

INSPECTION REPORT

MILLBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Westminster

Unique reference number: 101113

Headteacher: Ms Alyson Russen

Reporting inspector: Ian Knight
23031

Dates of inspection: 10th July 2000 – 14th July 2000

Inspection number: 196767

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Erasmus Street London
Postcode:	SW1P 4HR
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Catherine Martin
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Knight	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics; Science; Design and technology.	The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Barry Wood	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Nina Bee	<i>Team inspector</i>	Under fives, Equal opportunities, English, Art, Physical Education, Religious Education.	
Tom Allen	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; English as an Additional Language; Information technology; Geography; History; Music.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Millbank Primary School is an average sized community primary school. There are currently 217 on roll. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average; the proportion who speak English as an additional language is very high. Altogether, 22 languages are spoken by pupils and their parents. There are 32 pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is in line with the national average. Six pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This proportion is above the national average. There is considerable turnover in the school's roll because a significant number of pupils are refugees or live in short term housing. Most of the indicators of high social class are absent in the surrounding area. Baseline testing confirms that attainment on entry is below average, especially in spoken language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school is a highly effective school. Standards are broadly average starting from a low baseline so that pupils achieve well. Teaching is good, supported by good curricular provision and very good provision for personal development. Leadership is outstanding. Although all of this is achieved at a cost per pupil which is relatively high, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- All of the staff are committed, conscientious and hard working; they work together as a team very effectively under the leadership of an inspirational headteacher. Consequently, teaching throughout the school is good.
- The school analyses its own performance very well. It has used the information gained very effectively to make dramatic improvements in test results.
- Behaviour is good because the school achieves its aims to value each child as an individual and to nurture mutual respect. This comes about through skilful teaching and a purposeful, harmonious ethos.
- The school provides a rich and wide range of educational experiences.
- The provision for pupils to understand world cultures, including those not represented in the school, is outstanding.
- The school works very well with parents, who value it greatly.
- The provision for pupils with English as an additional language or who have a special educational need is very good.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The role of the governing body remains too passive.
- Experimental and investigative science is not promoted well enough.
- Attendance and punctuality are not good enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Standards in academic subjects are broadly the same as those reported at that time. They show an impressive level of improvement over the results in the intervening period which had been in decline, especially in Key Stage 1. Standards of teaching have improved. The key issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been effectively dealt with. This represents good improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	D	D	A
mathematics	C	E*	E	D
science	C	E	E	D

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E
<i>very low</i>	E*

A grade of E* indicates that the school was in the bottom 5 per cent nationally. These comparisons are now over a year old. The provisional results for 2000 show the school has made great strides in both key stages and reversed a previously falling trend. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in all subjects are broadly in line with those expected at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in all subjects and above that in art in Key Stage 2. Children under five are on course to achieve the desirable outcomes for learning in personal and social development and creative development. Standards are only a little below average in physical development and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. They are not on line to achieve the outcomes in language and literacy and mathematics. The school has exceeded its own targets for performance in 2000. Given the background of these pupils, these findings indicate good levels of achievement. However, investigative work in science is not as well promoted as the other areas.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and show great interest in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils understand the impact of their actions on others well and show very good respect for others' feelings and beliefs.
Personal development and relationships	Very good.
Attendance	Despite the school's best efforts and a recent rising trend, attendance levels remain below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching in all of the lessons seen was at least satisfactory. Sixty-eight per cent was at least good and 18 per cent was very good. English and mathematics are taught well. The school works hard to meet the needs of all pupils: provision for pupils with special needs or who have English as an additional language is good. In addition, many classes enjoy specific support to stretch higher attaining pupils in the core subjects. The best teaching includes good management of pupils, relationships of high quality and a good questioning technique. Less successful, but still satisfactory, teaching included tasks that were not matched closely enough to pupils' needs. In most lessons, pupils work diligently and with interest and this means that they learn well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The statutory curriculum is considerably enhanced by the community, visits and visitors. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. The school has a very strong commitment to equality of opportunity.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision leads to good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall; provision for pupils to understand all world cultures, whether represented in school or not, is outstanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for child protection and to ensure pupils' welfare. It has good assessment procedures. Pupils' personal development is very well monitored.

The school works very well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Outstanding. The school's aims are achieved extremely well. Every tier of management in the school - headteacher, deputy headteacher and curricular co-ordinators - works together to achieve this. Delegation to staff with particular duties is very effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The chair has a good understanding of the school and the governing body as a whole fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Their role in helping to shape the school's future direction is limited.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has taken swift and effective action to deal with weaknesses it has identified. Teaching is rigorously monitored. Test results are examined and amendments to teaching styles quickly implemented as necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school supports its educational priorities very well. New technology is used very effectively. The use of specific grants to support learning is first rate.

The school makes best use of very good accommodation. There is a good number of staff which is very well deployed in the school. Learning resources overall are sound. The school applies the principles of best value well.

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, make good progress and behave well. • The school is a harmonious one. • Teaching is good • They are comfortable in their dealings with the school, which works closely with them. • The school is well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant areas of concern.

The team agreed with parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school's performance in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for both key stages represents a significant improvement over the previous years' results. However, these latest results are still provisional and national averages are not yet available for comparison.
2. The 1999 National Curriculum test results for seven year olds were very disappointing and followed several years of decline, especially in mathematics. When the school is compared with all schools nationally, standards in reading and writing were well below average and in mathematics were very low, that is, in the bottom 5 per cent nationally. A fairer comparison is that with similar schools, based on the known eligibility for free school meals. On this basis, the results in English are better: in reading they are average and in writing below average. However, mathematics remained very low. The results were so low because in each subject large numbers of pupils failed to achieve the expected standard and very few exceeded it. Teachers' assessments in science show that the proportion of pupils gaining at least the expected Level 2 was very low overall, and that the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was well below average. The results are similar when compared with similar schools. Following a change in personnel in Key Stage 1 and other strategies, the results in 2000, although still provisional, are much improved. In reading, the proportion gaining at least the expected Level 2 rose from 77 per cent to 93 per cent with an increase of 4 per cent in the proportion gaining Level 3; in writing, the proportion gaining the higher level is still too low although 97 per cent gained Level 2 in 2000 compared with only 77 per cent in 1999. In mathematics, none of the 1999 cohort achieved Level 3 whereas 27 per cent achieved it in 2000; only 77 per cent achieved at least Level 2 in 1999 with 94 per cent gaining it in 2000. In science, the proportions assessed as having gained at least Level 2 rose from 47 per cent in 1999 to 79 per cent in 2000; no pupils gained Level 3 in 1999, but 15 per cent achieved it in 2000.
3. In Key Stage 2, the story is broadly similar. In 1999, the school's performance overall in English was below average, but in mathematics and science was well below average. Compared to similar schools the school did well in English, being well above average, but still below average in mathematics and science. Science and mathematics suffered particularly because too many pupils only achieved at or below Level 3 when the expected level is Level 4. There was no secure trend to the results up to 1999, although there had been a notable dip in 1998. Again, results are somewhat better in 2000 following the school's analysis of test papers and better preparation for tests. The proportion gaining at least Level 4 in English rose from 52 per cent to 67 per cent with the proportion gaining Level 5 increasing from 15 per cent to 29 per cent. In mathematics, the proportion gaining at least Level 4 rose from 46 per cent to 75 per cent, with the proportion gaining Level 5 staying broadly the same. In science, the proportion gaining at least Level 4 rose from 44 per cent to 83 per cent, a massive increase, echoed in the increase in those gaining Level 5, which rose from 19 per cent to 38 per cent. Clearly, the school's strategies for identifying areas of weakness have been very effective.

4. Inspection evidence uses a wider base and confirms these statements. That is, that attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is now broadly average in the school at the end of both key stages.

5. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average overall, especially in the area of language. Following good teaching in the Early Years Unit, children attain the desirable learning outcomes in the areas of personal and social development and creative development but not in the areas of language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Nevertheless, given their backgrounds and attainment on entry, this represents good levels of achievement. Good teaching and progress continue throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 so that standards in all subjects were judged to be at least in line with national expectations in all areas, except for art which is above average at the end of Key Stage 2. In lessons, pupils worked at or above the expected level for this time of year in nearly four-fifths of lessons. Most of those in which attainment was judged to be below that expected were in the Early Years Unit where children are still grappling with limited language skills in the main. Given the backgrounds of these children, these judgements represent good levels of achievement throughout the school.

6. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards which are below the national average, but in line with expectations for pupils of similar age and ability, as identified in their individual educational plans. They make good progress due to the good support given to them by their class teachers, the special needs co-ordinator, the special needs teachers and the special needs assistants. In lessons and in withdrawal groups, they achieve the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils make good progress over time. For example, in the last National Curriculum tests, one pupil with a statement of special need achieved Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in all subjects tested. Other pupils in Year 5 have targets to achieve Level 4. They have very good attitudes to their lessons, and work hard to achieve their targets.

7. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress as a result of the very good provision made for them. For example, a pupil entered the school with no English having received his prior schooling in Arabic. By the middle of his second term in school he was writing work of a sufficiently high standard to present at celebration assembly. Many examples of such progress can be cited. Many pupils arrive in Year 1 with no English at all and by the end of two terms they are able to write a full page of English and are often indistinguishable from the rest of the class.

8. The school had set itself targets for its own performance in 2000. When these were compared to the 1999 results they appeared to be optimistic; however, the school has easily exceeded them following the successful push on standards this year.

9. The judgements above seem to be similar to those made at the time of the last inspection. However, test results did go into a substantial decline in the interim in Key Stage 1. The reversal of this decline this year coupled with the improvement in standards in Key Stage 2 recently shows that the school has made sound progress in maintaining standards since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The previous report stated that pupils' attitudes were good, and behaviour was very good. It judged that pupils had a strong sense of responsibility and showed sensitivity and awareness of the different cultures and backgrounds present in the school.

11. The school continues to have very high expectations of the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of all its pupils, and all these aspects of the pupils' life in the school have been maintained as distinctive strengths, which gain an increasingly strong approval level from parents.

12. Despite attendance and punctuality levels being unsatisfactory, most pupils arrive at school with a calm and purposeful mood and are obviously very happy to be there. The school's requests on school uniform are well realised and pupils look smart and clean and represent their parents well. From the early years onwards their attitudes are good. In the Nursery and Reception classes, pupils soon start to enjoy the day's routine and their confidence grows, so that they participate fully. All pupils within the school show a developing enthusiasm for their work and activities and they respond well even where there are language difficulties. They listen well, concentrate, and persevere with tasks, which are demanding, either independently or in groups. They move between tasks without undue fuss or noise and their good humour and flexibility allows the school to develop a very productive teaching and learning environment.

13. The behaviour of the pupils throughout the school is good and mostly very good in the classrooms where the discreet vigilance of teachers anticipates any occasional lapses. There is a willing acceptance and understanding of good behaviour norms by all pupils, and this is well supported through the positive behaviour policy, a well presented set of school and playground rules, circle time and the school council. Staff have a very mature manner in dealing with all pupils and have very good behaviour management skills which relax the pupils and produce a calm and productive work atmosphere. In the early years, there are no displays of sulking, tantrums, or rough behaviour and only pupils' shouting out, in their enthusiasm to please, is an occasional problem. There is a marked improvement in behaviour, as pupils move into the main body of the school, and pupils develop a growing awareness of self-discipline and maturity. Behaviour in the playground can be strained by occasional fighting or swearing by boys, but they quickly show an understanding of their anti-social behaviour under the guidance of well-trusted staff. Bullying was not observed and does not appear to be a feature of the school. There has only been one fixed term exclusion in the last three years.

14. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils, and older and younger pupils is very good, and is an undoubted strength of the school. Staff present very good role models and there is consistent evidence of trust and empathy. The pupils, the staff and the parents, are bound together as a family unit with a strong ethos, in which mutual respect and harmonious relationships help to promote an effective teaching and learning environment. In the classroom, pupils, whatever their race or religion, value each other's opinions, and work together effectively and amicably in pairs or groups. They share resources and are helpful to

one another, and are courteous and polite, and manners are generally good. In the early years manners are less good as children will naturally push past adults without any courtesies. Boys and girls eat amicably and play well together and represent the school in teams, where their abilities to pull together bring success. The pupils welcome visitors easily, engage them in conversation, and take pride in their appearance, school and their work.

15. The personal development of the pupils is very good throughout their time in school. In line with the school's aims, each child is valued as an individual and is allowed to celebrate their race, religion and origins so as to contribute to the multicultural mix, which greatly raises their self-esteem. This is a very caring society where pupils are encouraged to look after each other. In the early years, pupils quickly settle into class routines and systems, so that any lack of social or physical development skills are countered well. In both key stages of education, they develop rapidly in expanding their whole school routines, and experience a rich agenda of education activities, including visitors to the school, visits into the local community and clubs. The school playground introduces pupils to a number of aspects, which have not been part of their life to date in the inner city. Hence, the gardening club is very popular with pupils, and the reflective garden is an important part of the school for many pupils. Assemblies are major happy events within the school. The celebration assembly was especially effective in displaying the whole school ethos of celebration of the individual, and a visitor talking about Big Ben was topical and lively and stimulated a whole school mathematical question that caused great interest. The school council has two representatives for each class, and they discuss topics of real substance.

16. The previous inspection report indicated that attendance was below average. Attendance levels have improved significantly since the last inspection, but in comparison with national levels, the school's level of attendance remains unsatisfactory. Under the extremely determined focus of the headteacher, parents are made very aware of their statutory responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality. There are improvements as pupils progress through the school from the nursery, and in this year, four out of seven classes have reached or exceeded the national average. The incidence of holidays taken during the school term and absence for religious observance are significant components of authorised absence. Unauthorised absence has fallen sharply but is still at a high level, despite the school's efforts to gain parents' interest and commitment. This is due to some families being new to the English education traditions or having poor communication skills when English is an additional language. There are no indications of any truancy.

17. Registers are completed in a statutory manner within the classroom and the registration period is carried out courteously and efficiently but is of limited educational or social benefit to the pupils. Registers are systematically analysed by teachers and the office administration for control purposes and to improve performance.

18. Many pupils find it difficult to come to school on time, despite the headteacher's best efforts in meeting parents and pupils outside the school gate at the start of the day. Punctuality throughout the rest of the day is good. The school receives only limited support from the educational welfare service in its very worthy attempts to realise its attendance targets.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching at Millbank Primary School is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and two-thirds of the lessons observed were good or better, including nearly a fifth that was very good. This quality of teaching is the most important factor in the good learning that takes place in lessons. It leads to good levels of achievement, so that pupils whose attainment on entry to the school is below average can leave the school with broadly average attainment, despite many pupils being taught in their second language.

20. Throughout the school teachers have a good knowledge both of the subjects that they teach and of the needs of their pupils. Basic skills are well taught. Sequences of lessons are well planned and the specific learning objectives are often shared with the class at the outset. In the best teaching, these are effectively reviewed with the class at the end of the lesson so that pupils are clear about their own progress. Teachers set high expectations in planning and link these with very effective methods. In particular, the use of questioning is a significant strength in the school. This enhances pupils' learning because they have to think for themselves or describe their methods. This process leads to a deeper understanding and consequently pupils acquire new skills and knowledge faster than is usually the case. The staff are also highly skilled in the management of pupils. Typically, this happens very discreetly, as the result of relationships in the class which are of a high order and of challenging work which pupils enjoy getting to grips with. This all means that teachers can maintain a brisk pace to lessons. A notable feature that was seen when work was analysed was the very high quality of marking, especially in Key Stage 2. Teachers take the time to closely analyse pupils' work and set targets for improvement which are followed up. In a number of lessons pupils in some groups receive additional adult support. Most often this is because they have a special educational need or speak English as an additional language. However, the school has also instigated a system where higher-attaining pupils receive support to challenge them further, and this has been effective in raising standards. These groups are often withdrawn for part of the lesson for very specific input closely based on their needs.

21. In the very best teaching, relationships of a high order allow pupils to work hard and make good progress. Often, speaking and listening skills are promoted well. These lessons demonstrate very high expectations. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, all pupils were expected to use the language of tension and suspense as they suggested possible endings for a story they had been reading. They gave imaginative ideas which the teacher readily accepted and clearly valued. She then helped them to expand on their ideas. A consequence of this was that pupils' self esteem was raised and their ability to write interesting conclusions was consolidated very well. Less successful, but still satisfactory teaching has a steady, rather than brisk, pace.

22. The teaching of both literacy and numeracy closely follows the recommendations of the national strategies and is good in both subjects. Teaching is also good in science, art, geography, history, physical education and religious education. It is sound in music. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement on the overall standard of teaching in design and technology, but it is at least satisfactory. Pupils with a special educational need receive good teaching from two qualified teachers. They have a clear vision for the work with these pupils, tasks are clear and the various activities are designed to give experience, enjoyment and to provide effective learning opportunities. Pupils with statements of special need are supported in lessons by a special needs assistant. They use varied strategies to ensure that

pupils maintain concentration throughout their lessons. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the special needs assistants remained with their pupils during the mental arithmetic stage helping them to use stringed beads to get the answers. This encouraged the pupils to participate and was very successful. The work for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and is matched to the ability of each pupil.

23. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. They are taught sometimes in withdrawal groups by well-qualified teachers who know their subject well so that pupils acquire new knowledge in a secure atmosphere. Relationships with teachers are very good and the teachers provide very good role models for the pupils. Sometimes support is given in lessons so that pupils receive the same curriculum as the rest of the class. Bilingual assistance is provided in the early years in order to encourage pupil participation in all activities. Pupils are made to feel included in all aspects of school life. Teachers prepare their work thoroughly and it is well matched to the ability of the pupils so that they show interest, enjoy their work, make maximum effort and develop new skills. The teachers are very dedicated, work hard and achieve good results.

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are very good. The curriculum on offer throughout the school is broad and balanced. The school has a varied and rich learning environment, which ensures high standards of attainment in all areas of learning and personal development. Very good use is made of the Tate Britain for regular visits. The relationship is so close that pupils from the school were chosen as ambassadors for the Tate Modern during the opening ceremony. The variety of cultures represented in the school is used to enhance the curriculum as happened on the 'International Day' when parents presented varied aspects of their culture ranging from dancing to foods and art. The quality of the curriculum has improved considerably since the previous inspection. There are now schemes of work for all subject areas, sufficiently detailed to ensure good rates of progress, and pupils attain higher standards. Updated policies are now in place, including those for health and sex education, and there is a clear programme of policy review. Sufficient time is allocated to meet the objectives of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education and for pupils' spiritual development. The school has improved its standards in information and communications technology and is fitting out a suite of 14 computers for teaching the subject in the new term.

25. The curriculum for children under five in the Early Years Unit is well planned and based firmly on the areas of learning recommended.

26. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum meets all statutory requirements fully. Religious education is planned according to the locally Agreed Syllabus. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. There is a well developed and detailed health education programme and appropriate areas concerned with sex education and drug abuse are incorporated into the teaching programme.

27. The strategies for teaching literacy skills are very good. All teachers follow the National Strategy for Literacy and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Learning objectives are detailed for each lesson and at the end of each lesson, pupils evaluate whether these objectives have been met together with their teacher. Literacy skills are emphasised across all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning. Planning and teaching strategies for the National Numeracy Strategy are good and indicate how pupils in each year group will develop their skills over the year. Co-ordinators are discussing and drawing up plans for greater use of information technology and literacy across all areas of the curriculum.

28. The school analyses test results for each pupil and uses this information to inform planning. The staff know the pupils well and plan lessons carefully to ensure that they make good progress. Detailed records are kept for each pupil and are used to identify areas for development. These are set as targets for older pupils to work towards. Careful, regular monitoring by the headteacher and co-ordinators ensures that the plans are put into operation, so as to ensure that each pupil receives consistent and regular support.

29. The school provides equality of access for all pupils and works hard to ensure that, for example, pupils with special educational needs have access to all aspects of school life. Pupils with special educational needs have equal access to the full curriculum on offer at the school. They also benefit from the special provision made for them in the special needs classroom where resources appropriate to their ability are used effectively to ensure that they make good progress. All extra-curricular activities, such as after-school clubs and day and residential visits, are open to pupils of all abilities. They have the same opportunities for taking on small responsibilities as the rest of the children in the school. Some older pupils give help to younger pupils at lunch and playtimes.

30. A very good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs enriches pupils' learning. Many teachers run a club and the majority of parents agree that there is a sufficient range of activities. The pupils have the opportunity to join a variety of clubs at the end of the school day. Over the year these include: basketball, chess, art, gardening, dance, Art of Bangladesh, Arabic, Bengali and steel band. Tournaments in football, basketball and other competitive sports are played against other schools in the locality. These are well supported by pupils. The curriculum is also enriched by educational visits to places of historic and cultural interest and visitors are an important feature of the curriculum. Year 5 pupils attend an annual residential course at Sayers' Croft in Surrey.

31. The curriculum offered to pupils with English as an additional language is broad and balanced. They also have equal opportunities in all aspects of school life. They participate in the rich and varied experiences on offer beyond the formal National Curriculum. In addition they receive full support in language to enable them to make good progress in their learning.

32. Provision for spiritual development is very good. In religious education lessons, pupils gain a very good understanding and appreciation of some of the beliefs of major world faiths such as Islam and Judaism as well as Christianity. Assemblies meet statutory requirements, are of good quality and provide pupils with very good opportunities to reflect and develop their spiritual awareness. A very good example was observed during the inspection week when an outside visitor spoke about the history of Big Ben. This resulted in the pupils in Key Stage 2 being involved in a whole school mathematical problem of working out the number of chimes the clock had made over 141 years. There are planned opportunities for pupils to experience

wonder such as in a science lesson when the Year 3 class was discussing whether or not materials were opaque, translucent or transparent. In the school grounds there are special quiet places where pupils can sit and reflect.

33. Provision for moral development is very good. All pupils are expected to behave well, and are taught very effectively to know right from wrong from an early age. Adults constantly reinforce thoughtful and good behaviour. The very well planned assemblies regularly contain stories, which remind pupils about moral issues. For example the story of 'The Everlasting Shoes' related the moral issue that meanness does not pay. All adults, who work in the school, including the midday staff and the school administration officer, provide good role models throughout the school day.

34. Very good provision is made for social development. A well ordered framework has been created within which social development blossoms. All pupils show courtesy towards passing adults and pupils as they move maturely through the school. Pupils relate well towards each other in particular when they work together in groups such as in English and religious education lessons. In the dining hall at lunchtime and in the playground they eat and play very well together. The playground itself has been thoughtfully designed so that pupils can sit and chat quietly during break times.

35. The provision for cultural development is excellent and pervades all areas of the curriculum through topics in lessons, extra curricular activities and informative displays around the school. Pupils learn to value and understand their own cultural traditions through many links with the community, educational visits and visitors invited into school. For example, an Albanian mother told a story whilst her daughter translated to the class. The school uses parents very well to come in and share their many cultures. A very successful event was organised where parents were invited into school to work with their children, which resulted in everyone sharing their cultures with each other. This was very highly thought of by the parents at the pre-inspection meeting. The school identifies cultures that do not have a high profile and works specifically on these areas. For example, they identified a lack of awareness of the Japanese culture and, therefore, promoted Japanese art which resulted in the building of a wooden stage, screen and seating area in the playground which is decorated with Japanese patterns. The school has continued to build on the sound provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education noted at the last inspection through many subjects of the curriculum, including art, English, music and geography.

36. The school has good links with the local community, which provides important opportunities to contribute to pupils' learning. For example, the curator of the Westminster archives is a regular visitor to the school and contributes to lessons on the local environment. Her high quality presentation to school assembly was well received by the whole school. Reading volunteers from the local business world make weekly visits to support pupils' reading skills. The Westminster Independent School sends eight Sixth Form pupils twice a week to help in classes and after school clubs, teaching French, helping on the computer and playing chess. Imperial College sends science undergraduates to help in school and this has been very beneficial to pupils in Key Stage 2. The school works in partnership with the

parents in celebrating special events such as a day in Black History Month. An artist in residence works with different classes in producing, for example, silk printing. This is a rich and rewarding experience for the pupils. The school grew daffodils to celebrate the birthday of the Queen.

37. Constructive relationships are fostered with partner institutions. There is very close liaison with the secondary school to which pupils transfer. Their Year 7 co-ordinator makes several visits to the school during the year and pupils from Millbank make a series of introductory visits to the school to which they transfer. Pupils with special educational needs are discussed regularly with the Educational Psychologist. The Education Welfare officer and the school nurse make regular routine visits to the school. Sporting and musical activities engage pupils in meeting others within the authority.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The previous inspection report stated that many aspects of the support, guidance and welfare agenda were effective, with policies and procedures in place that promote good disciplines and an effective, positive and supportive school ethos. The school continues to provide strong support for its pupils and families and parents are very approving of the school's performance in this area. The school's aims are well defined and relevant to pupils and parents from a multi-cultural background. They receive a clear message that the school wishes to have an equal relationship, in which respect for the individual whatever race, creed or religion is of paramount importance. The headteacher and all staff are committed, conscientious and hard working and work together as a strong team in discharging their pastoral duties.

39. The staff have a very detailed knowledge of all of the pupils in their care, and the harmony and integration of all parts of the school family ensure that all pupils have a very happy and positive experience of their first years in school. The teacher's individual knowledge is well documented through very good pastoral school records and there is an impressive focus on children with problems through weekly staff meetings, and review meetings with the headteacher every term. Pupils' needs are evaluated very effectively and outside professional services are used well to produce good results. The provision for the very high number of pupils with special educational needs and the high quality of the provision for pupils, and sometimes parents, with English as an additional language is a testimony to the determination of the staff to ensure that all pupils gain a good start in their school lives. Individual educational plans are good, targets are reviewed termly with parents, and the plans are regularly consulted by teachers. There is a strong focus on the inclusion of children in all activities, and the school behaviour policy gives confidence to this process as well as giving strong motivation to all pupils.

40. Procedures for assessing the achievements of children in the Early years Unit are good, and these subsequently inform teaching effectively. In both key stages, procedures for assessing pupil's attainment and progress are good and work is now well matched to individuals' needs in the core subjects. The school has examples of moderated work for each

subject and these are available for parents. The school has made good use of assessment information, including national test results, to guide education initiatives and curriculum planning in the medium term. The grouping arrangements for literacy and science initiatives are direct results of this analysis.

41. The school assesses pupils at the end of a cycle of work and does not consistently use ongoing assessment to inform short-term, daily planning.

42. The support, guidance and welfare agenda is well underpinned by sufficient policies and procedures, which have been developed internally or are from the local education authority. The school welcomes outside agencies, such as the education welfare officer and the police, to support the pupils if there are problems. A succession of interesting visitors to assemblies is especially stimulating and greatly adds to the all-pervading happy environment that is very reassuring for pupils. The school nurse is an invaluable resource who gives confidence to parents from ethnic minorities and helps to deliver advice about sex education, hygiene and healthy eating. Child protection procedures are good and staff are vigilant. Most staff have received thorough training and there is a very good involvement of social services both on specific problems as they arise and to conduct ongoing quarterly reviews.

43. A major pillar of support and guidance for the pupils is the behaviour policy, which is well implemented throughout the school. The school has very high expectations regarding behaviour, and the underlying culture is to raise the self-esteem of individual children through positive behaviour strategies in the school's behaviour policy and to celebrate their heritage and achievements. The mature implementation of this behaviour policy is not overbearing and is effective in producing very good relationships. There are comprehensive rewards that pupils find motivating, and sanctions, called consequences, are in place and cause the pupil to think about any poor behaviour. School rules are displayed in all classrooms and pupils have been involved in their production. Playground rules are very well presented and indicate their importance. Despite there being occasional fighting and swearing in the playground, the school is very vigilant to any poor behaviour and the use of a 'time out' system is immediate and allows pupils to calm down and reflect on their actions. The school has been very effective in eliminating any bullying, inter-personal conflict, or racial incidents between pupils, and the tolerance and harmony within the school are distinctive features. The behaviour strategies are well supported by the recognition of the school council, which discusses real issues concerning behaviour, and regular circle time in each class which explores pupils' relationships and feelings.

44. Attendance procedures are very good and have produced a significant improvement in attendance levels. However, these levels are still below national norms. The headteacher is personally involved in the drive to improve this area of weakness in the school's performance. Parents are made increasingly aware of their statutory obligations as they advance in the school, but in-term holidays are high and authorised absence is increased by religious observance days. Punctuality is poor but the weekly punctuality cup is particularly prized by the pupils and is starting to produce a good focus. To date, the headteacher's considerable efforts have received only satisfactory support from the local authority's school welfare service.

45. The school is a safe environment for all pupils, staff and parents. The school is particularly mindful of the need for care on the many stone stairs, which are a feature of the main building. The school does not keep sufficient records of minor accidents to allow any evaluation of accident rates within the school. It is aware of a significant level of 'knockdown accidents' within the busy, congested playground, and has developed class rotas for particular types of play. The school has a very good complement of first aiders and emergency procedures are effective. Health and safety procedures are good, are well underpinned by a policy, and by the joint abilities of the headteacher and premises manager. However, there is currently no school governor with the brief to oversee the implementation of the policy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The previous report judged that there was a successful and effective partnership between parents and the school, with good communications. This aspect of the school has further strengthened. Parents now express a very high level of approval, which has been consistent over many years. They clearly recognise and value the efforts of the headteacher and staff in developing their child's education and especially respecting and celebrating their individual cultural traditions. All families, whatever their race, colour or lack of familiarity with the requirements of life in Britain, are made to feel instantly welcome and embraced into the rich harmony of the school. Dissatisfaction levels are very low.

47. Although there are few parents who help in the school, all parents are encouraged to come into the school and increasingly they feel confident in being alongside their children within the school environment. The celebration assembly held on Fridays is very well attended. Induction procedures are good, and on joining the school, parents are able to use the on-site parents' room. The weekly parents' 'story sack' work shop is a good demonstration of the importance the school places on helping parents who do not have English as a first language. The school does not have a formal parents association but there are organised gatherings of parents, such as the international evening, which demonstrate a harmonious and thriving community. The parent governors are extremely enthusiastic and are looking to play an increasing role in the school.

48. The communications with parents are very good. However, formal documents, such as the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents, although of good quality, do not fully observe statutory requirements. Policies and procedures are well written and these are prominently displayed so that parents can view them at their leisure. Other written communications are sometimes translated, and are precise and timely and give parents sufficient time to react. The parents' room and school general areas are displayed with a wealth of information for parents on literacy and numeracy, or family help and are very relevant to many disadvantaged parents. A major strength of the school's communications with parents is its commitment to be an approachable school that listens. Informal communications flourish at either end of the day in the school playground or in classrooms. Parental problems are dealt with immediately rather than being allowed to grow. All formal open evenings are well attended including the annual governors' meeting for parents. Annual reports are satisfactory and give good judgements of pupil's performance. The report sets targets but does not seek pupil's or parent's written views.

49. The educational partnership is a developing feature, as many parents have only limited confidence in their relationship with the school. Some parents have not fully realised their statutory responsibilities within the English education system in regard to attendance and punctuality, and only seven out of ten parents have signed the home-school agreement despite the school's best efforts. The school is continually analysing its performance in its relationship with parents and teachers have very good records of their contacts with their parents. Its detection of problems within the Bangladeshi community regarding open evenings was impressive and shows a real concern and care. The school gives instruction in many aspects of the curriculum including literacy, numeracy and information technology. Parents have a good awareness of topic work and are requested to participate in regular homework. Most parents are very approving of the school's stance on homework and many are very dedicated and serious in the discharge of their duties. The school further encourages this enthusiasm for learning by regular trips to the local library. There is a close collaboration with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and together they produce meaningful individual educational plans, with targets which produce good progress. All parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed from the moment the needs are identified. Termly visits are arranged for parents to discuss the needs of their children with the emphasis on ways in which they can help the children at home. The parents are very supportive and as a result many pupils do not remain on the register beyond stage two of the code of practice. They meet regularly with class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator and are kept well-informed of their children's progress. Parents of children who have statements of special educational needs are invited to attend the regular reviews and are keen to do so. Their views are taken into account in the setting of the revised targets. External support agencies are involved in monitoring the provision made for pupils with special educational needs. The Speech and Language Therapist visits the school on a regular basis and liaises with class teachers, the special needs teachers and the special needs co-ordinator. The Local Education Authority Psychologist is a regular visitor as are the school nurse, the school doctor, and the Education Welfare Officer. The Social Services representative comes in to the school on a regular basis and is involved in a variety of ways linked to the special educational needs of pupils. The school has established good relationships with parents who need language support. They are consulted about their children's progress. Some parents participate in class lessons, where pupils hear their own language spoken and interpreted.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher and her team who provide a clear and uncompromising sense of direction to its work. The governing body is supportive and the chair is very effective, but other governors are not all as confident as she. The school evaluates its own performance very well and has taken positive and effective action based on the results. Specific grants are used very well. The school understands and applies the principles of best value well. The school is very well staffed, has very good accommodation and sufficient resources to teach the curriculum effectively.

51. The headteacher has remarkably clear view on how the school should be and this is communicated very effectively to the staff. They share the vision and consequently the school operates as a harmonious unit. Teamwork is a strength in the school. This is particularly impressive as the school has had a high turnover of staff in recent years, several at a senior level. The school's aims are appropriate and reflected in its positive ethos. They lead to an

appropriately small number of whole school rules which are applied consistently. This means that the school's aims are very well reflected in the day to day running of the school. For example, the school sets out to value each child as an individual and nurture mutual respect. These properties were clearly seen in the lessons observed. Delegation to the deputy headteacher is effective and has contributed to raising standards as the headteacher and deputy headteacher have shared direct monitoring of the school's work. Some of this role is shared by co-ordinators but the school recognises that there is still some work to do here. Nevertheless, the use of the deputy headteacher to support higher attaining pupils in class has proved its worth in the radically improved results in national tests this year. The provision for special educational needs is very good. It is managed temporarily by the headteacher pending the take up of responsibility by the co-ordinator appointed for the new term. The policy for special educational needs meets statutory requirements. The governor for special educational needs is aware of the issues involved and plays a full part as 'critical friend'. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. The management of provision for language support is good and as a result the pupils make good progress.

52. The governing body is supportive but some members still lack confidence. The school has recognised this and is carrying out a skills audit of members, with a view to forming more effective committees with clearer terms of reference. Plans are also in hand to use this to decide on further training. Consequently, despite visits from 'governors of the month', the role of governors in shaping the school's direction is limited. They do, however, have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

53. The school monitors its own performance very well. Teachers' plans are scrutinised as well as pupils' completed work. Lessons are observed and targets set for further development. The completed test papers are analysed by gender, race and background and the information used well. For example, an analysis of the science test papers in 1999 showed that pupils with English as an additional language had problems with some of the subject specific vocabulary. This was addressed with the twin effects of making radical improvements to the test results in 2000 and making the teaching of subject specific vocabulary a strength across all subjects. Alongside the monitoring of teaching, the school has very effective systems for performance management. These include regular staff development interviews with the headteacher, the setting of targets and a purposeful review of those targets. These also feed, in a general way, into the school development plan. This sets out priorities for the current year, based on an analysis of need, using the schools results in national tests and its aims. It defines its aims well, but the raising of standards is only implicit within the document. The headteacher involves staff and the chair of governors and they contribute well to the plan, but as yet the contributions of the overall governing body have not been sought. The plan has some appreciation of the next three years but remains a short term document.

54. Financial planning is very detailed and thorough and enables the school to make very good use of all its resources. The school's priorities have been well thought through and all expenditures are mutually agreed by staff. Through the headteacher's awareness and a good evaluation of supplier's quotations prior to order, the school makes a very good use of evaluating value for money in many of its financial decisions. The school carries out the principles of the finance procedures manual as evidenced by the latest audit, so that there is no risk to the school of any irregularities. The school administration is very efficient and makes good use of information technology. The headteacher has an excellent awareness of available grants and awards, and the negotiation with the adjacent building site has yielded a substantial

amount of money for noise pollution, which will be used to improve playground facilities during next year. The funding for special educational needs and other funding from special grants is carefully targeted and managed.

55. A distinctive feature of the school's accounts is the extremely high unit cost per pupil in comparison with other schools. All areas of school expenditure are very high except the area of staff development but there is no evidence to suggest that any member of staff is inappropriately trained to deliver the national curriculum. The presentation of the school's accounts distorts the picture of the unit costs of the school, as the income from facilities and services is very high. This income derives from lettings of an unused building; however, when the costs involved are taken into account, the net contribution to the school's finances is small. The previously high carry-forward balance is now in line with guidelines. The funding from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant has now been devolved into the school and, along with the funding for pupils with a special educational need, the school can provide a formidable amount of resource to support its welfare and educational agendas.

56. The school is well staffed and new members of staff are introduced to the school's procedures well. Newly qualified teachers are well supported as they make the transition from college to school. The school makes very good use of the staff at its disposal, as is evidenced by the recent strides made in standards brought about, in part, by the intelligent use of support staff and the deputy headteacher to support specific groups. The accommodation, though old, is very good. The rooms are well used and suitable for teaching the subjects of the curriculum. All available surfaces are in use to celebrate aspects of pupils' success or their cultures. The school has sufficient resources to teach the whole curriculum including good provision of resources for pupils with special educational needs, particularly reading texts which are appropriate to the age and experience of all pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve standards further the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- Increase the effectiveness of the governing body by:
(*Paragraph: 52*)
 - * Using the forthcoming audit of the skills and aptitudes of members to ensure that further training is appropriately focused;
 - * Ensuring that the members of all committees are as active as they are able to be within the school;
 - * Extending the scope of the governor of the month scheme with clear objectives for visits.

58. In addition, the governing body may wish to include the following, more minor points in its action plan:

- Ensure that the planning for investigative science allows all pupils to design experiments without undue teacher direction.
(*Paragraphs: 83,84*)
- Continue the school's best efforts to improve punctuality and attendance.
(*Paragraphs: 16, 18, 44*)
- Ensure the prospectus and the governing body's annual report to parents contain all of the required information.
(*Paragraph: 48*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	18	49	32	0	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)	25	192
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	99

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	32

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	117

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	7
	Girls	11	12	9
	Total	23	23	16
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	77 (62)	77 (55)	53 (55)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	12	9	7
	Girls	12	8	7
	Total	24	17	14
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	80 (59)	57 (55)	47 (52)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	14	14	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	6
	Girls	11	6	6
	Total	18	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	67 (60)	46 (28)	44 (36)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	5	6	5
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	48 (68)	48 (52)	48 (52)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	22
Black – African heritage	27
Black – other	2
Indian	4
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	31
Chinese	1
White	31
Any other minority ethnic group	36

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.8
Average class size	27.1

Education support staff:

YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	638547.00
Total expenditure	638665.00
Expenditure per pupil	2944.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	58367.00
Balance carried forward to next year	58249.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	217
Number of questionnaires returned	128

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	26	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	34	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	39	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	34	11	0	3
The teaching is good.	65	33	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	30	2	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	26	4	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	29	2	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	66	33	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	23	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	28	3	1	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	30	6	2	11

Other issues raised by parents

No significant issues raised

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

59. Children enter the Early Years Unit at three years old and at the time of the inspection there were 31 children under five on roll. All start in the Nursery, where they attend full time prior to joining the reception class. The curriculum for the under-fives is closely planned to the required areas of learning for children of this age. Planning in the nursery is thorough and all adults contribute to the sound day to day planning and assessment. These daily assessments are used to inform the next step in learning. The teachers are aware of the necessity to collate this useful information into concise individual profiles, which clearly shows progression through the areas of learning. Links between the nursery and the reception classes are very good and at certain times in the week the children work together. The children who are under five visit the main school for some assemblies. Learning resources are sound to promote all areas of learning. There is a secure, well-equipped outdoor play area, which contains sound quality apparatus for outdoor play sessions.

60. What the children know, understand and can do on entry to nursery is below average. Most have English as an additional language and seven children are identified as having special educational needs. Five children have been identified as having speech and language difficulties. All under-fives are assessed on entry to the reception class. This year the majority of children attained standards below what is expected nationally. Overall, they make good progress as they pass through the Early Years Unit.

61. The quality of teaching is good overall. Good teaching is characterised by thorough planning which is well matched to the children's individual needs. Sessions are well resourced with a good range of activities, which allow the children to acquire new knowledge, develop skills and increase their understanding. Most groups are well managed and the adults demonstrate good questioning, give clear instructions and have high expectations regarding the importance of developing good listening skills. This results in the children selecting activities confidently and concentrating well on all they do. Relationships between all adults and children in the nursery and the reception class are good.

Personal and Social development

62. The children quickly adapt to the routines of the nursery. They all enjoy coming to school. The children display positive attitudes to learning from an early age and most demonstrate good listening skills. Behaviour is good in the nursery and in the reception class. The children begin to develop good, constructive relationships with adults and with each other. Most work well in pairs and small groups and develop the skills necessary to work independently. The children select activities with confidence, although a few find it difficult to share equipment at times. Teaching is good and the children make good progress. The majority of children reach the expected levels in their personal and social development by the time they are five because it is promoted well in all they do.

Language and Literacy

63. Many children under five are reluctant speakers with limited understanding of basic vocabulary. A small minority of the children has been identified as having speech and language difficulties. The majority demonstrates good listening skills. These children talk using limited vocabulary as they recall information about themselves, their experiences and their families. Most children enjoy listening to stories, handle books well and understand their purpose. They learn to recognise their names and as they get older and they begin to learn the names and sounds of some letters as they attempt to write their names. The children record their ideas and experiences through drawing and writing at levels slightly below those expected for their ages. The quality of teaching of language and literacy is good; however, the teachers do not always promote basic letter formation sufficiently. Most children are on course to achieve standards, which are below those expected nationally by the age of five. The children make good progress in this area of learning.

Mathematics

64. The children work enthusiastically, in particular on practical mathematical activities. In the nursery they count different objects such as the number of children in their group. Most attempt to name and write numbers up to five and above. The children in the nursery demonstrate a limited mathematical vocabulary for example many are confused with the 'taller' and 'shorter'. The higher attainers demonstrate accurate understanding of basic vocabulary related to the tasks they are given. Under fives in the reception class gradually increase their understanding of basic numbers and many confidently write numbers, but many write with incorrect number formation. Teachers do not consistently correct this. By the age of five a few understand terms such as 'one more than'. A few are able to count up to ten forwards and backwards. Most children name two-dimensional shapes but are confused between three-dimensional shapes. Clear teaching aids on the classroom walls reinforce mathematical concepts taught. Teaching is good and the children make good progress. By the age of five most children will not achieve standards which are expected nationally.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

65. The children begin to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the world, in particular their local area. Many recall the number on their house or the name of the road where they live. They understand that they live near to their school and begin to develop an understanding of the local area by naming things they see on their way to school. They name places in the wider world, which they have visited, such as Trinidad, Ireland and Brixton. Many children are confused with the idea of old, older and oldest. Limited understanding of basic language hinders progress in this area. No child could name a person who lived a long time ago. Most recognise that some things are alive and talk about the plants they see in the playground, which are growing. They know that plants need water in order to live. The children learn body parts such as 'leg' and 'neck' and transfer this knowledge to the animals they draw. They talk in a limited way as they recall how they make dough by mixing flour and salt with water but show amazement as blue food colouring instantly changes the colour. A few use the word 'melt' as they describe what happens to ice-cream and chocolate, but no-one could say what makes substances melt. With varying degrees of success all develop skills needed to cut and stick materials together. They make models of animals from re-cycled materials and giraffes with moving limbs. The children use simple computer programs

confidently, which teach and reinforce many areas of learning for example reading and counting. Most develop a sound knowledge of the keyboard, moving the cursor around the screen confidently and naming the main parts of the computer. Teaching is sound in this area of learning and by the age of five most children achieve standards below those expected nationally in this area.

Creative development

66. The children use a good range of techniques for example painting, printing, drawing and collage. All children select materials and equipment to develop interesting pieces of artwork such as collages of plants and mini beasts and three-dimensional artwork as they roll marbles in paint and create a spider's web effect and then make three-dimensional spiders. The majority of children demonstrate good listening skills as they follow instructions carefully. All children have opportunities to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through role-play sessions in the classrooms and playground. They do this with confidence and obvious enjoyment as they play in the 'Rainforest Café'. The children have regular opportunities to sing songs and begin to name and confidently play percussion instruments. Good teaching and support are enabling most of the children to reach the standards expected nationally by the age of five.

Physical development

67. All children who are under five have regular opportunities for outdoor play in a safe and secure area. They use the good range of equipment, including wheeled vehicles and climbing apparatus, with enthusiasm and enjoyment. However, these sessions are often not well planned and many children run about aimlessly. The outdoor activities do not always develop skills and knowledge systematically. The children take part in physical activities in the hall, which enables them to begin to develop body awareness and to move with confidence. Most listen and follow instructions, but many children have difficulty finding a space and regularly bump into one another. Adults do not always address this area sufficiently. Most children handle scissors, paint brushes and pencils with sound control, although a significant number of children in the nursery are identified as having difficulties in this area. They play well together with construction toys and cut out shapes using malleable materials such as Play Doh. Teaching is sound overall. The children make sound progress but most do not reach the expected levels by the age of five.

ENGLISH

68. Pupils make good progress in English as they move through the school because teaching is consistently good and all classes are well managed with teachers having high expectations regarding behaviour and the completion of tasks they are given.

69. Test results for the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 showed standards to be well below the national average in both reading and writing. When compared with similar schools standards were average for reading and below average in writing. The standards in 2000 show significant improvement, especially in reading although too few still gain the highest levels in writing. The results of the 1999 assessment and tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that standards in English were below average compared with all schools nationally. Standards

were well above average when compared with similar schools. However, the results for 2000 again show significant improvements, especially at the higher levels. The attainment of boys and girls was broadly similar at the end of both key stages. Over the last four years, the results in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 have shown a downwards trend; in reading, there has been no discernible trend. At Key Stage 2 results are below average but have followed the national trend up to 1999.

70. Inspection evidence concentrates on the pupils currently in school and considers a wider range of evidence. This indicates that standards in all areas of English are broadly as would be expected at the end of both key stages. This represents good achievement for these pupils as they have limited language skills when they join the school. Progress is good as pupils move through both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress with the extra support they receive. Pupils in both key stages, make good progress because they listen carefully, develop good relationships with adults who work with them and generally demonstrate good attitudes to learning.

71. In Key Stage 1, many pupils have limited basic vocabulary and have difficulty extending their ideas when answering questions. However teachers consistently promote speaking skills well in English lessons by asking clear questions and giving pupils time to answer. By the end of the key stage, most talk confidently and listen well to instructions. Pupils with limited English talk and communicate with less confidence in classes, but most communicate appropriately with each other. Pupils in Key Stage 2 talk with more confidence, listen carefully and make suitable responses. They have opportunities in assemblies to develop their speaking skills. However, discussions with pupils show that many still have a limited vocabulary when attempting to talk about what they are doing. By the time they leave the school, pupils develop ideas thoughtfully and confidently in speaking and their listening skills are well developed. Pupils use their skills to justify their viewpoint and respond accurately to questions.

72. In Key Stage 1, pupils read confidently but many have a limited vocabulary which means that those pupils read with weak understanding. Most identify the title and author of the books they read and begin to use their knowledge of sounds to help them. From an early age, pupils develop basic skills in exploring a text to gain information and understanding. They learn how words are used, begin to extend their vocabulary and most develop a sound understanding of what a sentence is. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils read showing a basic understanding of the text and sound expression. Pupils know initial sounds and some blends. They use the pictures and the sounds to guess new words. Higher attaining pupils use the sense of the sentence to guess new words. Most pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils read with a growing understanding of the text and, usually, reasonable expression. Higher and average attaining pupils develop higher order reading skills such as predicting events as they get older. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are able to read with good expression, both for enjoyment and for information. Many pupils distinguish well between fact and fiction and explore the text to identify key features of the stories they read. A few have difficulty understanding words which they read fluently in texts, such as 'intricate'.

73. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils begin to write in sentences and most have some idea of when to use a capital letter and a full stop. They spell familiar words independently and spelling skills are developed each week as they learn to spell useful words. Pupils begin to form letters correctly and most begin to join their letters. Handwriting is taught systematically to all age groups so that it begins to show consistent size of letters and is generally well presented. Most pupils demonstrate the confidence to write independently from an early age. However progress is restricted in writing when teachers do not consistently promote the use of dictionaries and wordbanks. In Key Stage 2, pupils write for a wide range of different purposes. For example, they write diary extracts and imaginative stories, which have clear introductions, paragraphs and concise conclusions. Pupils develop appropriate skills in drafting and re-drafting work as they move through the school. By the age of 11, they demonstrate sound research skills. When they leave the school, most pupils are able to join their writing fluently and legibly. Pupils confidently take notes, draft and re-draft pieces of work, and presentation is good.

74. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive in both key stages. They enjoy their lessons, are well motivated and respond well to tasks they are given. They settle quickly to work, show high standards of behaviour and demonstrate good listening skills. They generally sustain concentration and work hard. Pupils work well together and develop good relationships with each other and other adults.

75. The quality of teaching in the *literacy hour* and during other English lessons is good: over three-quarters of the teaching seen was at least good and fully a third was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have worked hard to implement the guidance and materials of the National Literacy Strategy into their teaching. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted across all year groups and in all subject areas. In particular, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking skills in the well-planned assemblies. Listening skills are developed successfully in all year groups because all teachers have high expectations regarding the importance of listening accurately. Teachers also systematically teach the basic skills necessary to improve written work, including an emphasis on the importance of basic sentence construction and correct letter formation and encouraging pupils to join up their letters when writing. Marking is good and generally tells the pupils what they need to do in order to improve. Teachers consistently have high expectations regarding completion of tasks and presenting work neatly and this has an impact on the standards in writing throughout the school. However, they do not consistently use resources such as wordbanks and dictionaries sufficiently to enhance independent writing. Most teachers manage their classes well and have high expectations regarding behaviour and manage difficult behaviour very well. Where teaching is very good, subject specific vocabulary is reinforced both orally and visually. Support staff are used very well which enables all pupils including those with special educational needs, the higher attaining, and those with English as an additional language to make very good progress during the lesson, as they use dictionaries and thesauri to enhance their work. Activities are very well matched to the pupils' needs and the teacher values the pupils' contributions highly, which gives all pupils confidence and builds their self esteem.

76. The subject is well led. Lessons are well planned and evaluated. Teaching has been monitored and this has resulted in the improvements seen in the 2000 tests results and observed in classrooms. Procedures for assessment are good and teachers develop data, which they use to determine the next stage of learning. All pupils in Key Stage 2 have English

targets to work to and these have recently been introduced in Year 2. Resources are adequate to teach the literacy hour. Texts such as *The Mean Hyena*'– a Malawi folk tale, are well chosen and promote the pupils' cultural development well. All classrooms have adequate class libraries and pupils visit the local library and develop sound library skills. There is limited evidence to show that information technology is used to support the subject. Displays in classrooms celebrate the work of the pupils and, in the best instances, reinforce literacy skills taught.

MATHEMATICS

77. Standards have improved markedly over the last year in mathematics. This is because teaching is now good throughout the school, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, so that pupils are learning effectively in lessons.

78. On the basis of the average grade obtained, the school's performance in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds was very low; that is, the school was in the bottom 5 per cent of schools nationally. If the school is compared only to those with a similar intake, the same picture emerges. An analysis of the results shows that no pupils gained the higher level, Level 3, and too large a number did not attain the expected Level 2. This followed a period of significant and consistent decline from 1996, when results were above average. However, the school analysed the reasons for the decline and took effective action. This, combined with a change of teaching personnel at Christmas, has resulted in provisional results for the latest group of pupils, who took the tests in 2000, that are significantly improved. More than a quarter of the pupils gained the higher Level 3 and only 6 per cent did not attain at least the expected Level 2. Inspection evidence, which is broader than pure tests and also includes an analysis of completed work and discussions with pupils, confirms the view that the school has made great strides in the last year and that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are now broadly as to be expected. When the background of the pupils is considered – many do not speak English as their first language and attainment on entry to the school is below average – this represents good levels of achievement for these pupils.

79. There is a similar story in Key Stage 2. When the school's results in 1999 are compared with those for all schools nationally, they are well below average. When compared only with those schools with a similar intake, they are better, but still below average. This is because a large proportion of pupils did not attain even Level 3 when the expected level is Level 4. There is no secure trend to recent results up to 1999. However, the current provisional results for 2000 show a significant improvement in the proportions gaining at least the expected Level 4 from 46 per cent to 75 per cent, although the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 is similar. The analysis of completed work and classroom observations again confirm that pupils are now working broadly at the expected level. This has taken place against a background of changing personnel in Key Stage 2: few of the Key Stage 2 staff have been in post for more than a couple of years – and represents good achievement for the pupils.

80. The story of average standards is repeated throughout the school in the lessons observed. In almost all of the lessons observed, pupils were working at the expected levels in class. Pupils with special educational needs or who do not speak English as their first language make similar gains to their peers. This is because they receive very effective support in the classroom from well qualified and effective support teachers or other staff. Indeed, it

often not possible to locate the pupils with a special need in the whole class situation. A notable strength in the deployment of support staff is the use of 'murmur teaching', in which the teacher's exposition to the whole class is discreetly paraphrased and expanded upon for those pupils being supported. This effectively avoids the scenario in which pupils are cast adrift in whole class sessions, whilst support staff passively listen to the teacher.

81. Pupils respond well to mathematics lessons. In every lesson observed their attitudes and behaviour were judged at least sound; the vast majority was good or better with pupils exhibiting very good attitudes and behaviour in over half of the lessons seen. Unusually, most of the very good behaviour was seen in Key Stage 2. This is a testament to the quality of teaching throughout the school, a strength of which is the management of behaviour and the motivation of pupils. This results in lessons that have a rapid pace and in which the teacher can concentrate on the job of teaching without getting side-tracked to deal with disruptive behaviour. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the relationships with the teacher were first rate and the teacher used her ongoing informal assessment through questions and observation effectively. This meant that all pupils were appropriately challenged and they applied considerable intellectual effort. Consequently, their learning was enhanced. This same lesson included some imaginative methods of maintaining pace in the introductory section as pupils passed board pens from one to another to complete a partial number line. Very good questioning made pupils think – for example, when they were asked to judge their work, they realised that for numbers with a range of -12 to 37 , the appropriate place for zero was not in the middle as they had previously supposed always to be the case. The teaching and learning in this lesson were both very good. The pattern of very good teaching and learning was repeated in three of the seven lessons observed. Teaching was good in one lesson and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. When teaching, whilst still satisfactory, had less sparkle, this followed from tasks that were pitched too high. This happened in a Year 2 lesson on fractions, in which pupils were expected to work in too abstract a manner and consequently struggled with the task. Even so, the pupils remained keen and tried hard with the task. The introduction had made the point that half of a half is a quarter effectively using pictures and the teacher subsequently noted pupils' difficulties and took effective steps to remedy the matter. Consequently, by the end of the lesson, pupils had consolidated their knowledge of halves and quarters, albeit to a lesser degree than the teacher had anticipated.

82. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She receives regular time to carry out her managerial duties and this has been effectively used. Planning and pupils' work are scrutinised and appropriate steps taken. Assessment and teaching follow the suggestions in the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been well implemented. A useful standards file has been compiled which, in common with other subjects, is on display for any interested visitor to the school to peruse. Monitoring of the subject has been effective in raising standards. However, resources are only just adequate for the delivery of numeracy, especially for the introductory mental mathematics section.

SCIENCE

83. The teaching of science and pupils' achievements have markedly improved over the last year so that both are now good. However, some areas still require attention.

84. Teachers' assessments of seven year olds in science in 1999 showed that attainment in science was significantly below average: the proportion of pupils gaining at least the expected Level 2 was very low and the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was well below average. A similar picture emerged when the school was compared only to those with a similar intake. However, there was substantial improvement in the assessments in 2000. The proportion gaining at least the expected level increased from 47 per cent to 79 per cent in 2000; no pupils gained the higher level in 1999 whereas 15 per cent did so in 2000. At the end of Key Stage 2, performance overall in science was well below average in 1999 when compared to all schools, and below the average of similar schools. This happened because large numbers of pupils did not achieve the expected Level 4. The school was surprised by these results: it had been concentrating on the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Nevertheless, the test papers were analysed and it was discovered that a major weakness in pupils' completed test papers was their limited knowledge of scientific vocabulary. It is perhaps unsurprising that this was most marked in the papers completed by pupils with English as an additional language. The school then devised a means of correcting this by focusing on this aspect in lessons. This had an immediate and beneficial effect. The proportion of 11 year olds gaining at least the expected Level 4 leapt from 44 per cent in 1999 to 83 per cent in 2000; the proportion gaining the higher level doubled to 38 per cent. Inspection evidence confirms both that standards are now broadly average in science and that vocabulary is well emphasised. However, pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to design and carry out an experiment entirely independently: in the investigative lessons seen, the teacher had thoughtfully provided exactly the right materials to carry out the investigation. Pupils' only input was, for example, to decide whether to put food into open or closed containers to check whether cooking delays food going bad. Nevertheless, older pupils did understand what is meant by a fair test and could describe how a test was made to be fair. When the background of the pupils is taken into account, especially the limited English of many, these judgements represent good achievement by pupils in both key stages.

85. Pupils enjoy science. They have a good attitude and behave well. When carrying out investigations, they share out responsibilities sensibly and co-operate effectively. They enjoy answering questions. Relationships in the class are generally good so that teachers' management of behaviour is discreet and learning is enhanced. Teaching was invariably satisfactory or better, and was good in all but one lesson. The weakness noted above concerning investigative methods prevented learning, and hence teaching, from being very good in the lessons seen. Nevertheless, the teaching of science is good overall. A notable feature of the teaching in many lessons is the quality of support that pupils with a particular need receive. In addition to high quality support for pupils with a special need or whose English is weak, the school also provides support for groups of more able pupils from the deputy headteacher. This was particularly effective in extending them and making them think more closely about their work. This happened in a Year 1 lesson about sound. In this lesson, pupils investigated whether sound became fainter further from its source. Her group discussed how they could ensure that the sound – a clarinet – could have a consistent volume which led them to an understanding of fair testing. In each lesson in which more able pupils were supported in this way, open questions were used very effectively. This meant that pupils were

discreetly led to the outcomes the teacher wanted, whilst still working hard and thinking hard and their learning was accelerated. In all lessons, the use of questions was a strength, guiding pupils to the appropriate conclusions whilst challenging them to think carefully about phenomena. When recapping previous work, the teacher in a Year 6 lesson also used praise well when a pupil recalled that yeast does not need oxygen.

86. The subject is led effectively by the co-ordinator. The school has adopted a model scheme of work, but although there is a useful standards file for teachers to refer to, there is currently no consistent system of assessment throughout the school. Pupils' work is scrutinised and points for action are then made informally. The subject is adequately resourced.

ART

87. Pupils' attainment in art is in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum by the end of Key Stage 1 and above those expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress as they move through the school.

88. Judgements are based on discussions with teachers and pupils and a scrutiny of planning and work around the school. There has been an improvement in standards in art and in the provision of art since the last inspection.

89. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop a very good understanding of the difference between two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork. They show a sound understanding of observational drawing as they draw their favourite flowers accurately. In Year 1, they work together after studying the work of Vincent Van Gogh and create an impressive 'Class Sunflower Picture'. There are good cross-curricular links between art, history and information technology, as pupils use their senses to describe and draw objects such as irons from the past. They program a simple robot to find treasure on an island then draw carefully and colour the island. In Years 1 and 2, pupils carefully begin to use sketchbooks maturely. They lift out sketches they have previously completed and turn them into collages. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently use a variety of techniques and materials and develop artwork of which they are proud.

90. Pupils in Year 3 continue to develop observational drawings as they look at faces and using wax crayons to draw portraits. They listen to African music while looking at pattern in African art and carefully develop geometric shape patterns. Continuing with this theme, pupils listen very well to instructions and make their own stencils to work further on pattern. After studying the work of Claude Monet, pupils in Year 3 work together with tissue paper to create their own picture of 'Waterlilies'. Year 4 pupils work with a visiting artist on the technique of silk screen-printing. They work co-operatively and produce attractive, colourful banners. Pupils in Year 5 study paintings by Picasso and carefully create portions of his paintings. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show good observational drawing skills, use

sketchbooks very well and work confidently using a wide range of materials, tools and techniques. They show increasing accuracy to detail when drawing and painting. Pupils in Year 6 develop a good understanding of the work of different artists, as they look at numerous famous pieces of art by Renoir, Van Gogh and Monet and, using pastels, create their own pictures.

91. Pupils' response to art is very good. They enjoy art lessons and recall what they have done in previous art lessons with accuracy and obvious enjoyment. They work very well together are supportive of one another and listen well to instructions.

92. The teaching of art is consistently good and often very good. Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge. Planning for lessons is thorough and lessons are very well resourced. Teachers give clear instructions, promote subject specific vocabulary well and have high expectations with regard to listening accurately and behaving well. They interact well within groups and give good supportive and helpful comments to the pupils. This high quality teaching results in pupils developing techniques confidently and allows them to use a large variety of materials and tools. All pupils are encouraged to develop their own sketchbook, and these show the good progress pupils make as they move through the school.

93. Throughout the school, art displays create an attractive visual environment and clearly demonstrate the good progress pupils make as they get older. There are clear guidelines for teachers to follow which ensures the progressive teaching of skills knowledge and understanding in art. There is little use of information technology to support the art curriculum but the co-ordinator is aware of this. Pupils have good opportunities to work in clay, develop three-dimensional artwork and to use their art skills in other subjects, such as in English, history, and mathematics.

94. The subject is well led with enthusiasm and knowledge by the co-ordinator. She maintains a standards file of work for reference and to assist with assessment. The school has developed very good links with the Tate Britain as all pupils have the opportunity to visit the gallery regularly. Indeed, pupils were invited to the opening of the new Tate Modern gallery to act as ambassadors and receive guests. They regularly visit during lunchtimes and look at famous pictures such as *The Swimming Pool* by Leon Kossoff. The art curriculum greatly enhances the pupils' cultural development. Recent projects have promoted art from Bangladesh and Japan.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson specifically given over to design and technology. This was because the school's response to the previous report's criticisms included the use of whole days set aside to a complete design and technology project so that the momentum can be maintained. Judgements are therefore based on the lesson observed, in Year 4, a scrutiny of completed work, photographic evidence and displays, and formal and informal discussions with staff and pupils. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about teaching overall, other than it is at least satisfactory.

96. The standards observed in completed work are broadly as would be expected at the end of each key stage. Pupils are increasingly designing to a brief and producing objects that are

broadly similar to their design intentions. As they move through Key Stage 2, they begin to evaluate their work against their own criteria. Pupils take the subject seriously and, in the lesson observed, evaluated their own work honestly and frankly. This was a follow-up lesson to a design and technology day some ten days earlier when pupils had designed and made torches or model lighthouses. The concept of evaluation was relatively new, and the teacher introduced this effectively by considering a magazine advertisement. This activity made valuable links with literacy and promoted pupils' vocabulary, for example introducing words like 'durable', and promoted pupils speaking and listening skills well. Pupils were attentive and listened closely, taking part sensibly, for example, by taking turns to speak. The written work that followed was matched to individual pupils' needs and their social development was well promoted through the grouping that the teacher used. Pupils were able to identify areas for improvement, for example, realising that an uncovered bulb for a lighthouse could be unreliable. Although most of the class worked hard and learned well, a minority of boys was unable to settle down to the individual task and consequently did not learn enough in the lesson.

97. The subject is enthusiastically led by the deputy headteacher who has constructed a useful standards file of photographic evidence to help staff judge how standards should be. The school has adopted a model scheme of work for the subject. The subject is adequately resourced, for example, each room has a tool board on the wall with tools appropriate to the age of the pupils

GEOGRAPHY

98. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in geography. Judgements on teaching and pupils' learning are therefore based on scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school, discussions with the co-ordinator, with teachers and with pupils.

99. The standard of attainment in geography at the end of both key stages is in line with that expected of pupils of similar age. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have experience and understanding of the local environment by carefully observing and recording their route from home to school. They make observations and record information on 'My House', 'My Shop' and 'My Park'. They study and discuss ways in which traffic is controlled and relate this to safety in, and care of, the environment. They develop their skill of interpreting landscape when they identify features near the school through their examination of aerial photographs. They make comparisons with a contrasting environment when they compare life in St Lucia with that in England. They share the first hand knowledge of pupils who have experienced life in other parts of the world to extend their knowledge and understanding of how climatic and other factors affect people's lives. They become familiar with locating places on the globe and on the world map and share their experiences of places they have visited. They study the physical and human aspects of the seaside and discuss the forces at work in shaping the landscape.

100. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have extended their knowledge of the local environment through analysis of environmental change. For example Year 4 examined the scale model brought into their lesson by the architect developing the site adjacent to the school. They ask searching questions and discuss the impact on the rest of the community. Their mapping skills are extended, for example, by colour coding the land use functions of

buildings near the school on a large-scale map of the area. They contrast a village environment with a major city when they study Ewhurst and Cranleigh villages during their residential field week at Sayers' Croft. Displays of their investigations are seen outside the classroom. Pupils employ their investigative skills in geography to examine ways in which the environment could be improved. In their study of world rivers, pupils in Key Stage 2 become familiar with the appropriate vocabulary and understand how rivers alter the landscape through erosion and transportation of material. By revisiting topics pupils extend their skills and knowledge of different aspects of geography, as for example in mapwork. By the time they leave school their skills of geographical investigation are well established.

101. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. National model schemes of work have been adopted and on-going assessment has been improved and used to inform planning.

102. Analysis of pupils' work and others sources indicate that pupils are well taught and make satisfactory progress in their learning. They acquire skills of map reading and interpretation as a result of their lessons in Key Stage 1 drawing maps of their route to and from school. They gain new knowledge of places by using atlases and globes to locate places studied and places visited by them. By the time pupils leave school they have developed investigative skills in physical geography through their study of mountains and rivers. They develop aspects of citizenship and concern for environmental issues in their survey of redevelopment in the locality. They establish links with other subjects through their study of St Lucia and the island of Struay. Work is systematically marked with suggestions for improvements.

103. The geography curriculum is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a clear vision for the development of the subject. Resources are adequate for the delivery of the curriculum.

HISTORY

104. Standards attained in history at the end of both key stages are in line with those expected for pupils of similar age and ability nationally. History is accorded an important place in the school curriculum and pupils make satisfactory progress, in spite of the increased focus on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

105. In Key Stage 1 pupils demonstrate a very clear understanding of past and present when comparing the dolls which their parents and grandparents had, with dolls of today. They note the use of plastics in construction against metal used in the past. They survey buildings in the locality noting the contrasts between old and new for example terraced houses versus modern skyscrapers. They ask questions about the past, compare bath times in Victorian days with today, analyse how members of the family have changed with the passing of time, and sequence experiences in their own lives from the past to the present. They develop their awareness of chronology using artefacts, pictures of the past and stories about life in other

times. They make detailed studies of the life of people in the past, for example Florence Nightingale, and understand the difference between hospitals then and now. They learn about The Great Fire of London and show enthusiasm in answering questions about their studies. Pupils acquire skills of enquiry by finding out about leisure pursuits in the past using history books and relevant artefacts. They note how things are different now. With the aid of a time line they develop a sense of chronology sequencing events and objects.

106. In Key Stage 2 pupils learn about selected periods of the history of Britain from Roman times to the present. They use a time line to sequence major events over the period of Viking invasions of Britain, understand the reasons behind the invasions and appreciate the impact of their occupation. They understand the importance of archaeology in the reconstruction of the past. They know that there are many myths and legends derived from Ancient Greece and they understand that some aspects of our culture derive from Greek civilisation, including the origin of the Olympic games, and their contributions to science, mathematics, language and architecture. By the end of the key stage pupils understand how the monarchy influenced the lives of people in Tudor times and the impact of past decisions on the present. They make detailed studies of the life of Henry VIII and know that the role and power of the monarchy differ considerably from today. They recognise the value of diaries in the reconstruction of events in the past, for example, the diaries of Pepys and Anne of Cleves. Year 6 pupils demonstrate different ways of remembering the past through extended writing. They begin to develop their own research skills to find out more about topics in history, from books, videos, artefacts and by asking questions.

107. From the analysis of pupils' work in their textbooks, work on display and through talking to teachers and pupils it is evident that pupils acquire a sound sense of chronology as a result of what they are taught. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and work is well planned across year groups. Good use is made of visits to museums and places of historical interest. Key Stage 1 pupils visit the Pollocks Toy Museum. In Key Stage 2 pupils visit the Tate Britain and the Westminster Archives. These educational visits help pupils to make progress in their learning and contribute positively to the standards attained. As a result of good planning pupils achieve well as they move through the school. From the study of toys in the early years pupils progress to analysing the reasons for differences between the past and the present and to empathise with those who endured difficult circumstances during the Plague and the Great Fire of London. Teachers' communication strategies enable pupils to develop confidence when talking about the past as they build up their vocabulary of historical terms. They show respect for property and handle artefacts with care.

108. The management of the subject is effective. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject and is dedicated to the task. There is a clear policy and a scheme of work based on the optional Qualification and Curriculum Authority recommendations which help to ensure continuity and progression. Monitoring is done through involvement with planning across year groups but there is as yet a lack of opportunities to monitor teaching, in order to ensure consistency across the subject and the dissemination of good practice. There are good procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress but these are in the early stage of development. There are adequate resources for the delivery of the curriculum and plans for the acquisition of computer software to support the teaching of history. The subject makes an important contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of the pupils in the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

109. The standards achieved in information and communication technology are in line with expectations nationally. The previous inspection report stated that work in information technology was not sufficiently developed across the school and that this reduced pupils' skills and competence. The school has fully addressed this issue and there has been a very significant improvement in provision for the subject. The regular inclusion of information technology in teachers' plans for all subjects now provides better opportunities for pupils to acquire the necessary practice and skill. Teachers are fully involved in the direct teaching of information technology, there is a co-ordinator for the subject, there is a policy and scheme of work detailing what is to be taught, learnt by pupils and how work is to be assessed. Clear guidance and support for teachers through in-service training have been provided and there is enthusiasm and commitment to improve standards in the subject.

110. In Key Stage 1 pupils log on using the correct password and select the right icon for set up, operate the mouse competently to select choices, combine text and graphics and save their own work. They can click and drag, rotate and label, combining text and graphics as for example when working on the parts of a plant. They begin to present information in graph form. Pie charts indicate favourite colours of members of the class. By the end of the key stage pupils are able to word process their written work direct on to the computer, make corrections and print the finished product.

111. In Key Stage 2 pupils explore simulations and options, make choices and operate the system effectively. By the time they leave school they have the ability to re-organise text, change font, alter the size of print and change the pattern of presentation. Pupils demonstrate good understanding of the use of word processing and use art programs to combine text and pictures. They import and export images, cut and paste material to create a satisfactory end product, such as the greeting cards produced by pupils in Year 3. By the end of the key stage, pupils give commands to the computer, gain experience in control and monitoring as for example in Year 6 designing and monitoring 'The Sensored House' and operate a digital camera to enter pictures on to a database. They record and analyse information on data bases, for example in mathematics using spreadsheets to decide best value in shopping at supermarkets. Pupils load and save files and use a colour printer. They develop research skills using CD ROMs to find information on topics being studied. They have a good understanding of the social implications of advances in information technology and its revolutionary impact. They send and receive e-mail and use the internet to obtain information from web sites. They take a keen interest in the school web site on which newsletters are to be recorded for parental access.

112. Progress is satisfactory particularly when pupils are able to use information technology to advance their study in other subjects. They are highly motivated when using the computer especially if there is an element of gaming or competing against themselves to achieve a high score. In this way learning is accelerated. Regular practice on the computer reinforces the skills they learn and enables them to proceed to the next stage because they concentrate for a longer period than during less practical activities. They improve their mouse and keyboard skills when dragging and attaching shapes.

113. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school due to the positive attitude of the teaching staff and the support given by the co-ordinator to develop confidence in the teaching of the subject. Work is well planned and pupils are given clear instructions in order to achieve the lesson objectives. Attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils are interested in the subject and are eager to use the equipment. They concentrate well when working individually in the classroom, generally in pairs, supporting each other and sharing the operations fairly. They show respect for property by taking care in the way they handle the computers. They can work independently and have confidence to learn from their mistakes by correcting them. Pupils are generally well behaved, they listen attentively during lessons. They have good relationships with one another and this contributes positively to attainment and progress.

114. The subject is efficiently managed by the co-ordinator who is enthusiastic about the subject, having assumed responsibility in January this year. Since then she has run twice weekly sessions for the staff in order to increase their confidence and plan their teaching. In addition, arrangements were made to use the expertise of a parent to provide training for staff and to assist in the classroom. Monitoring of work is carried out by lesson observations, analysis of the work of pupils throughout the school and through regular discussions with colleagues. There is a clear policy and a detailed scheme of work based on national model schemes. Computers are used effectively to support all other subjects of the curriculum. The provision of resources is adequate. Each classroom has a computer which is used by pupils during lesson time. Plans are in hand for the provision of a computer suite containing enough computers for a class of 30 working in pairs, to be in use during the Autumn term of this year, and this should be instrumental in raising standards even further.

MUSIC

115. Standards of attainment in music in both key stages compare satisfactorily with those of pupils of similar age nationally. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

116. In Key Stage 1 pupils sing confidently and play simple percussion instruments with sound regard to the beat of the tune. They listen attentively to parts being demonstrated and appraise the performance given. They recognise pitch and make adjustments accordingly. Pupils listen well to music from different cultures and from different times, recognise different types of sounds, and relate these to their own preferences. They maintain rhythm by beating out a regular pulse as an accompaniment to songs. They recognise fast and slow movements and practise pitch changes during singing practice. They add accompaniments to simple songs using a variety of simple percussion instruments. They sing in tune, performing confidently using clear diction, well-modulated voices and in harmony. They use clear expression, convey mood and meaning, and respond enthusiastically to musical pieces recognising changes in tempo and moods. They appreciate rhythm while listening to, and clapping the beats for different sections of songs.

117. In Key Stage 2 pupils sing in two parts, maintaining pitch and harmony, and sing in rounds to create a melodious sound. They express moods and feelings clearly, for example when performing the Russian song *The Hopak*, through rhythm and correct articulation. They pay attention to diction and convey the changing moods reflected in the composition. Pupils gain insights into the cultural background of compositions and the expression of environmental conditions in music. They contrast the atmosphere conveyed by this composition with the

music of the steel band. They take turns to conduct confidently as the rest of the class sing a two part round as, for example, when singing *Friends in the Park*. They are critical in their appraisal of music to which they have listened, and explain reasons for their judgements. They persevere to improve their performance. By the end of the key stage pupils are given opportunities to perform the rhythm from a written score using untuned percussion instruments.

118. The school benefits from the work of a qualified musician who teaches music throughout the school, and this ensures continuity and maintains a satisfactory standard of performance. The teaching of music is always at least sound and some good teaching was seen. When teaching is good, pupils know exactly what is expected of them because the teacher explains very carefully how to, for example, play the instruments. She shows clear expectations that pupils will listen carefully; as a consequence they do so. The specialist vocabulary of music is reinforced well. Music education is enhanced by the steel band club, where pupils develop their skills in performing competent and entertaining renditions.

119. Since the last inspection attention has been given to composing music. But there is scope for greater emphasis on this aspect of music education. The school recognises this and has plans to provide opportunities for composing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Pupils' achievements in physical education are in line with those expected nationally by the end of both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make good progress as they move through the school.

121. Judgements are based on discussions with teachers and a scrutiny of planning as only three lessons were observed during the inspection, one being a gymnastics lesson and the other two games lessons.

122. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate sound control of movement and balance. They perform safely on the floor and when using large apparatus as they plan and perform simple sequences. All pupils move apparatus safely at the beginning and the end of the lesson. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils perform safely alone, in small groups and as team members. They sustain energetic activity over suitable periods of time and show that they understand the effect of exercise on their bodies. They develop a good idea of the skills necessary to play games such as football and rounders. All pupils take up the opportunity to learn to swim and by the end of Key Stage 2 the majority can swim the expected 25 metres.

123. Pupils change into appropriate kit and participate well in all lessons. A strong feature in all lessons, in particular in Year 6, was the enthusiasm with which pupils participated as they worked together in small teams. They listen well to instructions, generally work well together and support each other in all activities.

124. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, for example, a games lesson in Year 6 was physically challenging and contained purposeful activities which developed the skills needed to play football. Teachers are supportive to the needs of all pupils and develop very good relationships with their pupils. They have high expectations regarding behaviour and listening to instructions.

125. The school places a high priority on the teaching of physical education. Accommodation for physical education lessons consists of two spacious halls and a medium sized playground. The space, in particular the outside area, is used well not only by the pupils in Millbank School but by pupils from other local schools who come and play games tournaments throughout the year. Millbank School has done very well in these tournaments this year. Visitors who are invited into the school greatly enhance the provision for physical education lessons, for example the male and female football specialists who came in and worked with Years 5 and 6. The school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. Girls and boys happily play football alongside each other. All pupils have the opportunity to attend a dance club, where outside specialists such as an African dancer work with them after school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. By the end of both key stages pupils attain standards in religious education which are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

127. Pupils make good progress in religious education lessons because they have good attitudes to lessons and show enthusiasm for the wide range of tasks that are offered, such as watching videos, listening to speakers, discussing issues and taking part in visits to local places of interest. A strength, which contributes to the attainment of the pupils in all years, is their ability to discuss the issues with which they are presented, sensitively and maturely.

128. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils begin to identify how beliefs and values can affect the lives of individuals and groups. Most recall facts about other world faiths such as Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Pupils in Year 1 learn about how Muslims use water to prepare for prayer. In Year 2, they identify and discuss as a class, people in the local community and distinguish between the people in school and those outside school. Pupils in Year 3 learn about the key features of Muslim worship. In Year 4, pupils discuss and then write sensitively, about the importance of relationships and the different things they bring to their lives. Pupils in Year 5 identify the leadership qualities of the prophet Mohammed and begin to recognise these properties in other leaders they know, for example their headteacher.

129. Progress is satisfactory for all pupils as they move through the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils record their work in the form of pictures and brief written accounts that show sound understanding of facts they have learnt. In lessons they listen well to stories and information. Pupils discuss and write about feelings such as anger and worry. They discuss special journeys and relate them to their own experiences. All pupils have the opportunity to visit different places of worship, which gives them an insight into the different religions they study. All pupils recall facts about festivals such as Easter, Christmas and Eid. Pupils

continue to make good progress as they move through Key Stage 2. All develop good listening skills and articulate well what they have learnt. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak a language other than English at home make sound progress when they receive extra support from their teachers and helpers.

130. The pupils concentrate well on the tasks they are given. When given the opportunity, they co-operate very well in groups. A good example of this was observed during a Year 3 class when Muslim pupils led group discussions about their faith. Pupils confidently recall information they have been previously taught and talk confidently in whole class situations about their own experiences.

131. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers build on previous learning and questions are used well to challenge thinking. Planning is generally sound and in the best lessons, teachers reinforce subject specific vocabulary orally and visually. Teachers encourage pupils to use dictionaries to enhance their independent writing skills and give pupils the opportunity to take notes and develop note-taking skills. Work is generally well presented to pupils and matched correctly to their abilities.

132. Provision for religious education meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has developed a clear standards file for the subject to guide teachers' assessments. The teachers plan well to the Agreed Syllabus. Resources are sound to promote the subject but information technology is not fully used to support the subject.