the school to help children have a good understanding about the lives of others in different parts of the world. However, undoubtedly the most effective use of resources comes in the way the school uses adult support. In the first place, the adults who work throughout the school are highly skilled and know exactly what it is that is required of them. Most offer specialist support, for example, the nursery nurses in the reception classes speak Spanish, Turkish or Italian. This helps them to communicate with parents and young children whose first language is one of these three languages. The impact of the quality of the support is seen at its best during small group sessions when they work with designated group of children. In these circumstances they are skilled at developing children's communication skills as well as any other area that they are working on.
- 32 In each class there is a small group of children who are not easy to manage. The consistent approach to classroom management helps the children to be clear about what is, and is not, acceptable and also helps the teachers to manage children who have the potential to disruptive. Strategies like sitting children in specified places, when they gather together as a class, work well. The staff are clear about what the consequences are of inappropriate behaviour and have been able to communicate this to the children, resulting in everyone being able to accept the rules that help the classroom run smoothly.
- 33 The quality of teaching has come on a long way since the previous inspection with many strengths that have already been outlined. However, the staff recognise that there is still some way to go. In the area of information and communication technology, for example, there is still some insecurity amongst some staff. They recognise that their own subject knowledge needs to be enhanced and they are looking forward to opportunities for them to undertake further professional training in this area. Similarly, there are inconsistencies in the marking of children's work. There are times when staff tend to give written praise to untidy work and therefore does not set appropriate targets for improvement. Whilst it is accepted that much is done orally there is not a clear link between the marking and giving children information about what they need to do next in order to improve.

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

- 34 The curriculum is satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection when many weaknesses were highlighted. In the foundation stage of learning there is an effective balance

between indoor and outdoor play and stimulating creative activities that challenge all children, even when adults do not directly observe them. Children aged 5 to 7 have opportunities to take part in a rich variety of learning experiences that enable them to make good academic and personal progress. All statutory requirements are met, as are the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school implements the National Literacy Strategy effectively, which has been an important factor in the improving standards achieved in English in recent years. There is satisfactory implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, but this has not had time to positively impact on standards. There are some aspects of information and communication technology that are not sufficiently covered, and most children are not given sufficient time on computers to develop their skills appropriately. There is good provision to support the children's personal, social and health education, which was seen as a weak area in the last inspection.

- 35 Children have many opportunities to relate to others in a variety of situations, in and out of school, and as a result they learn to respect the values and beliefs of other children and adults. This provision for social education is enhanced by a good range of extra activities, such as visits to places of educational interest in London and visitors to school from a variety of backgrounds, which is an important factor in promoting the good relationships to be seen throughout the school. Within the science curriculum the children are helped to develop good attitudes towards healthy eating and effectively learn about how medicines are drugs that can be helpful but are dangerous when misused. The school provides for sex education in a sensitive and supportive manner that emphasises Catholic family values within a very caring community. The children are given a variety of responsibilities as they pass through the school and this has a positive effect on their personal development. A good example of this is the way that older children look after those in the reception classes at lunchtime. All children have weekly opportunities to take part in 'Circle time' activities, in which they sit in a circle with their teacher to talk about any worries they might have and such issues as the importance of caring for others, which effectively supports their personal development.
- 36 The school is successful in ensuring that all children have equal access to the curriculum, having addressed the weaknesses identified in the last report. The provision for children with special educational needs is now good, with effective procedures in place for the early identification and assessment of these children. The individual education plans give appropriate targets, which are broken down into small steps to enable children to make good progress in their learning and to achieve well. The children with English as an additional language, including those at very early stages of English acquisition, are also well supported and they also make good progress. Added focus on communication skills has helped these children.
- 37 There has been an improvement in the school's planning procedures and all subjects now have suitable guidelines to better ensure continuity and progression of learning, especially in English and mathematics. As a result, teachers are provided with effective information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught, so that they are able to give work that effectively builds on children's prior learning. The teachers plan in 'Year' teams, to ensure that children of the same age in different classes are given the same kind of work
- 38 The school gives all children opportunity to take part in a wide variety of educational visits, which enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. Children in the nursery and reception classes make effective use of walks around their local environment to find out about the area in which they live. There have also been visits to local churches, a greengrocers and a farm. The children in Years 1 and 2 make good use of trips to London Transport Museum, National Art Gallery and Bruce Castle Museum to deepen their

understanding of topics covered in school. Children also have opportunity to take part in activities such as 'Book Week' to develop their skills in reading and writing in an imaginative and stimulating way. An author of children's books has also been in school to lead sessions for children on book making. There have been visits from theatre and drama groups to perform productions, such as 'Aladdin' and 'The Elves and the Shoemaker'. Children have been able to work with a group of brass musicians and watch an African Dance Group perform.

- 39 The school has made strong links with the community, especially the Parish Churches, which makes an effective contribution to children's learning. The parish priests visit the school on a regular basis to take assemblies and to work with children in class. There are regular visits from representatives from the police and fire services to talk and work with the children on such topics as road safety and the awareness of the dangers of fire. There are opportunities for parents and members of the local community to come into school on several occasions, for example, to watch a concert at Christmas. The children are actively involved in raising money for a variety of charities, including 'The Catholic Children's Charity', which enables them to gain a good understanding of the needs of others. There are good links with other schools in the area that resulted in a joint celebration of the Millennium. There is successful liaison with the adjacent junior school, with teachers from both schools working closely together to ensure that children in Year 2 are effectively prepared for when they transfer to this school. These children visit the junior school and join in a variety of activities, including assemblies, concerts and playtimes.
- 40 The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school, which shows remarkable improvement since the last inspection when it was deemed to be poor.
- 41 The children's spiritual development through the curriculum and acts of collective worship is very good, being set within the secure context of the Catholic faith. There are many opportunities for children to quietly reflect in assemblies and at other times of the day in classrooms. Assemblies are used well to promote a feeling of wonder, as was evident when the headteacher told the parable of the 'Mustard Seed'. During this assembly there was good use of drama for children to act out the story and effective use of resources to capture the children's interest. Spirituality is also promoted through links with the Parish churches, with priests coming into school on a regular basis to take assemblies and mass, and to work with children in their classrooms. The experiences that children have access to in science, music and drama play an effective part of the school's provision for spiritual development. In assemblies there is very good use of music to heighten the mood of spirituality. All classrooms have a focal point for spiritual reflection that is respected by children and well used by teachers to develop their spiritual awareness. A good example of this was in the nursery when the teacher lit a candle to focus the children's thoughts as they said their prayers. All teachers greatly value children's ideas and efforts and this is shown by the way that all children are encouraged to make contributions during lessons and by the impressive displays of children's work throughout the school.
- 42 The school's provision for moral development is very good. This has been a key area of development since the last inspection, as many children enter school with underdeveloped ideas of what is suitable behaviour. The school has been very successful and, as a result, it is a friendly community in which most of the children clearly know right from wrong. Moral themes are an integral part of the school ethos and feature in many aspects of the curriculum. 'Circle time' activities are used well to promote good moral values with children who are able to discuss issues such as the importance of caring for others. There is a simple, but effective

behaviour policy, that is consistently applied by all staff. The policy is based on positive encouragement and all children are aware of the awards and sanctions that the school uses. The staff set good examples and work very hard to promote a sense of fairness among children and are successful in teaching them to be tolerant of each other.

- 43 The provision for children's social development is also very good, which is important as many children enter school with poor social skills and low self-esteem. The school works very hard to improve these aspects, so that effective learning can take place as children pass through the school. The children are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to work and play together with respect and tolerance. Children listen to and respect the opinions of others, as was seen during the introductions and round up sessions of most lessons. They are encouraged to work collaboratively, in pairs and small groups, as was evident in many lessons, such as in science lessons for children in Year 2 when they were working in pairs to measure each others hand spans. Children are able to take on a variety of responsibilities as they move through the school, such as acting as monitors, taking registers to the offices and passing messages to members of staff. The older children have the responsibility of looking after reception children during lunch and this adds to the harmonious relationships to be found throughout the school. Social development is also supported by a good range of extra activities, such as visits to places of educational interest in London and visitors to school from a variety of backgrounds.
- 44 The provision for children's cultural development is good. There are many opportunities for children to learn about their own culture and the traditions and beliefs of the other cultures represented in the school. The school makes good use of the stimulating places of educational and cultural interest in London to add to the children's learning experiences. Children are able to work with visitors that include theatre groups, artists, authors, storytellers and musicians from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Music makes a useful contribution to the children's cultural development, as they are able to listen to and appreciate music from around the world. Books have been chosen to develop the children's understanding and tolerance of other people's religious convictions and cultural traditions. There is also good use made of displays around the school to promote this aspect of their education, and all the children are well prepared for life in the multi-cultural society in which they will grow up.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

- 45 The way that the school cares for its children is good, which shows very good improvement since the last inspection, especially in relation to looking after their welfare. All staff work together to provide a happy and supportive learning environment in which each child is valued, treated with respect and made to feel special. The high number of adult helpers is a significant part of this provision that has a positive effect on children's attitudes to their work and the progress that they make. It is obvious that the children feel secure and are able to grow in confidence as they pass through the school.
- 46 There are good procedures for child protection and ensuring children's welfare. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and she liaises well with local agencies and attends any necessary meetings. All staff are aware of current practices and ensure that they keep abreast of any changes in this area of school life. Throughout the school, all adults have a good personal knowledge of the children that they work with and, as a result, are able to cater well for individual needs. The procedures for accidents, emergency evacuations from the building and risk assessment are all well established in the school.

Several of the staff are qualified first-aiders and parents are quickly notified if their child feels ill. The site-manager works diligently to maintain the building and to check any safety concerns. The midday supervisors are alert to what is happening in the playground and take good care of the children. The cook and kitchen staff provide a variety of interesting meals that encourage children to adopt a healthy lifestyle. There is suitable use made of visitors from medical backgrounds, to support children's health and welfare as part of the school's personal, social and health education provision.

- 47 Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well cared for, enabling them to take part in all activities. Their progress is closely monitored and recorded, so that the work they are given effectively matches their learning and personal needs. The example of noticing the potential underachievement of Black African boys in mathematics is one example of the school being proactive in checking on the standards being attained by children from different backgrounds. Classroom assistants give good support to those children who have behavioural difficulties, which play an important role in the progress that they make. Any concerns that teachers have about individuals are followed up sensitively, with parents being consulted and kept fully informed of what is happening.
- 48 The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. The children are involved in drawing up the school rules, which are consistently applied through the school. There is a clear system of sanctions and rewards and parents are involved at an early stage in cases of inappropriate behaviour. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good and it is made apparent to everyone in the school that bullying is not acceptable. Children are aware of the teachers' high expectations of them and there is much emphasis placed on rewarding positive behaviour. Any instances of roughness or unkindness are discussed in class and this helps to reinforce the importance of care and consideration for others.
- 49 The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are not effective, as the attendance rate has remained below the national average in recent years. The school is finding it difficult to convince some parents of the importance of their children attending regularly and on time. There are a number of strategies currently being explored to try and improve the situation.
- 50 There has been an improvement in the procedures for assessment and record keeping, which are now satisfactory, and can be used by teachers to decide children's levels of attainment and set work accordingly, especially in English and mathematics. The use of assessment to set targets for improvement are at an early stage and the school sees this as a priority area for development. Assessment information for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is used effectively to plan future work. There are also suitable systems in place to monitor the achievements of different groups of children, which means that the school is effective in meeting the needs of children of different abilities. The procedures for monitoring the personal development of children are mainly informal, but nonetheless satisfactory. The teachers work closely together as children pass through the school and the good exchange of information means that their individual personal needs are effectively met. There is close liaison with the adjacent junior school, with teachers from both schools working together to ensure that children in Year 2 are well prepared for when they transfer to this school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 51 The good parental support reported in the previous inspection has been maintained and continues to be a strength of the school. Parents consulted during the inspection express high levels of satisfaction with nearly every aspect of the school. They consider it well managed with good teaching. They like the work ethic it promotes; they see their children as happy and making good all round progress. Inspection evidence endorses these positive views. A few parents express concern about the amount of homework given and a number say there are insufficient extra curricular activities. Inspectors do not agree with these views. They found homework to be appropriate, and whilst they accept there are few after school clubs they do not regard this as unusual for an infants' school.
- 52 Most parents are also satisfied with the school's termly consultation arrangements for keeping them informed of their child's work and progress. In addition, they feel able to approach teachers at any other time to share concerns about their children's education; they find staff very willing to listen and to help. They are confident that the school would be quick to alert them of any problems affecting their child. The children's annual reports give a good general overview of the individual's achievements and how they might improve.
- 53 Overall the school's arrangements for keeping parents informed of the school's work are satisfactory. Regular well-written and attractive newsletters provide parents with general diary details and special events. They are also used to remind parents of issues such as the safety problems caused by 'selfish' parking outside the school. The brochure and governors' annual report to parents contain much useful information. The former now complies with statutory requirements but it is not especially 'user friendly' and the school may wish to consider its general style and tone. Brief details and particulars of the curriculum are given in the brochure and parents have access to more detailed plans. Parents of nursery and reception children are provided with an informative foundation stage of learning curriculum booklet, which is further explained at a meeting in October. Weekly topic information sheets are displayed outside all classrooms. However these vary in their quality, detail and usefulness to parents. In addition, meetings on aspects of the curriculum such as the National Numeracy Strategy, the religious education syllabus and standard attainment tests are held from time to time. Most are well attended and appreciated by the parents.
- 54 All parents have signed the home school agreement and accept their role as educators in partnership with the school. The school works hard to support them in this. For example, reception class parents are introduced to the home school reading scheme and appropriate strategies at the October meeting and they are given a useful list of 'questions to ask'. As a result the majority of parents effectively help their children with reading at home and this has a positive affect on standards of attainment in English.
- 55 The school views parents as an invaluable resource and very actively encourages them to help at the school and to participate in its life. In turn, parents feel very welcome at the school and most are willing to assist whenever possible. Many parents enjoy attending class assemblies, liturgies and concerts with the children, and a significant minority are more actively involved. Several give valuable classroom support by helping with reading, mathematics and focus groups on a regular basis. Recently, for example, Year 2 under achieving readers have greatly benefited from the support of a very committed group of about ten parents and grandparents who have listened to them read for 15 minutes a day under the 'reading recovery' scheme. Some parents help on trips or with library visits and book fairs. Others tell or read stories in 'other' languages or provide artefacts for special displays. A few parents become involved in 'one off' projects. For instance, a mother has visited the school every week for the last eight months to work with the children on the production of a most beautiful Millennium banner.

There is no doubt that these parental contributions greatly enrich the children's educational experiences and have a very beneficial impact on their progress and personal development. Children also benefit from the work of the Parent Teachers' Association. Profits from the Association's fund raising activities are used to purchase items suggested by the headteacher and co-ordinators, such as computer equipment, books and very attractive rugs for the library corners. The Association's disco's for parents and children are very much appreciated and are always well supported.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 56 It is in this area that there has been the most significant improvement since the previous inspection, thus allowing many of the other improvements to have taken place. The leadership and management of the school are now its key strengths, which is in contrast to the weaknesses that were evident at the time of the previous inspection.
- 57 The headteacher was appointed after the school was declared as not giving children an adequate standard of education four years ago. During her time at the school she has successfully given staff a clear direction, giving more attention to the standards attained by the children and the quality of learning that is provided for them. The headteacher has made a very positive impact on all, with staff, parents and children feeling very positive about the way she has taken the school forwards. The headteacher is very well supported by her deputy headteacher, who has been associated with the school for a long time. She has embraced the changes that have occurred and valued the opportunity to work as part of a stronger team dedicated to improve the provision for the children. She leads by example, being a very good classroom teacher. She has a very full monitoring role and is well respected by all staff. As a result of the effective work of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher there exists a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff. All are committed to working together as a unit, as can be seen in the way the National Literacy Strategy has been introduced and the improvements in children's behaviour has been managed.
- 58 The headteacher saw that the monitoring of teaching and learning was a key factor in improving the school. There is now a very comprehensive programme for monitoring teaching and learning. This programme has resulted in teachers' strengths being recognised but in providing the necessary support for staff, as they require it. This has been a key feature to the improvement in teaching noted since the time of the previous inspection. Staff now feel valued, supported and confident about the way they work. The fact that the school is able maintain good provision when two out of the four class teachers are temporary appointments is testament to the strength that exists in supporting teaching and learning throughout the school. There is also very effective checking of the national test results to see how further improvements can be managed. The improvement noted in Black African boys' mathematics results is one example of this working well. The school is not complacent and has also recognised the need to focus on children's ability to use their number skills more effectively in problem solving as another area requiring attention. Good analysis of test results is therefore giving the school an additional focus for monitoring work.
- 59 The way in which the school set about dealing with the issues raised in the previous inspection is something that they can rightly feel proud of. The way in which priorities are drawn up and effective systems put in place to support initiatives is most impressive. The school improvement plan is very detailed, outlines the anticipated actions to be taken and is appropriately evaluated. The action plan, which has been in place since the previous inspection, and the school improvement plan are instruments, which have much to commend them. It has also ensured that all staff, governors and parents are fully aware of the actions being taken to improve the standards and provision in the school. The one area that still requires improvement is subject management. This is mainly due to recent staff changes leaving many subjects without a co-ordinator or being covered on a temporary basis by individuals. The school is at a stage where it needs to re-evaluate the role and to work towards linking the role more specifically with overseeing the standards being attained and the quality of the provision.

- 60 There is effective administration support, which helps the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Parents feel welcomed into the school as do a range of visitors. The administrative support provides invaluable help in keeping check on spending and provides updated information to the senior management team and governors as and when it is needed. The school aims are now very clear and the school works to meeting these, especially in relation to raising standards and to ensure that all children have opportunities to succeed, irrespective of their backgrounds and ability levels.
- 61 The governors are very supportive of the school. The chair of governors is particularly influential in the school and is someone who seeks to play an active role in supporting the staff. As a result of the school's problems after the previous inspection, they have had frequent updated information about the school's performance from a range of sources. They have had to work hard and are now in a good position to relate to the school's strengths and weaknesses. They meet their statutory requirements and have appropriate systems in place to help them evaluate the school's effectiveness, especially in relation to its use of resources. Most of the governors have had a long association with the school and know the problems that have existed. However, they have remained supportive and are now able to begin to enjoy the benefits of their hard work.
- 62 There is good management of the budget. The chair of governors works very closely with headteacher and the finance committee to ensure that spending decisions are taken after giving full consideration to the greatest impact on raising standards and to improving the provision for the children. In this way there has been effective support prioritised for children with English as an additional language and for children with special educational needs. The part of the budget specified for supporting these two groups of children has been effectively used for the purpose anticipated. Another area that the school can feel that they are having value for money from is the way in which the work of the classroom support assistants and nursery nurses is having an impact on children's learning. The relatively small amount of money dedicated to this resource is making a telling impact on the standards attained by children.
- 63 The school does not have an adequate number of computers to enable it to develop work in information and communication technology (ICT) to the extent that it would wish. As a result standards are not high enough in this important area. The school has a plan for improving the number of computers available but it will be some time before they are able to resources ICT to the level they desire. By contrast the range of resources and books in school to support multi-cultural issues is good and helps children of all abilities and backgrounds have a better understanding about the way people in different parts of the world live and worship. The accommodation provides enough space for children to learn in comfort and there is particularly good use made of the outside environment by the children in the foundation stage of learning. Parts of the outside environment is in need of upgrading and this is something that is likely to happen in the very near future and has already been planned.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64 In order to continue the good momentum of improvement seen in the school over the past few years the school now needs to:

- **Improve the standard of handwriting and the way work is presented in children's books;**
(Paragraphs 4, 33, 103, 110 and 127)
- **Ensure that teacher's marking is linked to a method that helps children understand what it is they need to do next in order to improve.**
(Paragraphs 33, 106 and 115)
- **Improve children's skills in information technology by:**
 - Increasing the number of computers available in school, and
 - Give children greater access to computers as part of their everyday work.
(Paragraphs 11, 33, 34, 106, 109, 110, 115, 127, 128-129)
- **Find ways of helping foundation subjects' co-ordinators to develop their skills so that they are in a better position to have an overview of the subject that they are leading.**
(Paragraphs 59, 107, 121, 124, 127 and 140)

65 *As well as the main issues identified the school also needs to continue to work on the following issues:*

- Improve children's ability to transfer work that is on-going in their mental and oral mathematics to problem solving in mathematics; (Paragraphs 5, 108 and 110)
- To help children improve the way they represent mathematical information in graphical form; (Paragraphs 5, 10, 30, 108 and 112)
- Improve children's descriptive language in writing. (Paragraphs 4, 10, 30 and 103)
- Continue to focus on issues related to attendance. (Paragraphs 21 and 49)

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	63

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	16	32	52			

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)	20	172
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	42

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	141

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	34	21	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	28
	Girls	19	20	17
	Total	45	47	45
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	82 (93)	85 (93)	82 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	28	28
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	46	48	48
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	84 (93)	87 (100)	87 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	38
Black – other	7
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	41
Any other minority ethnic group	22

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage	2	1
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29.2
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	421,376
Total expenditure	410,385
Expenditure per pupil	2,063
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,542
Balance carried forward to next year	27,533

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

22.9%

Number of questionnaires sent out

192

Number of questionnaires returned

44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	36	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	50	43	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	41	2	0	1
The teaching is good.	55	41	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	34	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	34	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	48	0	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	32	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	41	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	30	16	2	13

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

AREAS HAVE LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 66 There are 39 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis. The morning and afternoon groups are mixed and contain many children who are at early stages of English acquisition. In the reception there are two classes containing 59 children in total. These two classes contain a children of mixed ability, some very able and some with learning difficulties. Each class also has a large number who are at relatively early stages of English acquisition. Nearly all reception-aged children have normally had experience of some form of pre-school education, usually in the school's nursery. At present, the number of children attending the nursery is below the designated number of places available. This is due to the changes in the population in the immediate area with fewer young children living in close proximity to the school.
- 67 The nursery and reception classes work closely together and are under the leadership of the deputy headteacher, who has vast experience of early years education. This has helped the relatively inexperienced teacher in the nursery class to provide appropriately for the needs of the youngest children in the school. It also ensures that both sets of children in the reception classes have a similar provision, giving emphasis to equal opportunities. There is a commitment to providing children with as much outdoor education as is possible. The staff in both reception and nursery classes have worked hard to take on the new guidance provided with the new foundation stage of learning for children aged up to five. Outdoor play is a very important feature of the provision and the aim is to ensure that children have as much time outside as they do inside. This requires much additional preparation and planning on behalf of all staff. However, the benefits can be seen in the way children's skill development is being enhanced through the opportunities provided for them to engage in activities outside, which match the smaller scale activities provided indoors. For example, children working with a model garage indoors were able, at a later time in the day, to experience working 'large scale' in a 'make believe' garage with a car on a ramp, which had been created outside.
- 68 All staff, including special educational needs support workers and nursery nurses are involved in the planning and know exactly what the main thrust of each activity is. In this way there is a good sense of teamwork and commitment from all staff, with the needs of all children being uppermost on the minds of all. It allows the classrooms to be organised so as to let one adult work intensively with a small group at any given time while the other supervises a larger group. There is also a very good level of expertise amongst the staff, which helps the provision for children in the foundation stage of learning to be a particular strength of the school. This is used to good effect especially in one class where a nursery nurse who speaks Spanish is able to help children whose first language is Spanish settle quickly into the routines of the school. There is also very effective leadership from the deputy headteacher with teaching responsibility for one of the reception classes. She is very clear about the way she wants children to learn and has very good knowledge of the new requirements outlined in the national guidance for children of this age.
- 69 Children start school demonstrating a wide range of ability. There are several children who have limited experience in communicating in English and a few others who are eloquent English speakers. When taking account of the initial assessments undertaken and from the observations made during inspection the personal and academic skills of children when they start in the nursery and reception is well below that expected for their age. The skill levels of boys are particularly weaker than those of girls. There is good progress being made by all

children leading to good achievement. The children who have English as an additional language are being helped to become confident in using English as their main means of communicating. At the same time there is good progress being made with children who have learning difficulties. More able children are appropriately challenged and inspired so they are able to exceed the learning goals anticipated for five-year-olds before they finish in the reception class. The good achievement made by children of all ability is a particular feature of the provision for children in the foundation stage of learning.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- 70 The vast majority of children have poor personal skills when they start school but soon settle and make good progress in this area of learning during their time in nursery and reception. Despite this good progress many are still not on course to meet the learning goal identified by the time they finish in the reception class. A good number of children need help to adjust appropriately to school routines. A few require specialist support as they have problems related to their behaviour and can be disruptive. The calm and expert way the staff deal with these children is a major reason why children are able to settle quickly and make good progress in their learning. This is helping children make very good progress in this area of learning, leading to far more children reaching the anticipated learning goal than would happen otherwise.
- 71 During their time in the nursery children learn to play together and take turns. This is seen when children play in the 'Three Bears' Cottage' within the classroom. The practitioner working with the children slowly withdraws her support and observes how well the children develop their play. When it comes to tidying up each child is fully involved and helps by returning equipment to specified places. As they mature and move on to the reception classes, this good grounding is helping them to know what is expected of them. This is best illustrated by the way a day starts in each of the two reception classes. There is a range of activities set out for children and they know that they spend a little time working at one table or area until the registration period begins. This also helps staff have a brief word with any parent who wishes to pass on any information about their child. During the registration period the children settle very quickly. A candle is lit and all children show respect and calmness as they make promises as they focus on the candle. Promises include such commitment to 'playing in a friendly way'.
- 72 The school uses a golden book, which the children strive to be nominated for. This results in them having their name included in the book. The practitioners are quick to model language to help children's patterns of behaviour. For example, they may use terms such as, 'I don't like it when....' The children respond to this and have a good idea about what is and is not acceptable behaviour. If there has been an issue between two children then the practitioners expertly help the children to talk through the issue. There is a great deal expected of the children in terms of showing levels of independence. They self register and they fill in tick sheets when they have completed a range of different activities in the classroom. Children are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities. A daily helper gives out fruit and others have set tasks around the classrooms, which they respond to most positively. The play environment helps children to work together collaboratively and there is a noticeable improvement in the level of maturity shown as children move through the foundation stage of learning. The teaching is having a positive impact on the children's learning in this area. Adults model good behaviour and use intervention very effectively if they feel they could help to move on the children's learning or understanding. The use of 'good eyes looking' and 'good ears listening' is having a positive impact on the children's levels of concentration.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- 73 Many children start nursery or the reception classes whilst they are still at very early stages of English acquisition. This means that a large group is not able to use English as the main means of communicating. It takes some time for these children to be able to use a range of English vocabulary anticipated for children of their age. However, due to the very good teaching, which gives good attention to using specific language and explaining new words, there is very good progress made by children in their communication, language and literacy during their time in nursery and reception. More able children also are provided with a range of challenging activities to help them make progress, especially in relation to reading for enjoyment.
- 74 In the nursery, children are introduced to new words in the context of stories. In one example the nursery nurse was working with a small group on developing their communication skills. She skilfully used a range of soft toys to tell the children a story and then expects them to retell the story from the point of view of one of the characters. She is aware that this requires good listening skills on behalf of the children and they respond well by being able to answer questions and give careful consideration to the main issues within the main story. The nursery nurse introduces new words, such as 'calendar' carefully so that no one is confused. The activity successfully helps to raise children's confidence levels when it comes to speaking out in front of others and also has a positive impact on their listening skills. Older children in the reception looking at the pet bird that has been brought into the classroom are encouraged to ask questions or make observations and are helped to phrase them correctly. For example, 'What does the bird eat?' is followed by, 'The bird looks as though he is eating himself.' (when cleaning it feathers)
- 75 In one of the reception classes very good teaching leads to children being fully engaged in a book they are reading. The teacher uses a range of ideas, such as 'the noisy phonics game' to help children to recognise letters and the sound they make. The way in which it is done leads children to believing that reading is fun but it also provides opportunities for reinforcing good learning and helps with the children's pronunciation. The teacher involved has an excellent rhyme and action song to gain children's attention before moving on to use a phonics chant involving the initial letter of their name. The same group of children is able to recognise the author of a book they are reading and the way the teacher reads it with much expression and dramatisation, helps children's own expression in reading. Many join in voluntarily because they are completely engrossed in the story. New words, such as 'fierce' are introduced in such a way that helps children make the link between the topic they are studying (pets and animals) and the reading.
- 76 As the children move from the whole class setting to smaller groups there is a sense of calm retained although it is clear that the staff have to work hard to gain this level of discipline. A group working with the teacher makes up their own books related to the reading they had just heard. The way in which the teacher works with this group evokes a sense of love for literature. Children are encouraged to 'have a go' at writing their own sentences within the security that they know their efforts are going to be valued. Most use finger spaces between the words they write and their letters resemble letters from the alphabet and can be read.
- 77 Despite the very good teaching that is evident within this area of learning more than half the group are not on course to meet the learning goals anticipated by the time they finish in the reception class. The very good progress made by children at early stages of English acquisition

and by children with learning difficulties helps to improve their prospect of attaining standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the time they are 7.

Mathematical Development

- 78 Just as with communication, language and literacy many children have relatively low mathematical skill levels when they start in the nursery. There are many children who are not familiar with a range of number rhymes and only a few are able to count with any confidence. There is a great emphasis placed on helping children to learn through practical experience. For example, there are very few play environments set up that does not have mathematics at the heart of the expected learning that the practitioner is aiming for. This results in good progress being made, especially for children who are at early stages of English acquisition.
- 79 The staff have looked carefully at the National Numeracy Strategy and the guidance for the foundation stage of learning and have developed a planning system, which takes account of both areas in their preparation for improving children's mathematical understanding. There is again a very big emphasis placed on outdoor play with many practical mathematical activities taking place outside. These are mainly associated with sorting, counting and matching. For example, the counting of wheels on the vehicles in the outside garage, ordering the size of the castles in the sand area and naming the numbers that hang on the washing line. The markings on the playground, used by the nursery, are particularly helpful in relating mathematical ideas to the children.
- 80 In the reception the emphasis on practical activities continues with children spending more time linking the practical work to writing mathematical operations down. There is use of 'real' money to help children with coin recognition and with handling money for different activities. More able children are able to give change for items that are bought up to the value of 10p. There have been visits made to local shops so that children can put into practical use what they have learnt in the classroom.
- 81 In the nursery there is good attention to size and shape through practical activities. This is best illustrated by the way the 'three bears' cottage' is organised so as to give emphasis to small, middle size and large. In the reception there is much more attention to measurement with aspects of length and weight being more prominent. Children are also used to dealing with three-dimensional shapes and are developing a good knowledge of the names of a few familiar such shapes.
- 82 The good teaching is responsible for the positive progress that is made but many children are still not in line to meet the learning goal anticipated for their age. However, just as with other areas, the good solid work that occurs helps children to be more confident mathematicians and give them every chance to meet the expected level by the time they are 7.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 83 During the inspection there was a topic about pets being followed in the reception classes. The way in which the staff were dealing with this theme gave a good insight into the way children's wider understanding of how animals live and survive was being improved. There were effective links with developing speaking and listening skills with children listening to the owner of different pets talking to the whole group. They were also being encouraged to ask questions about the care of the pets.

- 84 Many children have limited knowledge of the world around them and about things from the past when they first start school. The staff in the nursery and reception put a great deal of effort into providing children with a very stimulating environment that gives them a chance to look at the way things grow, the way animals live and to relate to things from the past. Many children live in high-rise flats and the school seeks to widen their understanding through using the outdoor environment. There are for example areas dedicated to ‘digging’ in the nursery and reception. This enables children to explore different textures and materials. Children are provided with a full range of experiences in designing and making models. In each classroom there is a ‘design and technology’ area, which the children enjoy exploring. Children display skills in using information and communication technology at the level expected for their age. They are independent in using the mouse to move a cursor and click on to a desired icon. They also use tape recorders independently and settle down to listen to stories as and when they want to.
- 85 There is a great deal of effort put into ensuring that children have good awareness of a range of different cultures, particularly those represented by the children in the school. They have opportunities to experience foods from different countries and to wear clothes from different parts of the world. The books in the classroom give a positive image of people from different parts of the world and children are able to explain about the similarities and differences in their lives and those of children living in other parts of the world.
- 86 The children benefit from the range of visits that they undertake. Visits to the fruit and vegetable markets help them to name correctly fruits and vegetables that they come across. Visits to the local church help them to understand about aspects of their faith and those of others. There was an effective link between their pets project and the children’s visit to a ‘wild life centre’. This has enabled children to be more inquisitive about the animals that they see in books as well as those that they have in the classroom.
- 87 The good progress made by the children in the foundation stage of learning helps them to improve their knowledge and understanding of the world but most are not on course to meet the learning goal anticipated for them by the time they start Year 1. The teaching is good and does help children to gain a deeper understanding about the world about them.

Physical Development

- 88 The staff have made a conscious effort to use the outdoor environment as much as possible. They are aware that this maximises opportunities for children to be involved in using their physical skills. One of the reasons for this is to try and engage and motivate the boys. When they start school many are not used to rigorous exercise and staff notice how many are out of breath after short periods of physical movements.
- 89 During their time in the foundation stage of learning children regularly use the hall with the reception aged children getting changed fully while the nursery aged children remove their shoes and socks. This help to develop personal and social skills as well as getting them used to the routines involved when preparing for physical education. The movements that take place in the hall are usually linked to the themes the children are studying. For example, the children were moving like birds having had a pet bird in the classroom with them for a short time. The range of children’s movements is appropriate for their age but they quickly become breathless. However, the range of activities provided for them both indoors and outside is helping to improve their fitness levels. Children have many opportunities to improve their ball skills. A basketball ring is placed outside and a small group of children show a good level of accuracy

as they try to throw the ball through the hoop. Children make good progress in their ability to participate in a range of skills involving a ball, their body movements and their confidence in tackling apparatus and space.

- 90 Throughout the day there are many different opportunities for children to improve their finer physical skills. They use a range of equipment, such as scissors, glue and pens to help them with their creative work. The design and technology areas set up in each classroom emphasises the importance that the school gives to this part of the curriculum.
- 91 During their time at the reception and nursery the good progress made by the children results in many children being in a position to meet the learning goal anticipated for this area of learning. The good progress is as a direct result of teachers being aware of the children's needs and of activities being set up that match them.

Creative Development

- 92 It is in this area that staff make a determined effort for children to gain greatly from the experiences that are organised for them. For example, there is a conscious effort made to set up challenging play environment, which require children to think imaginatively. This together with the adult's careful intervention helps play be a stimulating and creative experience for the children.
- 93 When children first start school, many have little experience of moving into an imagined world or have developed their creative skills to the level expected for their age. The very good progress made in this area helps children to successfully improve their creativity and helps them to gain enough confidence to initiate their own play. In the nursery there are many opportunities for children to take on roles, which start from a familiar story. For example, the three bears' cottage that is organised gives children a chance to be one of the bears or to be Goldilocks. The cottage is well resourced, enabling children to re-enact the story with some degree of reality. The porridge is replaced by another type of food so as to add a different dimension for the children to think about. The teacher's intervention is crucial in moving on the children's learning. She expertly chooses the extent to which she needs to intervene so as to keep the story flowing. During one period of observation a very able child takes on the role of the teacher in helping others to follow a basic story line. The same girl is very active during the tidying up that follows. The teacher 'models' a role so that the children know how to use the area. This is done very well enabling the children to gain in confidence as they continue with the play. In the reception the children use the 'Noah's Ark' play environment to help them move to this make-believe world. They know the story well and there are clear links with the project about pets being studied in the classroom. In each classroom there is a very full range of dressing-up clothes or puppets to help children create their own stories. This they do with much enthusiasm and in the main helps them to move from the known stories that they have had read or told to them to developing their own creative ideas.
- 94 In the reception class, children are able to name and use musical instrument sensibly. The teacher deliberately reminds children of the musical vocabulary that they already know, such as, loud, soft, high and low. The children are keen to experiment and many are able to explain to others how they have organised their compositions. They show very good levels of control of their instruments and work co-operatively with others. The children listen attentively to music, which originates from Ghana. Children also use a range of materials, both two and three-dimensional to make their own artefacts. They record in paint using different shades and talk about lighter and darker when doing so.

- 95 The very good progress made by the children is as a direct result of the very good teaching that takes place for this area of learning. The children move from a position of being well behind the levels expected for their age when they start school to being in line to meet the learning goal by the time they start Year 1.

Teaching and Provision

- 96 The teaching is good overall but it is very good in the area of communication and language and literacy and creative development. The strength of the teaching in the nursery and in one of the two reception classes is making a very big impact on children's learning. Children are guided through a range of activities that help them to improve their skill levels. This is frequently seen at its best with children who are early stages of English acquisition. These children are provided with every opportunity to develop their spoken English by the way teachers ask appropriate questions and give full attention to the next area of learning that they require. Teachers give very great attention to recording what children have and have not managed. Each child has a personal profile and the adult's observations are transferred into these on a daily basis. The system has not yet been redefined so as to make it easy for staff to link their assessments to children's progress towards the learning goal. The deputy headteacher, who is the co-ordinator recognises this as the next area for the staff to work on.

Parents

- 97 Both the nursery and reception classes have established very good links with parents before children start school. A pre-school profile is filled in with the parent before the child starts and there is continuous liaison between home and school. The arrangement for starting children sees a staggered system in operation, which allows the staff time to help individuals settle.

ENGLISH

- 98 Standards have steadily improved and although there is some variation in each year group, due to the nature of the intake, overall children's attainment is now in line with that expected for their age by the time they are 7 years old. This reflects good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 with children of different ability and from different backgrounds achieving well. This reflects a much improved position to the one reported at the time of the previous inspection. The 2000 reading test results for 7-year-olds show that the school's results were slightly below the national average but were well above average when compared to similar schools. In writing, the school's results matched the national average but were again well above average compared to similar schools.
- 99 When looking more deeply at the national test results of 7-year-olds in 2000 the school's results in reading largely mirror those noted nationally. The main difference being that the percentage of children attaining the highest levels was not quite as good as that noted nationally. However, the present Year 2 is a slightly stronger group and is attaining in line with that expected for their age. They have a particular love for literature, which is a major feature of literacy lessons. In writing, the school's results are more variable but again match the national picture. The children's speaking and listening proficiency shows very good progress over time, especially in relation to those children who are early stages of English acquisition. Despite the initial problems associated with the attainment levels of boys when they first start school, the past four years' results show that they are performing at the same level as girls in reading, which is a significant difference from the national position. Good attention to the needs of boys in the foundation stage of learning and to providing them with a full range of reading materials that capture their interest is helping to improve boys' performance.
- 100 When children start Year 1, many have not met the learning goals anticipated for them in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 and are attaining in line with that expected for their age by the time they are 7. This good progress is due, in part, to the solid foundation that has been laid in the nursery and reception, which sees their confidence in speaking and listening improve significantly. There is also a positive impact being made in Years 1 and 2, especially in relation to generating within children a love for literature and books. The combination of good teaching and careful choice of resources is having a very positive impact on the children's learning, which in turn is helping children to achieve well.
- 101 Children who are early stages of English acquisition make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills. They are helped to become more confident in phrasing questions and given time to consider their answers. The staff are acutely aware of new language that they are likely to come across and take time to discuss unfamiliar words with them. Other children also make good progress in their speaking and listening. The central feature to aid this good progress is the way that adults use specific vocabulary and are quick to explain new words to children. For example, the word 'intonation' was explained to all the children in such a way so that they could use it immediately in their own descriptions. During a Year 2 lesson, discussing the merits of a range of poets from different parts of the world, one child describes the poet Grace Nicholls as 'an awesome poet'. The way in which children are asked questions is helping them to phrase answers correctly. This together with the staff's desire to use a wide range of vocabulary is helping children to improve their own conversational skills. Confidence levels are high with children being prepared to engage in discussions with unfamiliar adults. During the 'Passover Service' conducted by the local priest the Year 2 children displayed very good listening. They were attentive and clearly understood each part of the service because

they had listened to the explanations. At the time of the previous inspection children's listening skills were found to be poor. This is no longer the case with much improvement seen in this area.

- 102 Children make good progress in their reading. They have quickly developed a love for books and for literature. This is demonstrated at its best when Year 2 was involved in a lesson about their favourite poets. During this lesson the children show much enthusiasm for reading as they read a range of poems. In some cases the children re-read the poem after listening to the adult. The second reading is far more expressive and a child visibly oozes additional interest as a result. The staff give much attention to the punctuation within any extract of reading when they read to the whole class. This in turn is helping children with the expression in their own reading. At the end of the session when Year 2 children had been looking at their favourite poets the different children were confident enough to stand up in front of the rest of the class and talk about their chosen poet. During this session it was clear that the children felt a strong sense of association with the poets. One child, in answer to a question about why the poet repeated the last line remarks that he thought the poet wanted to 'create an echo'. The number of children, in the present Year 2, who are now reading at the higher level is increasing. Similarly, the excellent support provided through the reading partnership that occurs first thing in the morning is improving the reading of the lower attainers. In this session voluntary trained adults come in and work with a designated child for 15 minutes each day. This is improving the progress being made by these children.
- 103 There is good progress being made in children's writing, which is a vast improvement on the position reported at the time of the previous inspection. However, the picture is more mixed with presentation skills in particular being unsatisfactory. In Year 1 the more able children can retell or slightly develop well-known stories. In one example the story 'Funny Bones' is retold in an amusing way. The punctuation is good with capital letters and full stops being used correctly. However, there are a limited number of descriptive words being used. More able children in Year 2 show more imagination as they re-tell familiar stories. For example, in the retelling of the 'Three Little Pigs' there is an interesting twist with 'Three Little Wolves' attempting to build their houses. Story openings follow set conventions with phrases such as, 'One day...', or 'One fine day...', being prominent. The writing does have a sensible sequence but tends to finish too abruptly. There is also evidence of good use of speech marks. Spellings are about appropriate for age but common words like; their (thair), own (owen) are not spelt correctly. The handwriting and presentation continues to be unsatisfactory. Average ability children in Year 1 are at very early stages of setting things out on paper. The formation of their letters is poor with few letters touching the line. Spelling is also a concern with words like, 'of' being written as 'fo'. The average attainers in Year 2 also struggle with their presentation skills with frequent reversals of letters being evident. Stories tend to rely on telling what has happened to them with few imaginative features or descriptive words being present. There is also a high reliance on using 'then' or 'and then' to join sentences. Spellings mainly follow phonetic patterns but there are frequent misunderstandings of the phonetic pattern resulting in words like 'laughed' being written as 'laffed'. The lower ability group in Year 1 is still at a stage of copying with most letters being formed correctly. By the time they are in Year 2 there has been noticeable improvement but writing is devoid of punctuation and sometimes difficult to follow. The work carried out to improve children's spoken language is beginning to have an impact on the written work of children who are early stages of English acquisition. However, their presentation skills are also unsatisfactory.
- 104 Children have a very positive attitude to learning. They have developed a love for reading and discussions with children showed that they chose a wide range of books and love being read

to. They settle down quickly to their tasks and show good levels of concentration. When children do attempt to be disruptive they are dealt with quickly and appropriately causing minor disruption to the flow of the lesson. The strategy of sitting children in set places when they gather together on the carpet is working well in containing the potential disruption that can easily be caused by a few children.

- 105 The quality of the teaching is good overall but with a significant amount of very good teaching noted. The teaching is much better than that reported at the time of the previous inspection. Children are also more efficient learners. Teaching is particularly impressive when the class teacher and the specialist teacher for children who have English as an additional language work together. All teachers use the National Literacy Strategy to good effect in providing children with progression in their learning. They build effectively on the skills that children have already acquired and introduce new ones at the correct time. One of the most effective features of the teaching is the way all staff consistently use appropriate vocabulary to help children with their communication. They are also quick to pick up on words that may need further explanation, for example, calendar. There is very good use of resources to help children gain a deeper understanding of an area that they are looking at. For example, in a Year 2 lesson focussing on favourite poets, the staff had used the Internet to provide children with additional information about the poets that they are studying. There is also very good attention to the children's own cultures with efforts made to use examples from a range of different backgrounds as was seen in the favourite poets example. The staff manage children exceptionally well. When there is any sign of potential disruption they are quick to defuse situations, leading to very little disruption to the flow of the lesson. Children sit in designated places on the carpet when the class sits together. This is a strategy used by all classes and works well for helping children settle quickly and quietly.
- 106 In nearly all lessons the teachers share with the children what it is they are going to learn. This is effective in helping children have knowledge of their learning and teachers use the plenary sessions most effectively in checking whether the anticipated learning has happened. However, there is limited use of individual targets to help develop this still further. Similarly, the marking of children's work is inconsistent, which is not helping children have a clear understanding as to what they need to do next in order to improve their work. There is also limited use of children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills to help develop their written work. This is an area that the school is aware of. They recognise that improved resourcing is needed to help increase children's involvement in ICT skills.
- 107 The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been very successful and has, in part, been responsible for the improved position since the time of the previous inspection. There is regular checking on the quality of the teaching with the headteacher taking a 'caretaker' role with regard to managing the subject while the co-ordinator is on maternity leave. There is an adequate range of resources available with particular care given to ensure that books represent a range of different cultures and backgrounds. The teacher with specialist expertise to support children who have English as an additional language works effectively in classrooms. She plans co-operatively with the class teacher and there is good evidence of her having a positive impact on children's learning.

MATHEMATICS

- 108 There has been improvement over the last few years in standards, although this is not necessarily reflected in test results. It is difficult to compare one-year group with another

because the range of children from different backgrounds varies so much throughout the school. Most children are confident in their number work but have greater difficulty in representing their work in a variety of ways, especially in the form of graphs, and in answering mathematical problems. There has been an issue with the underperformance of black African boys but the school has recognised this and has recently taken steps to help them improve. The majority of children make satisfactory progress with the current Year 2's attainment matching that of the previous cohort, which is below that expected for their age nationally. However, when compared to similar schools the performance of children is above average.

- 109 The school has addressed many of the weaknesses highlighted in the last report. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory with a strong emphasis placed on developing children's basic skills through practical activities. There are good planning guidelines, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, and resources are no longer in a poor state of repair. The children now have positive attitudes, being well behaved, and show interest and enjoyment in what they are doing. There has been less success in enabling children to record their findings in a variety of ways or in teaching them how to improve their work by the use of information and communication technology.
- 110 The teachers' planning is thorough, with clear learning objectives linked to a variety of interesting activities for children to carry out. Teachers prepare their lessons well and employ effective classroom management and organisational methods. The high number of adult support in classrooms is a significant factor in the progress made by children, as it ensures that they receive a high proportion of direct teaching throughout the lesson. There is a natural integration of mathematics into classroom activities and children suitably develop their skills of recognising and using simple patterns and relationships. By the time they are 7, many children show that they can read and write numbers to at least 100 and can say the number that is 1 or 10 more or less than any given two-digit number. They can use the correct mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes and can sort these shapes according to such features as the number of sides and corners. However, in most lessons the children's ability to use correct mathematical vocabulary to talk about what they are doing is underdeveloped, as is their use of mental calculation skills and the ability to explain the methods used to find the answers to problems. This is not helped by some lessons being too long, so that the introductions are not brisk enough to effectively develop the children's quick mental recall skills. Many children find difficulty in recording their findings in different ways, as was seen when Year 2 children were trying to create and interpret simple block graphs. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what children can achieve and this is shown when poorly presented work is accepted as being satisfactory or better. This is an issue relating to teachers' marking of children's work. There is also limited use of information and communication technology to enhance children's work in mathematics. Since the last inspection, the school has provided more opportunities for children to develop the skills of working collaboratively to solve problems and they are now growing in confidence when involved in these activities. There is appropriate use made of homework to further develop children's learning in mathematics.
- 111 The progress of children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good, as a result of work being carefully matched to their individual needs. These children are given good support that enables them to make effective progress towards the individual targets set for them. The improved quality of planning ensures that the more able children are also now effectively challenged. Children who are at early stages of English acquisition are helped to understand mathematical terminology that might otherwise lead to them being confused.

- 112 Children show that they are able to make some use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, as seen in Year 2 science lessons, in which children were working in pairs to measure each other's hand spans. However, children's limited ability in recording information in graph form is limiting their opportunities to use numeracy in subjects such as geography and history.
- 113 The curriculum for mathematics is satisfactory, with the children being offered a variety of relevant activities that capture their interest. The planning follows the framework for the National Numeracy Strategy and is effective in ensuring continuity and progression of children's learning. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its systems for assessing and recording individual children's attainment and the progress they make in mathematics as they pass through the school, and these are now satisfactory. The use of this information to set targets for improvement are at an early stage and the school sees this as a priority area for development. There is effective leadership, with the co-ordinator having a clear view as to how the subject is to be developed in order to raise standards.

SCIENCE

- 114 The 2000 teacher assessment results for 7-year-olds show that attainment in science was average, in terms of national comparisons, but well above average when compared to similar schools. When taking account of the children's attainment when they start school there is good progress being made, resulting in children of all abilities achieving well. Many of the current Year 2 are attaining at the level expected for their age across all aspects of the subject. The school has been successful in dealing with the weaknesses indicated in the last report, with standards having been improved, the quality of teaching now being good and the attitudes of children, which were poor, also being good.
- 115 The teachers ensure that children have many opportunities to be involved in practical investigative activities to develop their scientific knowledge and understanding. This was evident in a lesson for children in Year 1, when they were working in small groups investigating how the speed and size of an object can effect how it stops. This work was well linked to the children's own lives, in terms of road safety, and when doing work on simple electrical circuits they are made aware of the dangers of electricity. As children pass through Year 2, they learn how to handle simple scientific equipment carefully and safely and to take part in discussions about scientific topics. This was evident in lessons for Year 2 children when they were talking about how to recognise and measure simple differences between themselves. In these lessons, the children were able to suitably use their numeracy skills to take measurements of their hand spans. During these activities the children are curious, show enjoyment and interest and are keen to take an active role in the lessons. The teachers show secure subject knowledge, prepare their lessons well and stress the importance of the correct use of scientific language. Many of the children have a suitable scientific vocabulary and this enables them to talk about their work in an appropriate manner. There is good emphasis given to teaching children the basic skills of carrying out an investigation and the different methods in which they can record what they have discovered. However, there is little evidence of children being taught how to make close observational drawings. The quality of marking could be improved to show children how to improve their work, especially in terms of presentation, which is poor. The teachers give children many opportunities to work collaboratively, in groups and individually, to investigate and find out for themselves. As a result, by the time that they are 7, most children show suitable skills in carrying out a simple fair test, with help from the teacher. Throughout the school, there is very little evidence of children using information

and communication technology to enhance their work in science, and this is an area for development. There is good development of children's spirituality, when they are given time to observe and talk about the wonder of living things during their lessons.

- 116 The progress of children with special educational needs is good, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The well-structured adult support in classrooms is an important factor in the progress made by these children, as it ensures that they receive a high proportion of direct teaching throughout the lessons. The children with English as an additional language also benefit from the same level of effective support and they make good progress in their learning.
- 117 The curriculum that is offered to the children is satisfactory with many opportunities for them to be involved in investigative activities. The leadership is good, with the co-ordinator having an effective overview of the quality of science education through the school. Since the last inspection, planning procedures have been improved by the adoption of a scheme of work that effectively ensures continuity and progression of learning. The school has also improved its assessment procedures and now collects suitable information about the progress made by children as they pass through the school. This data is beginning to be used by teachers to set targets for improvement, and the school is keen to further develop this. There is suitable use made of the school grounds to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things.

ART AND DESIGN

- 118 During the inspection two art lessons were observed, both in Year 1. The observed lessons together with the scrutiny of children's work indicate that standards are in line with that expected for children of their age. This shows that progress is satisfactory throughout Year 1 and 2 because the majority of children have reached the expected learning goals for their age in creative development when they start Year 1.
- 119 In Year 1 most children are able to create interesting minibeasts based on a balloon-shaped, paper mache' model. The children use information books appropriately to look up the minibeast they want to create. The teacher has used the work of Picasso to help focus children's attention on the more creative aspects that they could incorporate into their work. The end results are good with children showing a range of creative ideas in their models. In another Year 1 class the children have to think of their favourite place and they successfully link their original sketches with the collages that they create from a range of different materials. The children demonstrate appropriate creative skills and have the necessary manipulative skills to cope with the collage they wish to create.
- 120 The teaching in one of the two lessons is good and is satisfactory in the other. In the first example, the teacher successfully enhances the creative side of children's thinking and there is a sense of purpose and pace about the lesson. In the second there are many of the same attributes present but the teacher has missed the opportunity of linking the work with that of a known artist. In each of the two lessons the teachers have organised the resources appropriately allowing children access to a full range of equipment.
- 121 The subject is managed by a teacher who has only just taken over the role. At present there is limited monitoring happening and the co-ordinator is only just beginning to give wider consideration to what needs to be done. Her initial assessment is accurate having focussed on

the need to be more consistent in the use of famous artists and to develop the monitoring role more productively. She has started to build up a photographic record of work being covered and is about to start to consider the professional development needs of the staff. The resource level is adequate.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 122 Just as with art and design there was only a chance to observe two design and technology lessons. Each of the classes in Year 2 was making glove puppets. The standards attained are in line with those expected for their age, which indicates that progress is satisfactory.
- 123 Children show a good understanding of the process of designing and making and are able to name and describe the different techniques they use. They know the difference between a running stitch and a blanket stitch. The teacher uses finished puppets to help stimulate children's creative thought. Children use questions to help them gain further knowledge of the tasks that they undertake. Children complete drawings, which they then use to aid the 'making' stage. The drawings show a good level of creative thought.
- 124 In both lessons the teaching is satisfactory. There are times when the children are provided with too much direction, which reduces their opportunity to be creative. However, there are very good levels of organisation allowing children access to a range of resources. Children are well managed resulting in classrooms being calm and purposeful environments where children are provided with every opportunity to succeed. Resource level is adequate and the subject is appropriately managed although this is an area to be further developed. The time devoted to design and technology has inevitably suffered from the intense emphasis given to literacy and numeracy in the past few years. Professional development opportunities for staff at this time are therefore limited.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 125 In history, the children attain standards expected for their age by the time that they are 7 and make good progress in their learning as they pass through the school. There is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on standards or the quality of teaching in geography. The current provision for history shows good improvement since the last inspection, especially in the key areas of standards attained and the quality of teaching.
- 126 In history, the teachers have secure subject knowledge and are able to organise and manage their classes well. There is good use of time and resources, and effective use of questioning to find out what children know and understand. Explanation of the ideas to be taught are good and all teachers place strong emphasis on children using correct historical vocabulary. In their history lessons, the children are helped to successfully develop their understanding of time by listening to stories about the past and of famous people. A good example of this was in a Year 2 lesson on finding out about the Great Fire of London, when the teacher effectively used resources to stimulate and capture the children's interest. Previous learning is consolidated by the use of books, photographs and historical artefacts. Children learn how to use evidence to find out about the past and how things change over a period of time. This was evident in lessons for children in Year 1, on finding out if an object was old or new by looking at and discussing the characteristics of a variety of toys.
- 127 Teachers need to have a higher expectation of children's presentation, as they sometimes accept work that is not of a suitable standard. There is very little use of information and communication technology to support children's work in history. The children's attitudes to learning are positive and their response in lessons is good, handling historical artefacts and resources with care. They show interest and enjoyment in their work and are very willing to listen to the views and ideas of others. The children with special educational needs, and those

with English as an additional language, are well supported and they also make good progress. The curriculum ensures that all children have access to a suitable range of historical experiences. There is good use made of visits to the many places of historical interest in London. An example of this is the way that a visit to Bruce Castle Museum has effectively developed the children's knowledge and understanding of the key features of a home in Victorian times. The management of both geography and history needs further development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 128 By the time they are 7-years-old, most children are not attaining the expected standards in most aspects of the subject. This is a result of some important areas not being sufficiently covered, a lack of teacher confidence and expertise and children not having enough time on computers to effectively develop their skills in the subject. This shows that the school has not been able to successfully address the many weaknesses in the provision for the subject highlighted in the previous report. The limited number of computers in classrooms makes it very difficult for teachers to ensure children have sufficient time to learn and practice the basic skills of using a computer. In the two lessons seen, the teachers were able to demonstrate how to use a CD-ROM to research information appropriately, but there was very limited opportunity to use the computers for themselves. Children are not learning how to use information communication technology (ICT) to support and enhance their work in other subjects. This is a weakness that the school needs to address.
- 129 By the time they are 7, most children do not show confidence when using computers as word processors to edit the text of stories. They do not have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the layout and use of the computer keyboard, or to be able talk about what they have done using suitable technological language. When children have chance to use a computer they show positive attitudes to their learning, being well behaved and showing good concentration, which is an improvement on the poor attitudes seen during the last inspection. The co-ordinator, though only recently having taken over the subject, has a clear view on how to develop the subject. This includes training to improve teachers' subject knowledge and expertise, improving the number and quality of computers and providing a wider range of ICT experiences for children.

MUSIC

- 130 It was only possible to observe three music lessons during the inspection. Evidence from discussion with the co-ordinator, photographs of musical activities, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and observations during assembly indicates that attainment in music at the age of 7 is in line with that normally expected of children of similar ages. The children make satisfactory progress in the development of musical skills and are provided with opportunities to participate in a wide range of musical activities.
- 131 This is a marked improvement since the time of the last inspection when children's attainment was judged to be unsatisfactory and their progress generally poor. A subject co-ordinator has been appointed and management of the subject is now purposeful, supportive and enthusiastic.
- 132 Children in Years 1 and 2 regularly listen to music and develop simple appraisal skills. They listen to suitably chosen works during assemblies, as they come into some classrooms at the

beginning of the day and in some physical education and art lessons. On most occasions opportunities are taken to describe and discuss the pieces.

- 133 Children are able to use body sounds and simple instruments to explore the textures of sounds related to stories they have shared. Throughout Year 1 and 2 children sing a good range of songs from memory. They sing in tune and demonstrate the ability to sing both quietly and loudly and do this with enthusiasm and clear diction.
- 134 As children move through Years 1 and 2 they develop an effective musical vocabulary, and follow simple graphic scores. They compose music for instruments such as tambourines, woodblocks and cymbals. They take appraising and improving their own compositions seriously and standards in this aspect of the curriculum are good. They enjoy music and learn quickly. They sing regularly in weekly sessions where they learn new tunes and practice familiar songs and hymns. They sing tunefully with enthusiasm and improve the clarity of their notes and their awareness of tone, pitch and rhythm.
- 135 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with good features in the lesson taught by the co-ordinator. Many teachers, whilst not specialists, work very hard to provide a lively programme of work. They use a recently introduced scheme very effectively to underpin planning. Lessons are well paced and rigorous. Teachers demonstrate real personal enthusiasm for music lessons and create a motivating environment in which good learning can take place.
- 136 The teaching of singing is good. Teachers use many opportunities both within specific lessons and at registration or story time to sing. Children sing simple songs, rounds and even classroom rules and instructions. The teachers' high expectations are mirrored in the high standards of the children's performance. They know the importance of good posture and the teachers' enthusiastic praise encourages them to try their very best to sing as well as they can. Children with special educational needs are fully included and make good progress as a result. All children thoroughly enjoy their singing.
- 137 A feature of the good teaching is the way in which members of staff seek opportunities that enable children to perform their musical skills. Children regularly take part in the South Tottenham Music Festival, and during 2000 they wrote and performed a special Millennium composition. They participate in a range of musical adaptations. These opportunities give added purpose to the music curriculum and raise children's confidence in performance. The school encourages visits from musicians and has welcomed a choir from Brazil and an African dance and music group in recent months.
- 138 The school is adequately resourced with a satisfactory range of percussion and tuned instruments that are regularly used in music lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 139 During the inspection, the inclement weather and timetable restrictions allowed only one physical education lesson to be observed. This Year 2 lesson showed that children attain standards in gymnastics that match those anticipated for their age. The teaching was satisfactory and children showed much enthusiasm for the subject. It is difficult to make too many overall judgements based on this narrow evidence base.

- 140 The subject is appropriately managed but very much at a caretaker level. There is a need to develop the role of the co-ordinator who would welcome the opportunity to have more time to enable her to manage the subject more effectively.