

INSPECTION REPORT

VITTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Islington

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100426

Headteacher: Alan Muxworthy

Reporting inspector: John Lilly
12487

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 July 2001

Inspection number: 196084

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	38 Half Moon Crescent Islington London
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Christopher Page
Date of previous inspection:	30 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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			History	
			Religious education	
			Special educational needs	
			English as an additional language	
			Equal opportunities	
9115	Terry Clarke	Lay inspector		Attitudes and behaviour Care, guidance and welfare of pupils Partnership with parents
11190	Wyn Burke	Team inspector	Mathematics	Curriculum
			Art and design	
			Design and technology	
			Geography	
27736	Jeremy Collins	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
			Science	
			Music	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Vittoria is a primary school of average size with 228 girls and boys between the ages of three and eleven. Most pupils come from the immediate locality of the school, an area of mixed, but mainly high-rise, social housing. The homes of most pupils are significantly less favoured economically and socially than the national average, and this situation is significantly worse than at the time of the last inspection. The percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals (52 per cent), who speak English as an additional language (68 per cent) and with special educational needs, including those with statements, are well above average. The languages other than English that pupils speak at home include Bengali, Somali, Turkish and Chinese, and most pupils from minority-ethnic communities speak English as an additional language. Twenty per cent of the pupils are recent arrivals from other countries, for example, Somalia. In each academic year, a high number of pupils join or leave the school other than at the nursery or Year 6. The school is within an Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Vittoria is a very good school. Joining the school with attainment that is well below average, pupils make very good progress as they move up the school and most move on to secondary education with attainment that meets the standards nationally expected at eleven. The headteacher provides inspiring leadership for a team of dedicated staff, who increase the life-chances of all pupils. Standards are improving, and the rich and challenging curriculum offers pupils a vision of a wider world of opportunity. Very caring but firm guidance helps pupils become confident of their own value and identity, and able and willing to strive to meet their high and realistic aspirations. The dynamic example of staff leads pupils to care for others whatever their creed, culture or condition. Pupils deeply value their teachers, who help them to achieve well and, more significantly, how to enjoy learning. Even though its revenue is well above average, the school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Most pupils make very good progress, joining the school with very low attainment and attaining nationally expected standards by the age of eleven.
- The very strong leadership of headteacher and senior managers gives the life and work of the school a clear sense of direction and purpose, and an excellent ethos for teaching and learning.
- Teaching, overall, is very good.
- Provision for personal development is very good and, therefore, pupils behave very well, becoming mature, caring young people who are keen to learn and who relate very well with others.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum provides a very rich experience of the world beyond the classroom.

What could be improved

- The leadership and management of some subjects.
- Teaching and learning at the Foundation Stage.
- Opportunities for pupils to experience the religious aspect of human lives.
- The focused support for pupils learning English as an additional language.
- Attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the time of the last inspection in June 1997, the school had significant weaknesses. These included management, curriculum, assessment, and partnership with parents and the community. Since that time, there has been very good improvement. Senior management is now good, although the management of some subjects still needs to be strengthened. The curriculum is now good, with excellent features. Assessment is now satisfactory, but there is still work to be done in using this information to give pupils a clearer understanding of their own learning. Partnerships with parents and the community are now good, and improving. Despite the strenuous efforts of the school, attendance remains a problem. The school is now ambitious to improve further, and has the strengths to do so.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E*	E
Mathematics	E*	E	E*	E
Science	E*	E*	E*	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

extremely low E*

The attainment of children when they join the nursery is very low, but by the time pupils are eleven, most have made very good progress and reach the standards expected at that age. Pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers and are well represented amongst the higher-attaining pupils, as are English-speaking pupils from minority-ethnic communities. In 2000, standards attained by pupils in the national tests and assessments, for pupils aged seven, were well below the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Although they were below the average for similar schools in reading, mathematics and science, they were above this average for writing. Over recent years, standards appear to have remained static or declined but, since the attainment of pupils joining the nursery has declined year-on-year, teaching has needed to improve simply to enable overall standards to remain the same. Since 2000, attainment has risen in all subjects, although still below national expectations overall for pupils aged seven. Although overall standards in national tests for pupils aged eleven have remained static over recent years, this hides an improving trend because, for example, official comparisons do not take into account the impact of the increasing number of pupils joining the school as recent

arrivals from other countries, and with very low attainment. The key measure of the school's success is that pupils who remained in school from the nursery until Year 6 attained, in 2000, broadly the same standards as the national average, and well above those in similar schools. Attainment of current pupils in Year 6 in all subjects is at least in line with the expected standards when pupils are eleven, and exceeds these standards in, for example, physical education. The school has challenging and realistic targets for future improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils are keen to come to school and work hard. They have very good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is very good. Bullying is rare.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop very well in maturity and responsibility, becoming balanced and perceptive young people with high aspirations. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Children join the nursery with very low personal and social skills, and many pupils join the school in higher years with poorly developed attitudes to work and other people. Even so, by the time pupils are eleven most become self-disciplined young people, determined to succeed, and respectful of the views, beliefs and cultures of others. Attendance remains a problem. The poor attendance of a small minority of pupils seriously damages their chances of success, and supporting them when they are in school detracts from the teachers' support for the majority of pupils who do attend well. The school has well considered strategies in place to address the problem, and strives to improve attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Excellent	Very good

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

Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory overall, but has weaknesses, for example, the development of personal and social skills. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is excellent, and particularly effective in developing literacy, numeracy and personal skills. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good, although the quality varies a little in different subjects. Teaching from Year 1 to Year 6 is almost always at least satisfactory; in 12 per cent of lessons observed it was excellent, in 34 per cent very good and in 38 per cent good. This very effective teaching develops the pupils' ability to learn, so that they become confident learners, ambitious to improve. Most pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make very good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, and very relevant to pupils' present and future lives. The excellent provision for learning beyond the classroom broadens the pupils' horizons and raises their aspirations.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good, whether through lessons outside normal classes or within mainstream classes.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils are supported satisfactorily, and their needs are accurately identified upon arrival. This leads to careful monitoring of their progress. Even so, overall, the management of the provision does not focus sufficiently on their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development is very good. An excellent ethos enlivens and inspires every side of the life of the school. Much is expected of every pupil, and most are keen to follow the fine examples provided by the headteacher and staff.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Educational and personal support for pupils is very good, and the school makes very good provision for their welfare.

There is a good relationship with parents and they value their children's school highly. They help their children with their homework and their involvement in the school's success is growing. The school provides an excellent variety of visits, trips and outside-class activities, and these are major factors in raising pupils' aspirations. Staff offer pupils very good support, but have yet to develop this sufficiently into systematic ways of helping pupils take responsibility for their own learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior managers provide strong and inspiring leadership and effective management. Although management, overall, is satisfactory, the management of some subjects requires strengthening.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well, providing positive support and direction for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance rigorously and in detail; this is a major factor in raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Governors and senior managers ensure that money and other resources are invested prudently, wisely and to raise standards.

There are sufficient, qualified staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. After a period of considerable staff instability, the school now has a committed and ambitious team. The school makes very good use of what are basically inadequate buildings; they provide a stimulating place in which to teach and learn. Learning resources are good. The school's increasing success is founded upon a positive relationship with the local education authority,

which helps governors and staff to see what the school can achieve and gain best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • They have a positive and working relationship with the school. • Their children are well taught, and expected do their best. They make good progress. • Behaviour is good and their children gain in maturity and responsibility. • The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for progression to the secondary school of their choice. • The frequency of homework, especially in higher years.

Inspectors agree with all the positive views of parents. The school makes good provision for pupils to visit their secondary schools, and they are well prepared for this stage in their education. The quality and regularity of homework is usually satisfactory and sometimes good. Even so, more regular and frequent setting of homework would improve preparation for secondary education. Whether a secondary school accepts a pupil is beyond the control of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of pupils when they join the nursery is well below average for children age three; they have a very restricted vocabulary and low development of literacy, numeracy and social skills, and a very restricted experience of the world around them. Many pupils join the school in higher years with very low attainment for their ages. Over recent years, attainment on entry tends to have declined and the number of pupils joining the school other than in the nursery has significantly increased. Many of the pupils are learning English as an additional language, and although they make good progress in the acquisition of English, this improvement takes time and throughout the school this tends to hold back their progress and depress their attainment. This inspection finds that pupils learning English as an additional language have much better understanding of underlying principles, for example in mathematics and science, than they are able to express in English, for instance in national tests; they also find it difficult to show their understanding when set questions in contexts of which they have no experience. Taking these factors into account, most pupils make very good progress in their work within the National Curriculum, and by the time they are eleven attain standards expected of their age. This represents significant improvement since the last inspection.
2. Standards attained by pupils aged seven in national tests and assessments in 2000 were below average in writing, mathematics and science, and well below in reading. However, although they were below the average for similar schools in reading, mathematics and science, they were above this average for writing. Over recent years, standards, overall, appear to have remained static, although in writing and mathematics they have improved. However, since the attainment of pupils joining the nursery has declined year-on-year, teaching and learning have needed to improve simply to enable overall standards to remain the same.
3. Overall, standards in national tests for pupils aged eleven have remained static over recent years. However, the increasing number of pupils joining the school other than in the nursery as recent arrivals from other countries and with very low attainment has depressed overall results. Similarly, simple presentation of benchmarked results hides the fact that there has been rapid improvement; local authority analysis shows that the underlying performance of pupils has nearly doubled over the period 1996-2000, with further improvement in 2001. In national tests in 2000 for pupils aged eleven, results in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average and the average for the schools with which they were officially compared. However, the key measure of the school's success is that the pupils who remained in school from the nursery until Year 6 attained in 2000 standards close to the national average, and well above those in similar schools. Unconfirmed results in national tests for 2001 of current pupils aged eleven have improved significantly in English and science, and remained broadly the same in mathematics. The lack of improvement in mathematics relates to the finding of this inspection that pupils learning English as an additional language find particular difficulty with mathematics when it is set in contexts with which they are unfamiliar. In the main, differences in the attainment of girls and boys, although marked, reflect differences in prior attainment rather than differences in the effectiveness of teaching. The school has challenging and realistic targets for future improvement.

4. By the time pupils are seven, their attainment is below national expectations in English, mathematics, and design and technology, and is in line with expectations in art, history, geography and physical education. In science, information and communication technology and music, attainment is above national expectations. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
5. By the time pupils are eleven, their attainment at least matches national expectations in all subjects, and in religious education matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus; however, too few pupils exceed these standards, in part because elements of their literacy hold them back, and in part because the teaching does not always set the ablest pupils sufficient challenge. When this high challenge is given, final attainment is above expectations for all pupils, namely in science, information and communication technology, art, history and physical education.
6. Progress is good in the nursery but it slows in the reception class. Pupils make very good progress in Years 1 and 2, and good progress and often very good progress in Years 3 to 6. This progress reflects the quality of teaching. The teachers are very good at helping pupils become keen learners, and progress and attainment would improve further if there were better systems for helping pupils take responsibility for, and gain even greater understanding of, their own learning.
7. Girls and boys generally make similar progress, but occasionally the unsatisfactory attitudes of a minority of boys holds them back. Pupils of higher, average and below average ability make equivalent good progress, as do most pupils with special educational needs, many of whom make very good progress. The very able pupils make satisfactory progress but sometimes find the work too easy, or find that it does not offer sufficient opportunities for their very high ability to flower. Physical education offers a good example of how, when the challenge and opportunities are great, their gifts and talents enable pupils to attain very high standards.
8. Many pupils join the school unable to speak English, and many do not speak English at home. Because teachers are skilled at developing speaking and listening skills, and give these pupils additional help in class, they rapidly acquire everyday English. A significant minority then go on to acquire higher English language skills, and these pupils are well represented amongst the higher-attaining pupils. However, fluency in English is not enough. These pupils gain a wide vocabulary, but the words are simply labels, and pupils do not always gain a secure understanding of a word so that they can use it context. For example, they may understand a mathematical process but cannot apply it when the context of a problem is outside their experience and understanding, for example apples growing on a tree. These specific areas of English attainment are difficult to address within the more complex features of a mainstream class lesson and, even when supported, these pupils take a much less positive part in lessons because they realise they do not really understand. To some extent this is also a problem for their English-speaking peers. The language of many of the pupils is highly communicative and fine for everyday life, but lacks the deep understanding and complex structures required to attain high standards in their school work and, like pupils learning English as an additional language, they may know a word, but cannot use it in a context they have not experienced. This is why the school's very good programme of experiences beyond the classroom and beyond the school's locality is so important and so effective in raising standards.
9. Pupils' attainment and progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing, and in literacy as a whole, are equally affected by their understanding of English. Effective

teaching means that most pupils become fluent speakers, readers and writers, and intense listeners. However, pupils as a whole, and for the reasons explained above, tend to lack a deep understanding of words. Although they often read fluently, they miss the nuances of meaning. This hinders their ability to infer and deduce further understandings from what they hear or read. Their writing of poetry often allows them to deepen their understanding of words, but other extended writing and speaking, although it extends their vocabulary and fluency, does not show an equivalent attainment and progress in understanding of the deeper meanings of words. The school could usefully develop pupils' understanding of words and phrases by giving such development greater priority in teaching and assessment.

10. The pupils' attainments in literacy and numeracy make a positive contribution to their progress in all subjects. Pupils from minority-ethnic communities make similar progress to other pupils, and are well represented amongst the highest-attainers in the school. Since the last inspection, improvement in attainment and progress overall has been good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to the school, their behaviour, personal development and relationships are all very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.
12. Pupils enjoy coming to school, a fact confirmed by parents' answers to the questionnaires. They are enthusiastic and show interest in their school activities as soon as they arrive. They quickly settle down to their classroom work following registration. Pupils show interest in visitors to the school. For example, one younger pupil, during break time, approached an inspector to ask if he was coming to see the next lesson in her classroom. Attitudes in lessons are very good, as are those at play times and in assemblies. Pupils are rightly proud of their school. When a group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were interviewed and asked what they liked best about the school, a number of them said, 'everything'. They seemed particularly fond of their teachers. Although the attendance level might suggest that the attitudes of some pupils to the school are less than satisfactory, those with poor attendance are a small minority.
13. The behaviour of pupils in the classroom and around the school is very good. Pupils are courteous, polite, say 'please' and 'thank you' and hold doors open for adults and each other. From one fixed-term exclusion in the last reporting year, exclusions rose to four this year. This increase arose from one bullying episode, which the headteacher handled appropriately and promptly. There has been no recurrence, but the situation is being monitored closely. No oppressive behaviour, bullying, racism and sexism were observed during the inspection. Senior pupils say that on the rare occasions when threatening behaviour towards others has occurred, the school handles it firmly and promptly. The opposite of such behaviour was observed in the playground; for example, two young boys ran towards each other as if to start a fight. This was not the case and the two children proceeded to walk round the playground hand in hand! Behaviour is also very good in the dining room, where pupils patiently wait their turn queuing up to collect their lunch.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and they show very good respect for the feelings and beliefs of others; in a religious education lesson, pupils listened carefully as one of them described how she got up very early each morning to pray, and prayed four further times during the day. One example of the understanding of the impact of their

actions took place in a junior school assembly, when one of the teachers brought in her own dog. Pupils understood that to have a dog as a pet, they needed to understand that it was a full-time responsibility and they were able to identify, from pictures, what sort of dog would be suitable for certain people to own. Twice, different inspectors listening to pupils reading saw examples of the way pupils realise and then help others in difficulty. There were many further occasions when pupils quietly helped others who found the work difficult, or who helped younger children, as in a dance lesson.

15. Pupils show thoughtful initiative in performing duties around the school. They all help tidy up in the classroom and return the registers to the office. Pupils set up the hall for assembly and run the overhead projector independently. They work well together in the classroom, whether in pairs or in groups. Year 6 pupils filed into the hall and a group immediately, without being asked, moved to the back of the hall to pick up a bench and move it forward to sit on. There is a 'buddy' system, whereby the older pupils help look after the younger ones when they first come to the school. This includes comforting younger pupils when injured, informing an adult or taking them to the medical room. Relationships within the school, both amongst pupils and between adults and pupils, are very good. Pupils are very fond of their teachers and classroom support staff, and this extends to other adults at the school, for instance the new learning 'mentor', who is popular with pupils; they like and respect him. The site manager, an ex-pupil, is also very much a part of the school; he is an important member of the school community and provides a fine role model for the pupils. Pupils treat and view him with affection, respect and gratitude for looking after their school so well. The whole school, within itself and outside, is very much a caring community.
16. Attendance is unsatisfactory. In the previous reporting year, the level was 92.7 per cent, which was well below the national average. The unauthorised absence level, at 2.6 per cent, was well above the national average. The registers are not yet computerised so accurate figures for the current year are not yet readily available. From September 2001, the school will be using specialised software to record attendance. With the arrival of the learning mentor and a new educational welfare officer, investigation has shown that a part of the reason for the high level of unauthorised absences is that some non-English speaking families do not understand that notes are required if a pupil is off sick, and this is being followed up. A few pupils arrive late in the mornings, but scrutiny of the registers did not suggest that this was at an unreasonably high level and most pupils were in school before formal lessons had begun. Overall, the unsatisfactory level of attendance has an adverse effect on the attainment and progress of those pupils who are regularly absent, and the school is taking carefully considered and rigorous action to address the situation.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is very good and much improved since the last inspection. There are, however, areas for improvement. Due to recent problems over recruitment and retention of staff, teaching standards declined and to some extent the harm this did is still evident. Currently the school has a stable and skilled teaching team and the benefits to pupils' learning are great. Consequently, the quality of learning is also very good.
18. Almost half of teaching is very good or excellent, and more than 80 per cent is at least good. Twenty per cent is mostly satisfactory, with rare unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching in the nursery is good and in the reception class it is satisfactory but does include unsatisfactory elements. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is excellent, with all lessons being at least good and three-quarters very good or excellent. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good, with at least good teaching in 90 per cent of lessons observed, and very good or excellent teaching in 40 per cent. The other 10 per cent is usually satisfactory. There is only slight inconsistency between the quality of teaching seen in one class and that seen in another.
19. When teaching is very effective, teachers manage their classes extremely well, setting very high expectations of behaviour, concentration and quality of work. They hold pupils to account and are very precise as to how and why their behaviour, concentration or learning needs to improve. They move this management of behaviour on to very effective management of learning by expert planning that gives the lessons very high pace but in little steps. Teachers have challenging learning objectives based upon expert subject knowledge, and set them for the class as 'I can ...' statements that set the direction and purpose for the lesson, and that provide a check against which pupils and teachers alike can evaluate the progress made in each lesson. The work is very well matched to each level of ability, and these teachers use teaching assistants and specialist teachers effectively to support and drive forward the learning of pupils who are finding the work or concentrating more difficult. There is an excellent balance between the input of the teacher and the independent work of the pupils, and this is underpinned by the skilled questioning that focuses upon developing the pupils' listening and speaking skills; these teachers give pupils time to think through their answers, and, consequently, the pupils' speaking is confident and to the point.
20. Learning in these lessons is very rapid and secure. Pupils respond to the challenge set by the teacher by listening intently, contributing orally with confidence and well thought-through answers, and working very hard to produce their best work. They collaborate when meeting problems, but are also determined to succeed on their own. When they succeed, as they often do, they are proud of their achievements and those of others.
21. When teaching was satisfactory or, on two occasions, unsatisfactory, the teachers knew that their teaching is not as good as it needs to be; they are determined to improve. The reasons for less effective teaching are clear. The first reason was that the teacher used planning that had come from others rather than their own planning. This led to a lack of confidence in the teaching, and a determination to complete the plan rather than respond flexibly to the problems in the pupils' learning that became very apparent. The second reason was lack of subject expertise and understanding in subjects that currently lack expert subject managers. The third reason was that the teachers did not sufficiently balance their input to the lesson and the independent

work by pupils. Throughout Years 1 to 6, this imbalance occasionally led to over-dominance by the teacher, and in the reception class to over-dominance of pupils' free activities. In the former lessons, the learning became pedantic and failed to build upon what the pupils' brought to their learning, and in the latter, learning became random and behaviour over-excited and lacking in purpose.

22. As a whole, teachers work closely with teaching assistants and specialist teachers, and, as a team, support the pupils' learning. Even so, sometimes these additional adults were left with nothing to do when the teacher began the lesson or brought it to an end. The most effective teamwork was when the teacher gave the other adults a written sheet with the details of the lesson and space to record the progress of targeted pupils. Similarly, these adults, in full-class sessions, sat amongst the pupils or at the front of the class, fully involved with the teaching and learning.
23. Teachers use assessment well to adapt their teaching during lessons, and to focus their planning over time. Marking is conscientious and frequent, but too rarely feeds back to pupils why they succeed and how to improve their work. Homework is used well, but in the senior classes is not set with quite the frequency necessary to prepare pupils fully for secondary education. Teachers use learning resources well to illuminate and enrich the learning.
24. Both literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teachers focus on developing pupils' listening and speaking skills, and teach reading and writing effectively. In concentrating on the literacy strategy, however, they sometimes miss opportunities to use reading and writing from other subjects to make literacy lessons more relevant. Quick-fire mental arithmetic sessions balanced by the focused numeracy hours enable the pupils to be keen and confident users of number.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. It is usually in withdrawn groups with the specialist teacher, where the teaching is very well matched to the learning and personal needs of the pupils; it is both challenging and exciting. The teaching of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good, but restricted by mainly being within class. These pupils acquire English by hearing others speak but, when the specialist works within a class, her effectiveness is good when working with groups but has little input when the class teacher is teaching the class as a whole. The one lesson in which pupils were withdrawn was effective; the teacher had noticed that these pupils had become overly passive learners when in the main class. It would be useful for the school to consider a better balance between in-class support and withdrawn groups covering the same curriculum. The input of the learning mentor is having an increasingly beneficial impact on learning, helping more alienated or lacking-in-confidence pupils to become independent learners.

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

26. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and very relevant to the needs of inner-city pupils. It provides equally well for boys and girls of all abilities, as well as for those with English as an additional language or from a minority-ethnic culture. Even so, more extensive provision is required for the very able. Planning shows adequate coverage of the required areas of learning for the nursery and reception classes. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum includes required areas in all the National Curriculum subjects as well as religious education and personal, social and health education. French is taught effectively to Year 6 pupils.

27. The quality of learning opportunities is good overall. Opportunities are very good in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), history and physical education including dance, good in science, art and music, and satisfactory in design and technology, geography and religious education. The total teaching time is consistent with that found in most primary schools. Time allocated for physical education and music is in excess of that normally recommended but is used well to enrich pupils' learning. Football, swimming and kayaking are a regular part of the curriculum offered, as is access to drumming and dance workshops.
28. This is a socially inclusive school that provides good access to the National Curriculum for pupils with special educational needs as well as those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils are offered regular support in lessons as well as opportunities for withdrawal for extra language and numeracy work or for counselling. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented benefit from extra ICT and physical education opportunities, but their needs could be better provided for within other lessons. All pupils have literacy and numeracy homework, and regularly take home books to read. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language take additional reading books home on a regular basis.
29. The provision for ICT is very good; it has improved considerably since the last inspection. Statutory requirements are in place for subjects of the National Curriculum and the school conforms to the agreed local syllabus for religious education.
30. The school provides a good, well-prepared programme of personal, social and health education, which includes appropriate sex and drugs education. Pupils are able to share problems or sort out differences through 'circle time' or in one-to-one conversations with a specially trained learning mentor. The school maintains very good links with the local community through the parents' association. They also have good links with the Somalian Association, and business links through the Educational Action Zone and programmes funded through the Single Regeneration Budget.
31. The relationships with partner institutions are good. A number of Year 6 pupils benefited during the inspection from their visits to their future secondary schools. The launch of the new ICT network within Islington also offers the school a valuable opportunity to link with other schools and for pupils to learn from outside expertise.
32. The school's mission statement is based on a commitment to changing lives through the educational opportunities offered. An equal opportunities commitment for all pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff is evident in every aspect of the school's work. For example, all pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim or play sport and benefit from visiting cultural, environmental and historical sites of interest. Experts are engaged to lead activities such as dance workshops, football or swimming coaching so that the teachers can also learn from the advice offered. Educational visits such as the whole school visit to the Barbican to hear the London Symphony Orchestra play, benefit the whole school community. A particular benefit is the way that class teachers gain a richer and deeper understanding of their pupils by watching them taught or cared for by others.
33. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good for widening horizons and offering life chances beyond the school years. Sport, dance, music and gardening are all popular activities. The school is especially good in sport where many pupils enjoy and excel when kayaking on the local canal. As part of geography, the older pupils visit the Cotswolds, whilst other pupils learn history, English and art through

visits to Drake's Golden Hind, the Globe Theatre and the National Portrait Gallery. The school gardens and pond prove rich environments for learning science or for just contemplating the wonders of the changing seasons as ducks and the occasional heron pay regular visits.

The contribution of the community to pupils' learning

34. Vittoria School is very much a community primary school. As a result, the local and wider community make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. The curriculum is greatly enriched through its many links and a number of outside activities take place. These include visits to the fire station, city farms, rare-breed farms, and Sadler's Wells Theatre. The school undertakes visits further afield to places such as Maldon, and the Ivinghoe Study Centre in the Chilterns. Last year, the school was involved in a major project with the London Symphony Orchestra. These visits are mostly funded by outside organisations such as the Cripplegate Trust. The Kings Cross Single Regeneration Budget programme funds a range of specialist teaching. Education Action Zone monies fund some elements of ICT, and this project will bring even closer relationships with other primary and secondary schools. Apart from the above, the school has good links with other agencies such as Social Services and the Camden and Islington Health Authority, which provides the school doctor and school nurse who contribute to the pupils' learning. The school's positive relationship with the advisory service is playing a major part in its improvement. A very good example of the community's affection for the school was observed as a class of pupils was going out for a swimming lesson. As pupils walked along the road, passers-by waved at the children and the greetings were cheerily reciprocated.

Provision for personal development

35. Provision for personal development is very good and improved since the last inspection. It enables children who enter the nursery with low personal and social skills, and pupils with similarly low social skills who join the school in higher years, to develop into mature, responsible and caring young people who have high and realistic aspirations for the future. Guidance is loving and perceptive but very firm, and is the key reason why this is a school that changes lives for the better. It is the very secure foundation in a school in which providing equality of opportunity is a passion.
36. Provision for spiritual development is very good, but has areas for further improvement. This high quality is because the school engenders a very deep feeling of awe and wonder at the world. Within school, this comes from beautiful gardens and an environment of trees that pupils are encouraged to enjoy and care for; parents describe the school as an 'oasis' and a 'haven'. The displays in school trigger moments of reflection and joy, and sometimes shared sadness. Music assemblies encourage pupils to 'see where the music takes you', helping them to look into themselves. Pupils' opportunities for deep and emotional experience are built upon through poetry and expressive writing in lessons. Trips away from school are designed to build in opportunities to experience a spiritual appreciation of nature and creativity.
37. Although assemblies perform important functions, they are not acts of worship; they do not meet statutory requirements for collective worship. They do not provide sufficient opportunities to consider the significance of belief in a creator and caring deity or deities, or sufficient opportunities to reflect in silence, withdrawing from the hustle and bustle of ordinary life. This fails to build upon the deep spiritual experiences that many of the pupils have within their home communities. Similarly,

religious education provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to express their developing beliefs orally, reflectively and through creative writing, and is often taught in blocks, rather than as a week-by-week opportunity to consider and respond to belief and faith.

38. Provision for moral development is very good. The life of the school is founded upon clear and explained expectations of what is right and wrong. Pupils see these as just, sensible and rules they wish to build into their own lives; they do this by creating rules for their own class and caring for others through their own initiative. Staff continuously create the balance between expectations of moral behaviour, and helping pupils find ways to achieve these aspirations in their own lives. Staff help them grow to understand that morality is not simply rules, but ways of caring for others and ourselves. This careful nurturing of moral awareness threads itself through virtually every lesson and school experience. 'Circle times' and personal education lessons add understanding to this deep awareness, and in discussion with Years 5 and 6 pupils, they show a commitment to take this awareness into all their lives.
39. Provision for social development is very good but offers opportunities for further improvement. Its high quality is mainly because the school acts as a purposeful and caring family with strong values. Pupils learn how families and communities become successful by experiencing their own school society. The excellent range of additional activities takes them into the wider world and brings the wider world into school. These include residential experience and opportunities both to see the achievements of others and also to achieve themselves. At present, the school misses opportunities to help pupils manage their own learning, for example by using feedback from teachers for pupils to set their own targets, design plans to achieve them, evaluate success or failure, and record their achievements as a way of marking their growing ability to succeed, alone and with others.
40. Provision for cultural development is very good. It builds upon the aspects described above; through spiritual development pupils learn to understand the importance of faith in people's religious lives; through moral development they learn to respect the faiths and cultures of others; through social development they learn to understand the importance and meaning of cultural identities within British society, world society, and societies in the past. History, geography and even design and technology play important parts in the provision, as do religious education, music, art, dance and English. This is a school that revels in its cultural diversity, but balances the need for appreciation, celebration and respect, with hard-core knowledge of other cultures. The school, pupils and staff, recognise pupils' cultural achievements in their home communities, as when two girls performed an Irish dance especially for an inspector.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school cares well for its pupils. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare and those for providing educational and personal support for pupils are very good. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory. The pupils receive their education in a warm, caring, nurturing and loving environment.
42. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The school has an appropriate child protection policy in place, in line with those of the local authority. The headteacher is the designated adult and he ensures that staff are kept well informed of the proper procedures. The school has a satisfactory

relationship with the social services department, although occasionally the school has difficulties when different services do not appear to work together. A particular strength of the school's child protection procedures is the perceptive observations of lunchtime supervisors.

43. Very good procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' welfare through the school's management of illness and injuries and its health and safety procedures. The school has an appropriate number of members of staff, who have been trained in first aid, including the headteacher. Injuries and accidents are recorded well and the appropriate forms are in place for recording head injuries and for more major injuries; the school nurse and the school doctor visit the school regularly. A comprehensive personal, social and health education curriculum underpins all these procedures. Regular health and safety inspections are carried out and any issues arising are carefully prioritised. The school accommodation is well monitored for health and safety issues by an ever-vigilant site manager. The headteacher has a particular interest in teaching pupils about safety on water, and a lifebelt has a prominent place in his office.
44. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. The co-ordinator for this aspect of the school's work is expert, well organised and ensures that the school adheres to the Code of Practice. The needs of the pupils are identified early and very useful individual education plans are devised to guide teachers and parents; they are reviewed regularly. The co-ordinator has a positive relationship with other agencies that support the pupils. Her support is mainly through teaching in small groups in a well-resourced room, and pupils enjoy and value these sessions.
45. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are satisfactorily supported, but there is room for improvement. There is a specialised teacher who mainly works in support within classes. The teacher also has a small room with a good range of resources, and pupils come eagerly to take books home to read. Only rarely are pupils withdrawn from class. In a withdrawal lesson observed, the pupils gained considerably in self-esteem and joy in learning. This teacher also assesses the language needs of recent arrivals from other countries and keeps an eye on their initial social and induction problems. Although she keeps records, there is an opportunity to draw up individual language development plans that perform the same function for these pupils as individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs; these would make more precise her guidance to teachers and monitor more closely the pupils' progress in the acquisition of English. This highlights a key weakness in the provision. The specialist teacher is experienced but does not sufficiently guide colleagues on the problems facing pupils acquiring English. In the school's search for best value, there is insufficient opportunity for her to compare the school's present practice with very effective practice elsewhere and, therefore, increase awareness of what could be achieved and how.
46. Areas for improvement include testing the pupils' understanding even if they can say a word correctly, and ensuring that the context of a word is within the previous experience of the pupil. Such pupils bridge from their home language into English. If the English side of the bridge is beyond their knowledge, for example in a setting that only British people living in the country would have experienced, that bridge cannot be built. The lack of this expert understanding was seen in several lessons. At present there are no language support assistants with the home language of many of the pupils, although there is a part-time teacher who speaks the languages of most pupils learning English as an additional language. Finance only allows one day in school, and this is mainly used in the nursery and reception classes, even though the needs

in other years are almost as great. Opportunities to learn in English and in their home language in parallel are missed. Although satisfactory, in this type of school provision for these pupils must be highly expert. Increasing this expertise for all staff provides an opportunity for improvement that would improve learning significantly.

47. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are now good. The school has a formal attendance policy and, since November 2000, there has been a learning mentor in place, one of whose projects has been to monitor attendance and to devise ways of improving it; to this end he has been working closely with the education welfare officer. Those pupils with poor attendance records have been broken down into three groups of varying severity. Those with the poorest records have been followed up, some with home visits and, in some cases, the parents prosecuted. The school sends out letters for repeated absence and lateness. One of the first outcomes has been to discover that a number of non-English speaking parents did not realise that they had to send in a note if a pupil was ill. Since the parents have understood this, the incidence of unauthorised absences has reduced. As the attendance information is not yet computerised, it is not yet clear to what extent attendance is improving overall. The procedures the school now has in place are good and ought to improve attendance.
48. The school has very good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The discipline policy and anti-bullying policy are both comprehensive and are supported by the school's behaviour-modification policy. A comprehensive range of rewards and sanctions are in place. Some of the former were seen being awarded in a celebration assembly, to which pupils invite their parents. From time-to-time, a small number of pupils can be seen sheepishly making their way to the headteacher's office to be reprimanded and helped to improve. Most misbehaviour is minor and is dealt with effectively by the teachers' classroom strategies. The arrival of the learning mentor is having a positive impact on pupils who find it very difficult to behave well and those alienated from school. Where there has been known bullying, it has been dealt with promptly and effectively. This fact is confirmed by the pupils and by the handling of recent incidents, which led to four pupils being excluded.
49. Vittoria is a small school with a strong community spirit; consequently, staff know their pupils well, and can monitor and support pupils' personal development well. Staff are always discussing the personal development of pupils, whether special educational needs pupils or mainstream; minutes are taken and the school is well placed to pick up individual problems. These can vary from an extreme instance to a slight problem in a pupils' development. The lunchtime supervisors and support staff are experienced and vigilant and the headteacher is regularly in the playground to check any problems.

Assessment

50. Assessment is much improved since the last inspection, and there are clear plans for further improvement. The school tracks the progress of different groups of pupils by gender, ethnicity, and period since joining the school, and analyses the data collected from test results. This is particularly important in establishing the value-added for those pupils who have stayed at the school for the whole of their primary education, as opposed to those who are part of the floating population. Target setting is in place for literacy but not in any other subject area. Currently, few opportunities exist for involving pupils in the assessment process although a supported statement by the pupil is part of the annual report to parents. Marking in pupils' books is too often

limited to ticks on work or awarding stickers of approval. Whilst this is appropriate for younger pupils, there is too little indication of more specific written feedback to pupils as they progress through the school. Marking in Year 6 is more targeted, with helpful written comments by the teacher, offering guidance for pupils on how to improve their learning. Reports to parents do not contain National Curriculum Levels (required in Years 2 and 6), and whilst they communicate clearly what pupils can do, less emphasis is found on what they cannot do and how parents could help them improve.

51. The school assessment policy is in the process of being developed. A new co-ordinator has been appointed with a particular interest and expertise in assessment, who has good plans for the future. Too little emphasis has previously been placed on using assessment whilst teaching to aid planning and improve learning. Missed opportunities are seen in lessons for using learning assistants to observe pupils at work. Teachers currently do not sufficiently record assessment information about individuals or groups of pupils as part of the lesson. Too few strategies are seen for enabling pupils to give direct feedback to teachers regarding their understanding, confidence or motivation to carry out the task or activity, which is the focus of the lesson. For example, in a very busy school with so much happening, it is easy to forget that time for self-reflection is an essential part of both teaching and learning. Learning from the benefits in sport, the same targeted opportunities could be offered for academic activities; many pupils do not realise their own full capabilities and class teachers miss individual strengths and weaknesses because their attention is at the whole class level. The school could usefully consider more systematic ways for pupils to evaluate their own achievements, and then plan ways to achieve them, recording their achievements so that they can recognise and measure their progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The parents' views of the school, as expressed at the parents' meeting and through the answers to the questionnaires, are very positive. Perhaps the most perceptive comment came from a parent at the parents' meeting: 'The school is a haven'. There were 101 questionnaires returned, a high proportion, and 100 per cent of those parents said that their child liked the school. Most of the other questions were answered positively by over 90 per cent of those parents. The only areas of slight concern were homework, where only 79 per cent of parents answered positively, and the range of after-school activities, where there were 81 per cent positive answers. Parents at the pre-inspection parents' meeting said they would like more resources to help their children at home, for example videos and computers; their request offers an opportunity for improvement. Unusually, only two parents sent in letters voicing concerns and these were minor. This positive picture represents improvement since the last inspection.
53. The school works effectively with parents. It provides them with a good range of quality information. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are detailed and include the relevant statutory information. There are a number of informative newsletters sent out by the school. Those from the headteacher usually refer to particular issues, as do those sent out by the class teachers. The latter are frequently sent to an individual parent about his or her own child or about class trips. The most newsworthy letters are those issued by the Vittoria School Association. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality and there is a space on them for pupils' own comments, as well as details of the next targets for a pupil's educational developments. In Years 2 and 6, they do not, however, include as required the National Curriculum Levels, which pupils have reached.

54. A number of parents have worked as volunteers in the school. On occasions, doing this has encouraged them to become classroom assistants and go on to take National Vocational Qualifications. Although the Vittoria Association has only been formed recently, it has raised over £1000 so far this year, arranging a variety of social functions, most of which have been well attended. This money is used to buy extra resources for the school. Most parents help their children with homework, and some would like the school to make available further resources to help them with this support. The percentage of parents approving of homework provided by the school is higher than in most schools. Overall, the parents have a positive impact on the work of the school. Vittoria is a community school, which prospers through its many outside links and partnerships. The parents are an essential part of that partnership.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher and senior managers have a very strong vision of the type of schooling the pupils need. This is written down in the form of powerful aims for the school that colour and enliven every aspect of the its life and work. This vision and these aims are at the heart of the school's success, and create an excellent ethos for teaching, and the learning and personal development of pupils. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the whole school community.
56. The school has a strong senior management team that offers a good balance of expertise and qualities, and provides strong leadership; the day-to-day management of the school is very good. Management at a senior level is good, but has suffered in the recent past by needing to deal with considerable staffing problems. Now there is a more stable staff, the senior managers are planning strategically, and basing this planning on more systematic and effective monitoring and evaluation. Improvement is, however, still necessary. For example, senior managers have insufficient time to observe lessons and monitor standards, and subject management has yet to be sufficiently delegated. The school's evaluative analysis and interpretation of assessment data already shows the benefits that systematic monitoring and evaluation bring, and how they give a clearer view of strengths to build upon and weaknesses to address.
57. Management as a whole is satisfactory and much improved since the last inspection. There are appropriate policies for the whole school, for example for behaviour, and the management of the curriculum is guided by a clear overall plan. In the main, due to recent problems over staffing, subject leaders and policies are not in place for all subjects. As a practical interim measure, the use of national guidance documents means staff do know what to teach, and when and how. Improvement in the management of subjects is needed, because progress and attainment is usually better in those subjects that already have qualified leaders who focus on ways to improve. A particular and urgent need is leadership and management of the Foundation Stage. Management of provision for special educational needs is very good, and for learning English as an additional language it is satisfactory.
58. Communication within the school is good and staff share a strong commitment to improvement. A sensible programme of meetings supports this good communication. However, there is a need for a further bringing-together of the efforts of all staff, for example wider use of the feedback and guidance sheet provided for teaching assistants in Year 6. Relationships between staff are very good and mutually supportive.

59. The governors are well led and work in a business-like and efficient manner. Their membership provides a good range of skills and insights, and they fulfil their responsibilities well. They provide positive direction and support for the school, but this is not based upon sufficiently systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school's life and work. As a result, opportunities for improvement are missed, for example assemblies do not provide sufficient opportunities for collective worship, and threats to the future success of the school are not tackled with sufficient energy and focus, for example the need to present a better image of the school to the wider community. Governors are properly involved with the improvement planning of the school and subsequent budgeting, and their annual report to parents is helpful. Their support for the school is much improved since the last inspection, and greater partnership with parents is already bringing benefits. They set challenging and realistic targets for the school, but have as yet to be sufficiently clear as to how they may be achieved.
60. The school has a strategic, comprehensive and coherent improvement plan, which provides a sensible action plan for each year. Because of its extent, however, it is difficult for staff to see the top priorities for immediate action. In part, this is because it lacks the precision that comes from tight specification of targets and quality to achieve, and in part because it lacks sufficiently detailed schedules as to how, by whom and by when each stage is to be achieved.

Staffing

61. There are sufficient qualified staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum. Over the recent past, the school has had great difficulty over the recruitment and retention of staff, but there is greater current stability. In the main, teachers and teaching assistants are effectively deployed. Teaching assistants are dedicated and expert. When working directly with pupils, they are very effective, but too often they are given an insufficient role to play when teachers are teaching the whole class. The co-ordinator for special educational needs deploys teaching assistants sensibly, but as a responsibility post holder with a specified job description, plays too limited a role in co-ordinating the wider support work of specialist teachers of English as an additional language and the recently-appointed and very effective learning mentor. The success of the school has been helped significantly by in-service training and guidance from advisors, but there are occasions when mixed messages have led to confusion, for example in the nursery and reception classes; this confusion is often between a policy direction and actual evaluative observation of what works. Performance management for teachers has been successfully introduced, and yet, teachers do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes very effective teaching and how to identify areas for improvement. The school has just begun to work towards the Investor in People standard, and this initiative has already helped the deputy headteacher to see better ways of supporting improvement in teaching and learning. He has insufficient release-time from class to perform important aspects of his staff development role, for example observing lessons and feeding back to teachers on what works, what does not, and what they must learn next. The school administrator and site agent are highly skilled and underpin the effectiveness and efficiency of the school.

Accommodation

62. The accommodation is satisfactory for the delivery of the school's curriculum. The school is lucky to have as its site manager a former pupil, who is dedicated to the upkeep of the school's accommodation and lives on the site. The site is kept well

decorated through a rolling programme and the site manager makes good use of local young people to help with its upkeep. The buildings as a whole are enriched with very high quality displays that stimulate pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements. Some of the classrooms are barely large enough and sometimes teaching is difficult because the noise from one class interferes with teaching in the adjacent one. The provision of sliding doors to deal with this problem is in the school development plan. Also, the sun comes in through some of the top windows interfering with vision and would be helped by the introduction of blinds, which are present in some rooms. The playground space is adequate but there is no immediate grassy area for games. The school has provided high quality large play equipment for the pupils, and has planted beautiful gardens and wild areas around trees; there is an attractive and well used quadrangle garden with a pond. The nursery and reception class have good access to a well equipped outside play area, and another for playing with sand. The school makes very good use of what is available to create a safe and stimulating place in which to learn.

Learning resources

63. Learning resources are good in range, quality and accessibility. There are sufficient books and other aids to learning, and good libraries to encourage reading and research. With the recent installation of the computer suite, resources for information and communication technology are excellent.

Efficiency and effectiveness

64. The educational priorities of the school are well supported through its financial planning. The chairman of the finance committee of the governing body is well experienced in financial management and he uses his considerable expertise in support of the school. An experienced office manager assists him in the day-to-day running of the budget. The school's budget priorities are presented to the finance committee by the headteacher via a local education authority finance adviser, who ensures that funds are wisely spent. Specific grants are used effectively and appropriately for their designated purposes. The school uses new technology well, both for administrative purposes and also across the school. Governors and staff follow the principles of best value well when gaining best value for lowest cost. They are working in productive partnership with consultants from the local education authority. The school tends to work in isolation, however, and although senior management does compare the school's performance with that in other schools, staff would benefit from investigating best practice in even more effective schools, for example for support for pupils learning English as an additional language. Taking into account the contextual factors of the school, the quality of provision, the standards achieved, its overall effectiveness, and the improvement since the last inspection, in spite of the well above average income per pupil, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The school has improved greatly since the previous inspection and its strengths provide many opportunities for further improvements; staff and governors recognize there is still some way to go. Problems concerning the recruitment and retention of teachers pose a major threat to the school's success, and what follows should be seen in that context, especially by ensuring that the achievements of staff and pupils are better recognised both within the school and also within the community. Standards of attainment are rising, but to ensure that this continues management

needs to find even better ways of increasing the effectiveness and consistency of all teaching and learning, firstly through effective and efficient subject leadership and management, secondly by increasing the effectiveness of teaching in the Foundation Stage, thirdly through more effective support for pupils learning English as an additional language, and fourthly by improving attendance. To underpin this work, the school needs to ensure that the religious aspect in human lives, including the part this plays in the lives of many of the pupils, becomes a full and vibrant part of the life and curriculum of the school.

66. To raise the attainment of pupils and improve their progress and personal development, governors and staff should:

- (1) Improve the leadership and management of subject learning by:
 - ensuring that all subjects have well qualified subject leaders and managers; (Paragraphs 56 and 57)
 - increasing opportunities for these managers and senior managers to work alongside colleagues in classrooms; (Paragraphs 57 and 61)
 - creating better co-ordination across present support for pupils with especial gifts and talents, those with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and those who are less engaged with learning; (Paragraph 61)
 - ensuring that managers check and support teachers' use of assessment to give more feedback to pupils on where and why they succeed, where and why they meet problems and what they need to learn next, for example through improved marking. (Paragraphs 50 and 51)
- (2) Improve the teaching and learning of pupils at the Foundation Stage, and especially in the reception class by:
 - improving the balance of the curriculum by putting greater focus on the development of personal and social skills; (Paragraphs 67 and 68)
 - increasing opportunities for structured teaching and learning especially in literacy and numeracy, to provide a better balance with free-play learning activities. (Paragraphs 67 and 68)
- (3) Increase opportunities for pupils to experience the religious aspect of human lives by:
 - ensuring that assemblies enable pupils to share and experience the spiritual aspects of religious life in ways that celebrate and recognise the richness of religious life within the local community; (Paragraph 37)
 - ensuring that religious education plays a more continuous part in the learning of the pupils; (Paragraph 151)
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to reflect in quietness upon the 'big questions' of human life, and the way all people need to grapple with them. (Paragraphs 37 and 38)
- (4) Improve the support for pupils learning English as an additional language by:
 - providing guidance for all staff in ways to recognise and meet these pupils' learning needs; (Paragraphs 45 and 46)
 - improving language development planning for individual pupils; (Paragraphs 45 and 46)

- investigating best practice in schools where support is more effective. (Paragraph 45)

(5) Improve attendance by:

- developing further the present procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. (Paragraph 47)

Whilst addressing the above, governors and staff should:

- Ensure that the school meets requirements for collective worship. (Paragraph 37)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	34	38	12	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	181
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	na	119

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	na	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	na	52

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	138

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	2.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	17	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	13
	Girls	10	15	13
	Total	19	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	59 (72)	81 (41)	81 (72)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	9	13	13
	Girls	11	13	11
	Total	20	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	63 (59)	81 (62)	75 (59)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	11	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	7	10	11
	Girls	7	5	7
	Total	14	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	50 (41)	54 (55)	64 (64)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	7	5	7
	Total	16	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	57 (23)	54 (50)	61 (59)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	29
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	23
Chinese	8
White	83
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	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	165

Qualified teachers & support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	694213
Total expenditure	645884
Expenditure per pupil	3033
Balance brought forward from previous year	1671
Balance carried forward to next year	50000

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	228
Number of questionnaires returned	101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	29	4	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	30	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	31	11	7	4
The teaching is good.	68	29	0	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	27	3	5	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	18	1	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	25	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	30	2	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	68	25	0	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	36	2	4	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	23	7	4	8

Other issues raised by parents

- Many parents were concerned about previous high turnover in staff; they felt standards were rising now the staff were more stable.
- Some parents felt that homework was not of a consistently high quality, and this did not prepare pupils adequately for secondary school.
- Many parents were concerned that their children could not get into the secondary school of their choice and wondered whether Vittoria could do more to help.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

67. Provision at the Foundation Stage does not offer a sufficiently strong basis for the children's future learning. Most children arrive at the school at the age of three years, with extremely limited experiences of using or understanding language, and poorly developed personal and social skills. This presents a challenge to the school, and is combined with the fact that a significant number of children do not speak English as a first language and are faced with a learning situation in a new country or culture. Initially, the children receive a balanced curriculum in the nursery, which addresses the varying needs successfully. In the reception class, however, there is an imbalance between structured teaching and free-play learning activities, and insufficient emphasis upon the development of personal and social skills. Children do not get sufficient adult support or direction in making choices or taking decisions and, therefore, independence in learning is not sufficiently promoted and is too often overwhelmed by the children's self-centred actions. The majority of children do not develop their skills in co-operative work and play or learn to appreciate each other's efforts.
68. Teaching overall is satisfactory and it is good in the nursery. In the nursery, even though the teaching is good, the learning is only satisfactory because it takes time to establish the learning and social routines that these children need in order to learn through structured and purposeful play activities. The same emphasis on these early learning activities is found in the reception year as in the nursery. Consequently, the children do not develop sufficiently beyond the nursery stage, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and, to a lesser degree, in the areas of literacy and mathematics. The nursery and reception classes have sufficient staff, and they are committed to providing every child with an equal opportunity to succeed. On one day a week there is specialist teacher to support children learning English as an additional language, who can speak the home languages used by many of the children. At present, the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory and the school fails to use effectively the good accommodation and learning resources.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. In the nursery, all staff show a gentle but firm respect towards the children in their care. When a child is wilful, they manage the situation with composure and persist in moderating the child's behaviour until there is a positive response. Thus the children show a growing understanding that, even though they might be unable to act as they might wish, it does not lead to a confrontation. This was noted when one child refused to wash his hands before making sandwiches. Calmly the teacher explained that everyone had to wash their hands so that they were nice and clean. Though still reluctant, he waited a few moments and then washed his hands. The children begin to co-operate with the teachers and staff. They are not shy and are very happy to question and talk to visitors. Individually, the children are co-operative with their teachers but not with each other. During their reception year, collaboration in work should become more routine, but this seldom happens. Two children, when they were running a 'travel agency', collaborated well together, but other examples are too rare. The children tend to work alongside each other rather than together and they find it difficult to share things. An example of this was when children snatched

wooden bricks from each other in a mathematics session, thus causing shouting and distress. As a group, the children in the reception class do not respond to their teacher very well and control was only partially successful by her raising her voice. In a physical education lesson, much time was lost as the children took a long time to quieten; this unsatisfactory social behaviour was frequently noted elsewhere during the teaching day. Thus, much of the children's social and emotional maturity is underdeveloped by the time they leave reception.

Communication, language and literacy

70. The teaching of language is good both in the nursery and in the reception class. The staff emphasise language throughout the day and in all activities. The children, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress. The teaching in the nursery makes good use of rhyming stories, such as the gingerbread man, to extend language and understanding of the meaning of words. When the teacher described the sly fox as 'clever' one child insisted that sly meant bad. Further, the fox told lies so he must be bad. The teacher explained that one could be clever and bad or clever and good. When the children move to more free choice yet structured activities, the staff ask them probing questions that involve the children in thinking about their work. At one table while the children were colouring in different forms of transport, they were asked how the buses moved and how planes flew. When the table tipped up slightly the nursery nurse carefully explained why this happened. In the reception class, a good strategy was used for the children to consider words that illustrated sounds, such as *squelchy* mud and *swishy* long grass.
71. In both classes, the children greatly enjoy listening to stories and participate well. In less focused activities, however, the older children do not listen or respond very well to spoken directions. An example of this was when the children were asked to line up in a particular order yet they still rushed up to be first in the line. It is in situations such as moving around that they are very noisy and yet are unaware of this. Reading and writing at the end of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. Although the children enjoy books, treat them sensibly and understand for the most part that words carry meaning, they do not tackle unfamiliar words very well. At times, they do not even attempt to sound out the letters. The children generally write beneath sentences written by an adult, although they do know when to put capital letters and full stops. The sentences are generally very simple. The learning planned offers too little challenge and, therefore, the children are not yet ready to commence the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

Mathematical development

72. The learning of number begins well in the nursery. By the time children have been in school for a year, they recognise numbers up to five and can do simple calculations such as adding two and three. The children have a number table that they use well. Every opportunity is taken to count, and staff draw the children's attention to the basic shapes, squares, rectangles and circles. Jigsaw puzzles are used well and give the children experiences of the principles of rotation and spatial relationships. By the end of the year in the reception class, a number of children can count beyond 30 and one child counted up to over 50. But the expectations are not high, as at this time pupils are still being presented with number work up to six, whereas it needs to be at least up to ten. The children are, however, working on simple subtraction sums as well as addition. There is little extension for higher-attaining children, and the children are not fully prepared to work within the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. There is very good provision in information and communication technology in both the nursery class and reception. The children show very good skills in controlling the programs and in using the mouse. They explain clearly how the programs work. In the reception class, the children have discussed journeys and there is a display of some very colourful and carefully produced maps, which the children made on the computer. Other very varied opportunities help children to develop their understanding of the world. There are plants in the nursery and children know that they need water to live and water them regularly. There are some very well cared for guinea pigs and a hamster and the children can observe and help look after them. The home corners are well-devised, one as a greengrocer's shop with a wide variety of plastic fruit and vegetables, most of which the children can name. The other, in reception, is a travel agency, which is well supplied with travel brochures, giving the children good opportunities for making choices. Children, working with their teacher in reception, were looking at the different effects ramps had on toy cars being rolled down them. In water play, children were observed looking carefully at the rates of flow through different sized sieves. The water mills give them the emerging idea of waterpower. This good provision, together with sand-play, develops the children's knowledge of volume and quantities such as full, half-full and empty. Overall, the very good provision and gains made by the children in extending their depth of language and curiosity result in their being well able to commence the National Curriculum Programmes of Study related to this area of learning with confidence and growing interest.

Physical development

74. Provision for physical development is satisfactory overall, but in some more formal lessons planning does not give the children enough scope for developing their more robust skills as they sit and watch for unnecessary lengths of time. At playtimes, the children have plenty of opportunity to use very interesting and challenging climbing frames. They show good skills in swinging and travelling, hanging from their arms, and climbing ropes and nets. For the younger children, there are opportunities to use tricycles and scooters, which they do with great skill, though sometimes they do not show enough consideration to others in the safe, play areas. Fine motor skills are well developed by the time children leave the Foundation Stage as they colour in carefully and use smaller equipment, such as small pegs and pegboards, well.

Creative development

75. There is good provision for the children to develop their creative ideas in role play in the well-planned home corners. In the reception class, when working in the 'travel agency', children show some sophisticated telephone skills in sales talk. One little girl used particularly persuasive language in her imaginary conversations. They spoke about passports, travel documents and vouchers for special visits. There are on-going opportunities for painting and the children have painted their own self-portraits. These display careful consideration of their varying personal characteristics, and one little boy in the nursery, while painting a man, described the mixed colours very well. Boys, working with construction kits, were making a number of objects very successfully, such as an umbrella, a bow and arrow and a wheel. A very large sand pit gives the children considerable opportunities to build extensive castles and roads, and participate in more roleplay. By the time the children move on to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, they have developed many ideas and skills on which to build.

ENGLISH

76. Provision for learning is good with many very good features. Children join the nursery with very low speaking and listening skills and poor literacy. In addition, many pupils join the school in higher years with very low oral and literacy skills. Many pupils who join the school in the nursery and also in higher years need to learn English as an additional language. Despite these problems, in the current year, by the time pupils are seven, they attain standards that are only just below national expectations, and by eleven most pupils match standards expected at that age. A significant number exceed these standards, and pupils learning English as an additional language are well represented amongst the higher-attainers. Progress is best for pupils who remain in the school from nursery until Year 6.
77. Standards attained in national tests for pupils aged seven in 2000 were well below the national average in reading and writing; although most pupils attained the expected standard in writing, no pupil exceeded this standard. Compared with standards in similar schools, standards for reading were only just below average, and they were well above the average for similar schools for writing. Inspectors recognise that the degree of social and economic deprivation facing many of the pupils is considerably greater than in most of the similar schools with which the results are officially compared. Over recent years, results have varied and appear to have remained static overall. However, this simple interpretation hides the fact that, although standards of reading have not improved, standards in writing have improved significantly. In part the lack of improvement overall is due to inadequacies in past teaching, but in the main it is due to the declining prior attainment when children join the school. The attainment of current pupils is a significant improvement on standards reached in 2000.
78. Standards attained in national tests for pupils aged eleven in 2000 were well below the national average and the average for similar schools, and had remained static over recent years. However, if the results of pupils who had remained in the school from the nursery up to Year 6 are extracted, these pupils' attainment matched the national average, and was well above the average for similar schools. A major reason for the lower than average official comparisons was the lower than average number of pupils attaining the higher than expected national standards. Even when progress is good, most pupils have insufficient time to move from very low attainment when joining the school to attain these higher levels, even when well taught. Attainment of current pupils is a significant improvement on 2000.
79. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. In the nurser, they make good progress but this slows in the reception class because developments in literacy are insufficiently structured and insufficiently related to improvement in personal and social skills. Pupils make very good progress in Years 1 and 2, however, and at least good progress in each year from Year 3 to Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching is very effective but teachers have to plan to compensate for unsatisfactory attainment before entering this stage and to spend time and energy developing the pupils' underdeveloped social, personal and learning skills. In Years 3 to 6, teachers take full advantage of the pupils' developing personal and learning skills, and develop them further so that, by Year 6, most pupils are keen and able learners.
80. Girls and boys of differing abilities make equally good progress, and teachers check and ensure that they do so. National test results suggest that girls achieve better than boys. In the main, this relates to differences in prior attainment and not the

effectiveness of teaching, although there is evidence that the slightly less good personal development of boys damages their overall progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported, mainly within classes, and rapidly acquire everyday English, and many move onto the higher-level skills; they are well represented among the higher-attaining pupils. Their understanding of vocabulary remains low, however, and often represents low levels of development in their home language. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, especially through very powerful teaching outside class, but also by the skilled teaching and use of teaching assistants within classes. They make very good progress relative to their prior attainment.

81. The school recognises that the key problem to overcome is the low speaking and listening skills of all the pupils, and not simply those learning English as an additional language. Teachers focus on these skills, not only in literacy lessons, but in all subjects. Pupils learn how to listen carefully, thinking out the meaning of what they hear. By the time they are seven, they are average listeners, and by the time they are eleven, they are intense listeners, extracting every piece of information and meaning from what they hear. For pupils learning English as an additional language, understanding what they hear is difficult, but they rapidly gain a level of English almost equivalent to their English speaking peers; however, even in Year 6 some understandably miss nuances in meaning and cannot make the inferences from what people say to what they mean or imply. This is especially the case when solving mathematics problems in contexts they do not have the language and experience to understand.
82. Pupils rapidly become confident speakers, and as they move up the school this confidence becomes more disciplined and focused. By Years 5 and 6, they can justify and exemplify their views, argue for and against a case, and ask probing questions. They are conscious of audience and adapt their method of speaking and projection accordingly. The effectiveness of their speaking is restricted by a shallowness of their understanding of vocabulary. In this aspect of speaking and listening their attainment is below average, and this hinders learning in all subjects. Even so, this good progress in listening and speaking plays a significant part in aiding learning in other subjects.
83. Pupils make good progress in their reading. They join Year 1 with reading that is well below average, and initially make slower than average progress because they have not attained the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. They make good progress from then onwards, and by the time they are eleven, pupils read with enjoyment and for information. Because they are taught how to read well, their reading grows in confidence and range. It becomes an important part of all class learning, and also their lives outside school, something clearly seen in the way most pupils are eager to take home books from school. They enjoy reading a wide range of books and their own writing, often attempting books that offer considerable challenge, as well as books that are simply for fun. This confident reading comes from their skills at reading new words by sounding out letters, or breaking words into syllables, and in higher years guessing meaning from the context of the text; for too many, however, this is an underdeveloped skill because they are so keen to read on, they do not pause to discover the meaning of each word. They become critical readers, writing perceptive reviews in their reading logs, and show that they are fascinated by character and plot; the higher-attainers are beginning to differentiate the styles of different authors. By the time they are ten, they can use contents and indexes to find information, and know that skimming and scanning are important skills, even if, for many, they are not fully developed skills. By the time they are eleven, most pupils

attain the expected standards and a significant number exceed them. This positive picture is marred by the way their very keenness to read means they skip words they do not understand, even though they know how to use dictionaries and glossaries. This holds back their progress in reading comprehension, where attainment is below expectations by the time they are eleven.

84. Writing is now a strength. Pupils join Year 1 with underdeveloped writing skills. Good teaching from then on helps them develop well-formed letters that they soon combine into meaningful sentences and even simple stories and descriptions, although pupils tend not to write cursively until Year 3. By the time they are seven, their attainment is below national expectations but improving. By the time pupils are eleven, they confident writers, writing for pleasure and for functional reasons. They write expressively for a good range of purposes, for example describing, reporting, arguing a case; poetry in all years is particularly good. In the Years 5 and 6, the way they write fluently and rapidly is particularly marked, even though the speed at which they write often means punctuation and spelling are inaccurate. Teachers make insufficient opportunities for pupils to draft, polish and improve their writing before presenting the final product, and this allows these weaknesses to remain. The pupils use information and communication technology to aid their writing, but this tends to be for presentation reasons, rather than the more powerful use as a way to manipulate and improve text. Even so, writing is an important part of learning in other subjects and the fluency of writing supports good progress.
85. Pupils have good attitudes to literacy and language learning as a whole. They are keen to learn, proud of their achievements and value those of others. There are opportunities to build upon these good attitudes by providing more ways for pupils to set their own targets, plan to meet them, and evaluate and record their achievements. The range and quality of, in particular, speaking, listening and creative and expressive writing make a major contribution to the personal development of pupils.
86. Boys and girls of above average, average and below average attainment make similar progress. Their progress is supported effectively by the input of teaching assistants, and increasingly by the contribution of the learning mentor who works with pupils who are more unwilling to learn. Pupils of very high ability make only satisfactory progress because the teaching does not focus sufficiently on their particular needs; for example, extensive writing based upon individual research to investigate and solve challenging problems, and reading that moves on to very demanding texts. Pupils with special educational needs make at least good and usually very good progress relative to their prior attainment because they have a good balance of very effective teaching in withdrawn classes, and focused support in class guided by very useful individual education plans. Pupils learning English as an additional language make at least good progress in the acquisition of the earlier stages of English because they receive positive and specialised support within class and because teachers as a whole are good at developing language. Too often, however, they become passive learners and their general progress slows because they do not receive sufficient highly focused teaching that addresses their particular needs. The specialised teaching support for these pupils within lessons is not enabled by present practice to impact on learning during full-class sessions, and is, therefore, wasted. Pupils joining the school with little English do not receive sufficient focused support to enable them to acquire enough English to access rapidly the learning; therefore, progress at the beginning is slow and they lose confidence and self-esteem. This harms their later learning, particularly because they do not receive sufficient support in developing higher-level language skills in English.

87. Teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. This produces learning that is relevant and purposeful. The most effective teachers plan lessons that match very closely the abilities and attainment of the pupils. These lessons are given meaning and purpose for pupils by well-expressed learning objectives and targets to meet. The lessons bowl along with great pace and challenge, and each step in the learning is presented with great care and precision; this builds pupils' confidence and motivation. When teaching is less effective, the literacy strategy and theoretical planning overly prescribe lessons. These lessons become slow and lack continuity and coherence.
88. Overall, the literacy lessons are too long. Even when the lesson is well structured, the learning loses dynamism towards the end. Learning would be better if lessons were interspersed with other learning. Since literacy takes a major allocation of the timetable, and rightly so, teachers need to increase the relevance of learning by teaching literacy through texts and writing drawn from topics in other subjects, for example history and religious education. Teachers assess progress and attainment well, and use this to pick up problems and when progress slows. This leads to effective use of teaching assistants and specialist teachers in support of groups, although these adults are too often used ineffectively when the class teacher is teaching the class as a whole. Word processing is used effectively to present work, but too rarely to draft writing and arrange words creatively. Similarly, teachers generally make insufficient use of 'drafting' to enable pupils to work at text to improve not only the quality, but to build in a more disciplined way punctuation and spelling; such practices would increase even further the pupils' pride in their work. Good use is made of homework, but marking, though conscientious, too rarely shows pupils how to improve. Improved marking would guide the pupils' drafting of the final piece of work.
89. The subject is well managed and led by an expert senior manager. Her work has driven and is driving up standards. She monitors planning and work, and provides useful guidance and advice for colleagues. Currently, she has insufficient opportunity to work alongside colleagues in lessons, and to feedback to them what works and what needs to be improved. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy effectively, but have yet to make it fully their own. Resources for learning, including libraries, are of good range, quality and accessibility. Standards are rising, as seen in a considerable improvement in unconfirmed results in national tests for pupils aged eleven in 2001, and are well placed to go on improving.

MATHEMATICS

90. Provision for learning mathematics and numeracy is good. Standards of work seen during the inspection by the end of Year 2 are below national expectations and by the end of Year 6 are in line with expectations. Pupils' achievements in relation to standards on entry to the school are good. Activities are well matched to pupils' needs. The quality of teaching and pupils' positive attitudes ensure that their learning in mathematics is good. Pupils generally make good progress as they move through the school, although word problems prove difficult for pupils, especially, but not exclusively, for those for whom English is an additional language.
91. In the 2000 national tests, at the ages of seven and eleven, attainment was well below average when compared with all and similar schools. Over the period 1998- 2000, the results for mathematics have remained static. With 86 per cent of pupils on free school meals, a highly mobile population and large numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language, it is very difficult to judge this school fairly in terms

of average scores. An analysis of the results of pupils who were in the school for all of Years 3-6 shows that they achieved well when compared with similar schools.

92. Pupils enter Year 1 with well below average understanding of numbers. In the work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 2 are below average. This represents good progress in Years 1 and 2. In Year 2 most pupils are confident with numbers up to 20 and know the names of familiar geometric shapes. They recognise the shapes by feel and sight, but they are less confident when describing the number of sides or edges. Practical activities are more easily understood than oral instructions. The majority of pupils are motivated and work well, but a few boys were seen playing with the robot rather than concentrating on coding in the correct instructions. Girls with the same recognised attainment level make good progress, when carrying out the same activity at the computer.
93. Standards of work by the end of Year 6 are more in line with nationally expected standards. With such a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, pupils are constantly meeting word problems that prove ambiguous to them. Gifted pupils succeed well with number, shape and problem-solving, as was evident as they took part in a lesson with other schools using the Internet. Lower- and middle-attainers, as well as those with special educational needs, require the carefully planned strategies that the teacher provides in order to interpret graphs or solve problems. In a formal test situation, however, their understanding of vocabulary and their ability to understand words in contexts they have not experienced give them problems and impose a ceiling on their attainment.
94. The quality of teaching is always very good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 it is good in three-quarters of lessons seen and very good in one-quarter. A strength of this teaching is the quality of planning that includes worksheets and activities relevant to the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants, including the learning mentor, are well aware of the pupils' language and social constraints, as for example in Year 1 where boys from certain ethnic groups prove self-willed and would rather build a wall with bricks than sort them into tens. In Year 3, strategies used by the teacher give the pupils very good opportunities for understanding the concept of a minute-in-time. Comprehension is evident as pupils express surprise at how elastic time can seem when engaged in different activities. Vigilance is needed, however, in vetting commercially produced worksheets before using them with pupils learning English as an additional language who live in high-rise inner city accommodation. This was evident as pupils struggled to answer a question about how long it took for an apple to grow, a concept of which the majority had no prior experience.
95. In Year 4, classroom management is good and all pupils are well trained to access resources. Higher-attaining pupils have a clear understanding of place value up to 1000 whilst lower-attainers are confident up to 100. Emphasis on understanding and interpreting graphs, rather than simply constructing them, is a good feature of this practice. The use of open-ended questions and time allowed for thinking works well in Year 5. Higher-attaining boys, in particular, follow other boys' oral explanations closely, often intervening to translate 'child speak' into adult language for the teacher's benefit. A weakness of present teaching is the lack of strategies to obtain immediate feedback from pupils as to their confidence or otherwise in tackling the task set. Pupils with special educational needs are helped by well-considered in-class support, carefully selected worksheets and also by targeted extraction from lessons. The support for pupils learning English as an additional language is mainly in class and is seldom available in the higher years; it does not address with sufficient precision the

language needs of these pupils in mathematics. The focused teaching of mathematical language for these pupils offers an area for improvement.

96. Teachers set homework frequently and the majority of pupils complete the work set. Work in pupils' books is ticked, but helpful written comments by the teacher are mainly only added on Year 6 work. Pupils are tested regularly to see how well they are doing and information is used to plan future opportunities; for example, the school identified the need to concentrate on the interpretation of graphs rather than spending so much time on drawing them. Assessment whilst teaching, for example to inform planning or learning, is underdeveloped and manageable records of pupils' on-going strengths and weaknesses are not in place. The involvement of pupils in assessment is at an early stage of development. Currently there are no targets for improvement within mathematics.
97. The majority of pupils enjoy number work and investigating data, particularly when using computers. Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour in this subject area are very good across the school. Teachers make many opportunities to provide for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
98. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Statutory requirements are met. Good progress has been made with addressing those issues raised by the last inspection report. Outside advice, monitoring and feedback on teaching and learning, together with staff confidence in the numeracy strategy, have all ensured good progress. Assessment as part of teaching still needs further consideration, as do strategies for involving pupils more in the assessment process and overcoming the vocabulary barriers in word questions in examinations. Information and communication technology resources are used well to support and extend learning.

SCIENCE

99. Provision for learning is good, with some very good features. Teachers' assessments for 2000 showed that standards for the seven-year-old pupils were well below the national average, but were average for similar schools. Although this appears to show a decline in standards since the last inspection, the standards of the work seen are much better in 2001 and satisfactory improvement has been made. Standards in the national tests in 2000 for eleven-year-olds were below the national average and below the average for similar schools. It must be noted here, however, that the number of children actually attaining the nationally expected level was in line with the national average. The unconfirmed results in tests in 2001 show a significant rise in the percentage of pupils reaching this standard or above, and the work seen also reflects this; satisfactory improvement is being made. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they are very well supported in class and pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress because the nature of the teaching, the relevant curriculum and extended experience through visits allows these pupils to access the meanings of words; this good progress, related to their development of English appropriate to this subject; is a significant factor in the overall improvement in standards. Standards overall by Year 6 have improved considerably compared with those of the children when they first entered school.
100. No lessons were observed in science in Year 2 or Year 6 due to timetabling arrangements, thus only cautious judgements can be made with regard to teaching and learning at the end each key stage. Scrutiny of the pupils' work and the teachers' planning in these two classes shows good coverage of the curriculum. There is also good use of scientific enquiry, especially in the work of the eleven-year-olds. Here the pupils' written work is good and well presented. They show a good understanding of the functions of the heart and lungs and the terminology used in the study of the human body.
101. The quality of learning and rate of progress in Year 1 is very good. Pupils, working well in pairs, were looking at the properties of materials and were investigating how different materials reacted to magnets. They learned securely that plastic, glass and fabric were not attracted to the magnets whereas most metals were. The pupils recorded their findings well and the teacher had provided many different activities which reinforced their learning very well. The pupils' attitude to work was very positive and they made very good use of the opportunities given to them.
102. The quality of learning and progress is good for pupils between the ages of seven and nine years. Year 3 pupils explained in detail how they were investigating the conditions necessary for plant growth in an experiment using cress where one tub was in the light and one in the dark. They showed a good understanding of the requirements for fair tests where all elements except one remain the same. The teaching ensures that the pupils write up their findings carefully and pupils were observed self-correcting their written work. Pupils in Year 4 were looking at food chains and had a very clear understanding of the meaning of words such as 'prey', 'carnivorous', and 'producers and consumers'; this is because teachers took time to ensure that pupils did not simply know a word but understood fully what it meant. Pupils in this lesson made very good progress, as did pupils with special educational needs who received very good support. The way staff enabled access to the meaning of words helped pupils learning English as an additional language effectively.

103. The quality of teaching is very good overall. One third was good and two thirds was excellent. The excellent teaching was characterised by the clarity of planning and learning objectives, where the pupils had a very clear idea of why and what they were learning. The teachers' full knowledge and understanding of the topics covered ensured that the pupils had full access to a deep and interesting curriculum, and a curriculum that made full use of contexts they knew or had experienced. The teachers know their children well and this was seen in the high quality of class management, giving the pupils the opportunity to work without interruption. The support given to a pupil with significant learning difficulties and with English as an additional language was so good that the pupil made rapid and confident progress, completing the work in the time set. In marking the pupils' work, there are satisfactory elements of supporting and directing pupils in their future work.
104. Due to shortages in permanent staff, there is no co-ordinator for the subject. The subject is being temporarily led by the headteacher. He makes sure that the subject moves forward and that the pupils receive the best the school can offer. Lessons and planning are monitored and work is regularly assessed. The curriculum, mainly based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance, is very well extended through frequent visits to a science study centre; this supports language development effectively, allowing pupils to understand words in context. Here, specialists teach the children and the school's teaching staff also receive first-hand expert experience of science teaching. This is having a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and progress. The resources in the school are good. A most interesting garden with a large pond with a constant flow of water keeping it fresh enhances both resources for science and also the accommodation for learning.

ART AND DESIGN

105. Provision for learning is good with some very good features. Standards of work seen during the inspection meet expectations by the end of Year 2 and are above these standards by the end of Year 6. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good. Pupils' achievements in relation to standards at the start of Year 1 are very good. Pupils' attitudes to and behaviour within art and design are good, causing their learning to be good in Years 1 to 6.
106. By the age of seven, from the evidence found in the classroom and whole school displays as well as in pupils' books, standards of painting and collage work are better than skill development in using a pencil. When drawing from observation, for example, pupils concentrate on line with the use of tone and texture too rarely considered. Colour, on the other hand, is applied carefully and often with expression, indicating more confidence when using paint or coloured papers and card. Pupils show a similar confidence and success when using computer software to produce pictures.
107. By the age of eleven, pupils' standards are generally above average. The majority of Year 6 pupils work confidently as they discuss their ideas about carnival hats and head-dresses with their peers and make considered decisions in the light of their understanding of a wide range of cultures. Regular access to dance, drumming and music also inform their designing. Pupils' ballpoint pen studies, illustrating Victorian children, show good understanding of the original engraving process used in producing the pictures studied.
108. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Pupils enter the school with well below average knowledge, skills and understanding of painting, drawing or

modelling processes. This was evident from observing pupils at work in the nursery and reception classes. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, but from the evidence presented by the school it was clear that teachers planned art activities well to relate to topics studied, as well as to cover the National Curriculum requirements. Pupils benefit greatly from this provision. Of the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, two-thirds were good and one-third very good. Through the visual environment provided in the classroom, playground and gardens, as well as the opportunities offered through visits and visitors to the school, and access to the Internet, teachers extend pupils' awareness. They make them curious to know more about the natural and man-made world in which they are growing up. Pupils also develop an interest in people, as was evident on a recent educational visit to various sites of interest in London, when the pupils were most interested in the National Portrait Gallery. This represents very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although there are some missed opportunities for involving different cultural groups from the locality in the life of the school. Less emphasis is placed on teaching skill development and, as a result, pupils are not always aware of what is possible when drawing a seedling or a daffodil. 'Ideas' or sketchbooks are not part of the pupils' experience and there is no record of the pupils' drafting processes, only the final result. This is a missed opportunity for developing thinking skills and also for assessing progress over time. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to support all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Gender differences are noted in Year 4 in the approach to chair design, with boys considering the chair's function and girls concentrating on decorative features. Gifted and talented pupils are not given sufficient extra consideration.

- 109. Attitudes, values and personal development improve as pupils move through the school. The learning mentor works well in supporting pupils who experience difficulty in relating to the needs of others or in controlling their own behaviour and motivation. By Year 6, the majority of pupils are orderly, helpful young people.
- 110. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory but need to improve. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in raising standards. The units of work are well matched to the pupils' needs but assessment is not sufficiently developed, progressive teaching of skill development is not in place and no provision has been made for sketchbook use. These offer areas for improvement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 111. Provision for learning is satisfactory. Standards of attainment by the time pupils are seven are below those expected and by the time they are eleven they are in line with expectations. These standards represent satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
- 112. By the age of seven, standards are below expectations for this age group. Pupils with English as an additional language are sometimes confused by technical words and draw incorrect inferences from the teacher's instructions. They have plenty of ideas for designing a moving toy but without knowing for whom the toy is intended, or having previous experience of investigating similar playthings, their designing capability is limited by their present understanding.
- 113. By the age of eleven, standards meet expectations. Pupils draw carefully when recording structures on a visit to a crafts centre and their drawings show that they have understood how the constructions were made. Whilst no lessons were

observed in this year group, access to pupils' work as well as seeing their approach to an art problem indicate that pupils understand the need to research, investigate and design before making, as well as to evaluate their solutions.

114. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 is good. Of those lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, all were good, and in Years 3 to 6 half were good and half very good. As a result, good progress is made in skill development, knowledge and understanding in Years 1 to 6. A key strength of the teaching is the quality of preparation, planning and resources provided which help all pupils to engage equally with the task. In the best lesson seen, dealing with the topic of bread, pupils' self-esteem was raised by the way the teacher valued the pupils' cultural experience of this foodstuff. In Year 1, pupils' listening skills are hampered by their language problems and behavioural difficulties but as soon as they engage with practical tasks their interest grows and behaviour improves. By the end of the lesson, the higher-attaining pupils had devised some acceptable solutions, although many pupils were well behind with the task because of low skill development.
115. Teaching is enhanced across the school by the units of work provided. Good teamwork is evident as the teacher, learning assistant and additional language support teacher tackle some quite challenging behaviour in the Year 1 class and help all pupils learn by doing. Where teaching assistants or support teachers are not present, the practical situation is more problematic. In the Year 2 classroom, the teacher chose to concentrate on inducting pupils in using the drill and, whilst the rest of the pupils were busy and well motivated, opportunities were missed for the teacher to observe and identify strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' approach to the design process. The sharing of objectives for lessons with the pupils is good in all classes seen and helps their purposeful enquiry. Open-ended questions allow for extended thinking although this is often cut short in the rush to move the lesson forward. Good cross-curricular links are made between the pupils' own designs and the famous Bayeux tapestry. Missed opportunities are evident, however, as Year 4 pupils revealed that they had made a model of a Viking longboat but clearly had little idea of the technology underpinning the design of the boat and its importance to the development of human ingenuity.
116. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good in practical situations although a few pupils exhibit quite challenging behaviour in the opening part of some lessons.
117. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall, although there is recognition that the school has no-one with expertise in this subject area. Statutory requirements are met. Assessment procedures are not in place and pupils are insufficiently involved in peer and self-assessment. There are no shared 'ideas' books, with art. These offer areas for improvement.

GEOGRAPHY

118. Provision for learning is satisfactory. Standards of work by the ends of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with expectations but too few pupils exceed them. These standards are achieved because opportunities are well planned for visits to sites such as the Chilterns. Pupils' achievements throughout the school in relation to their standards on entry are satisfactory. The good attitudes and behaviour of pupils contribute to their successful learning.
119. By the age of seven, standards of attainment are in line with expectations. Most pupils know about places near to and beyond their locality, with many having travelled halfway across the world to this country. Whilst no lessons were observed for this year group during the inspection, pupils' books revealed the use of maps to establish understanding of place in England, Europe and the world; also that the pupils had successfully undertaken a simple comparative study of London and Venice.
120. By the age of eleven, standards of attainment are in line with expectations. No lessons were seen in this year group but pupils' books indicate a greater emphasis on history at the expense of the development of geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils had, however, made sound progress in studying the development of a settlement and had learned to recognise map symbols and their meanings.
121. The quality of teaching seen was good in Year 1 and very good in Year 5. A key strength of the teaching was the planning and quality of the resources provided. Year 1 learned to link rules in the playground with those that operate on the nearby road. The use of photographic evidence helped pupils focus their attention on important rules before going for a walk in the locality and seeing the sites for themselves. One girl in Year 5 with English as an additional language had kept a good diary of water usage as a homework exercise. Pupils in this class learned by discussing specific questions concerned with water location and usage and categorising their answers under specific headings. Good resources borrowed every half term support geographical studies. The world map displayed in the main hall records the 30 different nationalities present in this school. Work is marked regularly but few helpful written comments are seen. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well supported by the opportunities provided in this subject area.
122. Girls and boys of high, average and lower ability tend to make similar progress, but there are insufficient opportunities for the very able to move ahead. Pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily supported, and teachers help those learning English as an additional language to understand and speak about their learning.
123. Attitudes, values and behaviour are good. Pupils respond well to the educational visits and the opportunities available to them.
124. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. Little progress has been made with those issues raised by the last inspection report. Weakness lies in the fact that the subject is taught as discrete blocks of work and that there is little continuity or progression in knowledge, understanding or skill development. There is very little involvement of pupils in the assessment process. No evidence was seen of computer use for research, weather studies or data analysis. These offer areas for improvement.

HISTORY

125. The school provides well for the learning of history. Pupils attain at least the expected standards by the time they are seven and eleven; by eleven a significant number of pupils exceed them. The teaching is usually good, and often very good, and brings learning that is rich and well motivated. Girls and boys throughout Years 1 to 6 make good progress, and often very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported; those learning English as an additional language satisfactorily supported, and pupils of all abilities make similar progress. A considerable strength of the provision is the way the school enables pupils to experience at first hand the evidence of events in the past, through trips and visits. Improvement since the last inspection is good.
126. Pupils in Year 2 were learning how to compare the seaside today and the seaside in the past. The teacher built these understandings very effectively through perceptive use of resources, and because he made certain that pupils listen and look with absolute attention, and helped them talk through their growing knowledge and understanding with confidence and careful thought. In consequence, they approached the written tasks with confidence and a strong desire to 'really' find out the facts, and then understand them. The teacher used a visitor to give first hand accounts of not only what the seaside was like in the past but also what it felt like; the pupils later accessed the website for the area. The pupils made very good use of this visitor by preparing in groups very probing questions. Realising that many of the pupils had no experience of the seaside, the school had arranged a visit to a seaside resort where there was good evidence of how it may have been in the past. The teaching was very good and all pupils made good very progress.
127. Pupils in Year 6 were learning about World War 2, and in particular the experience of evacuation. The teacher helped them gain a good knowledge and understanding of what led up to the war and why it had happened. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the period. The teacher then made the learning real to the pupils by helping them collect evidence from the school's log written when their school was preparing children like themselves to evacuate. This very effective teaching helped the pupils become keen, eager but discriminating young historians, able to research and evaluate evidence, and gain an overview of change over time.
128. Previous work, displays and discussion with pupils showed that teaching and learning in other years was equally good. Younger pupils had a good understanding of the Tudor period, learning enhanced by a visit to the National Portrait Gallery and the Globe, and another class realised why the Vikings spread where they lived and how this changed life in this country, although they had not linked making models of long-ships with the importance of this design and technology innovation.
129. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The curriculum is well planned over time and there is a well-used and clear scheme of work. The teaching and learning are well resourced, and teachers are well supported. Teachers have a clear idea how each pupil is progressing and respond appropriately, but longer-term assessment is underdeveloped. Marking only rarely shows pupils how to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Provision for learning is very good and standards for pupils aged from six to eleven years are above average and exceed expectations. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were found to be unsatisfactory. All areas of weakness previously noted have been addressed and pupils are competent in using computers for many purposes. Pupils who will shortly be leaving school will have had the good advantage of accessing a very wide curriculum and those with special educational needs have made good progress, as have pupils learning English as an additional language. As early as reception, children show effective skills. They are very adept in controlling programs and have produced good illustrations of journeys.
131. The quality of learning is good and pupils make very good progress. Pupils in Year 2 paid careful attention when learning to control a robot, as they were led stage-by-stage through the process; this is a challenging task because, apart from pressing controls, the pupil as operator has to gauge the distances and relate this to the controls. There is a very good extension to the activity since mathematics plays a key role. Pupils made very rapid progress here and were soon directing the robot to within a short distance from its proposed destination. The pupils were very clear about the instructions and were soon able to program the robot well. They transferred their learning over to controlling a logo 'Turtle' on the computer most successfully. The progress made by pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs was very good as their teacher supported them very well. In Year 3, pupils followed a similar introductory program on controlling the robot and made good progress.
132. The quality of learning in Year 6 is very good and pupils make very good progress. They access a web page very quickly and save pictures and text from a website, and cut, paste and transfer (import) it into a document. The pupils learn to use the button on the right of the mouse very successfully to speed up the process. All pupils make very good progress, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Year 6 pupils enjoyed taking part in the new video-conferencing facility, which helped them understand the potential for information and communication technology (ICT) to aid human endeavour. The very good learning of these pupils also includes work on data handling and spreadsheets. There is good use of ICT to support learning in other subjects, for example drawing programs in art and researching topics in history and geography, but there is room for further development.
133. Teaching overall is very good. One third of the teaching was good, one third very good and one third was excellent. The excellent teaching made a very considerable contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding provide the pupils with very good access to the curriculum, and increase their understanding of the importance of the role of ICT in society. The pace of the lessons is very rapid and pupils are expected to listen carefully in order to make progress. Teachers are very confident in their approach to the subject and the pupils reflect this, especially in the ways the learning develops their speaking and listening skills.
134. Leadership and management are very good and the co-ordinator has explained to colleagues the many good features which can be derived from the very high

technology now available to the school; this includes access to a network that allows video-conferencing with other schools. Many programs can now be directly downloaded from the centre. Assessment is made through the very well presented notebooks that the pupils keep extremely well. The curriculum and teaching allow girls and boys of all abilities to make good progress, including and especially the very able. Accommodation and resources are very good. There is now an extensive computer suite so whole classes can use machines at the same time.

MUSIC

135. Provision for learning is good and standards attained by seven-year-olds are satisfactory. No observations were made for Year 6 music so no secure judgement can be made on standards by the time pupils are eleven; even so, on the evidence available, standards meet expectations. Music seen in other years indicates that there has been a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Music is regularly on the timetable and is taken partly by the class teachers and partly by visiting music specialists. A number of them come from leading London orchestras.
136. The quality of learning and progress made by seven-year-old pupils are very good. In the lesson observed, pupils listened intently to a Cuban song and made some very good suggestions as to its origin. The teacher made some good links with geography using a large map of the world. The pupils clapped the rhythms of the song very well before moving on to playing their percussion instruments. They were very controlled in their playing, keeping very good time. The pupils made good progress. The teacher made sure that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language contributed well and also made good progress.
137. The quality of teaching was very good. The teacher's knowledge and understanding was very good and the pupils had very good opportunities to listen and to perform successfully. The pace of teaching was very good and the pupils focused well throughout the session. Management of the lesson was extremely good and, consequently, pupils controlled themselves very well and did not play their instruments except at the appropriate times.
138. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed very good learning and progress. A professional percussionist was teaching them and the overall effect was very good. The pupils, on a wide variety of drums, cymbals and bells, kept perfect time and produced a most exciting sound. The quality of teaching was good and the pupils responded very well to all the teaching points. The high expectations of the teacher were well rewarded as the pupils made sure that they came in at the correct time and played their own particular rhythm. Management of the pupils was good and for the greater part of the lesson no inappropriate sound of an instrument disrupted the lesson.
139. Pupils sing enthusiastically in assembly and these times were used for singing practice, one session for pupils in the infant part of the school and the other for those in the junior section. In the first session, great emphasis was put on timing, melody and emotion and the quality of the music was good as pupils responded to the teacher's suggestions. During the second session, the teacher led the pupils to sing very softly and produced a song where the diction and melody produced a very emotional sound.
140. The co-ordinator, the headteacher, is very concerned that there is music continually in the school and ensures that it is constantly played in the school hall except during physical education lessons. Slowly the provision for music is moving forward and,

though not yet a strength of the school, it is very much to the forefront in school activities. The subject makes a considerable contribution to the personal development of the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. The school makes very good provision for learning. The standards achieved by the pupils are good and they make good progress overall. This shows a good improvement since the last inspection, which found standards and progress to be satisfactory and pupils' behaviour at times to be unsatisfactory. The latter does not now occur. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and were well supported during the dance and swimming lessons. Care is taken to involve all pupils, including those from minority cultures and faiths.
142. The quality of learning and progress seen during the inspection is good. Pupils aged between six and seven years worked very hard to better their skills and ideas in making shapes and dancing rhythmically. They showed considerable awareness of space and moved around very sensibly and avoided contact with each other. They listened carefully to their teacher who did not have to repeat instructions. This very good attitude ensured that they had plenty of time for their activities. Although the weather was very hot, the pupils never flagged, so keen were they to develop their ideas. Many pupils were very graceful, both in smaller movements of the hand and also in the larger movements using the whole body. The pupils work well at all levels and understand clearly that floor-work is as important as that when standing up. Throughout the lesson, the pupils' attitudes and progress were excellent. Year 6 pupils were working on a joint dance session with the children from the nursery. In their practice session they showed imagination, skill and great enjoyment in dance, and the lesson made a very significant contribution to the pupils' personal development. This contribution to the pupils' personal development and self-esteem is just one example of the powerful impact made by the subject as a whole.
143. In swimming, the oldest age groups work very hard in the pool. The curriculum for these pupils, in Years 5 and 6, involves them in personal survival awards. These demand swimming skills of a very high order. Treading water was of a very high standard indeed and the distance swum was beyond the 25 metres requirement. The pupils are dedicated and enthusiastic, and show a good knowledge and understanding of the taxing activities. Their learning and progress is excellent. Other pupils in these year groups make good progress as a smaller number were practising shorter distances most enthusiastically. Only two pupils have yet to complete their length of the pool. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress here. Year 3 pupils go swimming every week and make good progress over time, most being able to swim a short distance. Their attitude to swimming is purposeful and all pupils endeavour to improve their skills. Their excellent behaviour enhances their opportunities in learning.
144. The quality of teaching is now very much improved, as all teaching seen was excellent; this is in part because of the headteacher's policy of employing experts to ensure standards of the highest quality. The teaching shows great depth in knowledge and understanding of the subject, which gives pupils great confidence and determination to do well. The relentless pace in swimming is vital to the pupils attaining their award status but also in dance a similar pace keeps the pupils very active and focused. It ensures that the pupils have plenty of opportunity to exercise and improve their techniques. The quality of teaching therefore has improved to a very high degree.

145. Leadership and management are very good. This is under the wing of the headteacher at present due to the shortage of permanent staff. Lessons are monitored and the staff make on-going assessments. The curriculum, as in the previous inspection, includes kayaking and the philosophy behind this and other activities is to give the pupils a zest for life and the opportunities it offers. Accommodation is satisfactory, with a suitably large hall, but there is little storage space for the larger equipment. There is no grassed area. Resources are satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. The school makes satisfactory provision for learning and, by the ages of seven and eleven, pupils' attainment matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus; although only with seven-year-olds do many pupils exceed them. The curriculum is satisfactorily planned and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of major world religions and consider the importance of faith and religious practices in human lives. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils make satisfactory progress, but the quality of their learning varies. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
147. In a Year 2 lesson, the teaching and learning were very effective. Pupils talked about the importance of special books by learning about the role the Torah plays in Jewish life. The very skilled teaching enabled them to relate this to what they know about the Bible and Koran, and then to reflect upon their previous work on rules, and in particular their five golden rules dealt with earlier in class and in an assembly. The teacher helped them make a strong link from this learning to work in 'circle time', when they had discussed how difficult it was to behave properly, but also how important this was. They reinforced and deepened their understanding by making models of Torah scrolls, which helped them understand not only how important these religious objects were, but why they, as well as Jews, must treat them very reverently. In this lesson, pupils made very good progress both in their knowledge and in their understanding, and the quality of learning was very high, building upon their good attitudes to the subject. Pupils gained clear and structured information and went on to good understanding that they could apply to their own lives. The most able pupils asked questions that showed the high level at which they understood.
148. In Year 6, pupils learned about the wider practices of the Jewish faith, including the importance of prayer, the Sabbath and the function of a synagogue. Teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils gained a clear knowledge because the facts were explained clearly and they listened intently, showing genuine interest. When asked to discuss and investigate prayer further, however, they were less able to probe the meaning of prayer in Jewish lives, or their own lives. The teaching focused on covering the facts and missed opportunities to build upon the experiences of the pupils, for example the way some Muslim members of the class pray five times a day. In this lesson, pupils of different abilities tended to achieve the same levels of attainment.
149. Previous work in books and on display, for example a very good display of pupils' work on Eid that they had completed in preparation for an assembly, show that pupils' learning throughout the school is satisfactory with occasions of very good learning.

150. Pupils show genuine interest in the subject and treat it as important. In the lessons seen and their work they show care and thoughtfulness. They state their views carefully and with due consideration, and listen to and value the views of others.
151. The quality of teaching varies, but is never less than satisfactory. On the evidence, it is usually satisfactory with some lessons that are taught very well. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject and use learning resources such as artefacts effectively. Each lesson is well planned to cover the material, but only in the very good lessons is it planned in ways that allow the pupils to build on their own experiences and respond in ways that reflect their varying abilities and personalities. Planning tends to arrange the learning in blocks of time, and this diminishes its impact because pupils cannot enrich the personal sides of religious education continuously; religious education needs to develop the spiritual aspects of pupils' personality by responding to everyday life and this was the strength of the Year 2 lesson. Planning also tends to emphasise extending the cultural awareness of pupils, which is important, to the exclusion of the equally important ways the subject allows pupils to build upon their own religious experience and that of others. This misses the recognition and celebration of the rich diversity of religious life of the pupils at home and within the community.
152. The school admits that religious education has not been given priority, and a senior manager carries a watching brief rather than providing dynamic leadership and management. Even so, she ensures that teachers cover the syllabus, checks there are adequate resources that teachers can share, and helps teachers to use with confidence the scheme of work. The school has recently received a new locally agreed syllabus and recognises its previous scheme of work needs little adaptation to meet the requirements of the new syllabus. Marking tends to be congratulatory rather than making clear how each pupil can improve. Pupils do not produce much written work in this subject and work in general tends to get lost among other humanities work. This misses important opportunities for pupils to have in one place a record of the work they cover and how they have, or have not, improved. The lack of writing gives too few opportunities for pupils to probe, work out and express their beliefs on paper. The school has not developed sufficient links and partnerships with local faith communities, missing this important way of enriching learning by first hand experience.