

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLBEACH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

London

LEA area: Lewisham

Unique reference number: 100688

Headteacher: Colleen Boxall

Reporting inspector: John Eadie  
20191

Dates of inspection: 20 to 23 May 2002

Inspection number: 196930

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Doggett Road  
Catford  
London

Postcode: SE6 4QB

Telephone number: 0208 690 4713

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms Pauline Bonner

Date of previous inspection: 3 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20191	John Eadie	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector		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?
30853	Susan Betts	Team inspector	Science Geography History	
22452	Mary Farman	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education	
8316	Jo O'Hare	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15015	Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language Information and communication technology	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holbeach Primary School is a three storey Victorian building situated in an urban area near to Catford shopping centre in south east London. There are 400 pupils from the age of four to 11 in the school, of whom 58 are in the reception classes. A further 47 children attend the nursery part time. The school has almost 100 more pupils than it did five years ago. The surrounding area consists of a mix of Victorian terraced private homes and council flats. It is an area of high unemployment with many single parents. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. There is a significant number of children who join the school after the normal time of entry. A wide range of ethnic groups is represented in the school, the largest single group, though less than half the school, being Black British, Caribbean or African. Sixty six pupils do not speak English as their first language, a much higher proportion than that found in most schools. Most children have well below expected levels of attainment on entry to the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average and there is a well above average number of pupils with statements of special need, which reflects the nature of the intake. There is a range of special needs represented, including specific or moderate learning difficulties, speech and language needs and a significant group has emotional or behavioural problems.

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

Holbeach Primary School is a very good school. The pupils achieve very well from their levels of attainment on entry to the school. These levels of achievement are largely due to the very good teaching. The school is very well led and managed and gives very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The pupils make very good progress through the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good, and all staff work together very well as a team.
- Standards in religious education, art and music are above average.
- The school is very well led and managed and there is a very strong commitment to improvement.
- The school provides a very rich and varied curriculum for the pupils.
- There are excellent relationships within the school, which form the basis of the very good personal development and behaviour of the pupils. The pupils' social development is excellent.
- The school cares very well for the pupils and has created a harmonious climate in which the pupils flourish and find it easy to learn. All pupils, whatever their background, are fully included in all aspects of school life and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect between all members of the school family.

#### **What could be improved**

- These areas for improvement should be read in the context of this being a very good school; they do not represent weaknesses, rather they are pointers to refine further the very good practice that already exists.
- Standards in science.
- Continuing to adapt the present schemes of work to suit the needs of the pupils.
- Standards of spoken English.

*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 June 1997 and has made very good progress since then. Standards have risen since 1997 and the school won a School Achievement Award in 2000 for progress in performance in the National Curriculum tests. The quality of teaching and learning and the leadership

and management of the school have improved significantly. All the key issues from the last report have been very well addressed and the school has also made good improvements in other areas which were identified as minor weaknesses. There is an excellent shared commitment to continual improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	C	E	C	well above average A above average B
mathematics	C	B	E	C	average C below average D
science	B	C	E	D	well below average E

Despite the well below average results at the end of Year 6 in 2001, largely due to the unusually high proportion of pupils who joined that group during the last few years, progress has been significant in recent years. Closer analysis of the statistics kept by the school shows that this cohort made at least satisfactory progress from their scores in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 1997. Progress in English was good and many pupils of lower ability made good progress in all three subjects. However, some more able pupils did not make satisfactory progress. The indications are that standards have risen this year. The judgement of the inspection is that standards are average in English and mathematics by the time the pupils leave and just below average in science as there are insufficient pupils attaining at above average levels in this subject. The very challenging targets set for the tests in English and mathematics in 2001 were not met, largely because of the significant number of pupils with special educational needs in that group. The targets are equally challenging this year, but look likely to be met. Standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 have not been rising at the same rate as those at 11, but are getting closer to the average. Standards in religious education, art and design and music are judged to be above average. Standards in information and communication technology and in all other subjects are average. Bearing in mind their well below average levels of attainment on entry to the school, the children make very good progress in the nursery and reception classes to reach almost average levels of attainment by the time they start in Year 1. The pupils generally achieve very well during their time in the school. The pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs also make very good progress during their time in the school, largely due to the well planned and very effective support that they receive.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very good attitudes to their work and to their school. These very good attitudes have a significant impact on the learning and achievement of the pupils.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is very good. There are an above average number of exclusions, largely due to the high standards set by the school, which are fully understood by the pupils.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is very good and relationships at all levels in the school are excellent.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is below the national average and there is a well



	above average rate of unauthorised absence. There are a number of pupils who are often late for school.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall. This very good provision ensures that the pupils learn very well. Some excellent lessons were seen in which the teachers planned an exciting range of activities that inspired the pupils to try their very best. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good and the pupils therefore learn the skills of literacy and numeracy very well. The teachers are particularly good at ensuring that the very different needs of all the pupils in their classes are met very well and all groups of pupils are able to make very good progress through the school. The only exception to this sometimes occurs in science where the more able are not always sufficiently challenged. The teachers manage their classes very well and this ensures that there is a calm and purposeful working environment in which the pupils find it easy to learn. The teachers have high expectations of how well the pupils can perform and how well they should behave. The pupils rise very well to these expectations and put a lot of effort into their work. A further strength of the teaching is the way that the support staff work with the teachers. These staff are well trained and given clear guidance in what they can do to help the pupils to make the best possible progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a very good curriculum to the pupils, which is rich, relevant, vibrant and very varied. There are very good strategies to ensure that all pupils can gain maximum benefit from the curriculum according to their needs and aptitudes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified early and they are provided with very good support enabling them to make very good progress relative to their abilities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good provision is made for those pupils for whom English is not their first language. There are very good levels of support and these pupils are quickly able to enjoy fully all that the school has to offer. However, there is not as much support in the nursery as in the rest of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development and the pupils are developing well into responsible young citizens. Excellent provision is made for their social development and very good provision for their spiritual, moral and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for the pupils. There are very good procedures in place for assessing the progress of the pupils and these help the teachers to keep track of their progress very well. In some subjects there are no clear records of these assessments that the teachers can use to plan for the next stage in learning.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works very hard to involve the parents in the work of their children and the school. These efforts are not totally successful and there is a satisfactory partnership with parents.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school and is very ably supported by her deputy. There is an ethos of teamwork about the staff to which coordinators contribute with their hard work. The role of a few coordinators is not as well developed as others.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They are knowledgeable, well informed and very supportive of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very good at evaluating its performance and acting on areas found for development.
The strategic use of resources	There is a very good number of teachers and support staff and the accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. All resources are used very well and the principles of best value are applied very 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"> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of homework.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside school.</li> </ul>

The inspectors heartily agree with all positive parental views. However, the judgement of the inspection team is that there is a good range of activities outside school and that homework, although fairly informal, makes a valid contribution to the pupils' learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 Standards of work seen in the inspection in English and mathematics are average by the end of Year 6. Standards are below average in science. The pupils of all ability levels achieve very well during their time in the school. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection.

Strengths in standards achieved are:

- standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in 2001 were well above average in reading and above average in mathematics compared with similar schools;
- the pupils, including those with English as an additional language, those with special educational needs and those with particular gifts and talents make very good progress through the school;
- standards in religious education, art and design and music are above expected levels by the time the pupils leave the school.

Areas for development are:

- standards in science are not as good as standards in English and mathematics;
- standards in speaking;
- standards in swimming.

- 2 Evidence from the inspection shows that standards in English and mathematics are average and standards in science are just below average by the end of Year 6. The results in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals they were average in English and mathematics and below average in science. However, more than half the pupils who took the tests for 11 year olds had joined the school since the tests for seven year olds in 1997. Many of these pupils had special educational needs and although the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels was not far below average, there were too few pupils attaining at the higher levels. Taking the pupils that had completed the course through from Year 2 to Year 6, statistics show that these pupils made satisfactory progress overall, with the progress being good in English and for the less able pupils. Apart from the results in 2001, there has been a significant improvement in standards in recent years. The major factor in the improvement in standards between the test results for 2001 and the findings of the inspection is that the school has addressed the needs of the more able pupils in English and mathematics and an average proportion are now working at above average levels. Children join the school with well below average attainment so the pupils of all ability levels make very good progress through the school to attain average standards by the time they leave.
- 3 Inspection evidence shows standards to be average in mathematics and below average in English and science by the end of Year 2. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001, standards in reading and mathematics were below average when compared to all schools nationally. In writing they were well below average. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and average in writing. Standards in the tests for seven year olds have been improving in recent years, though not as rapidly as those at the age of 11.
- 4 From a well below average starting point, the children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> make very good progress but attainment remains below expectations by the time they start the subjects of the National Curriculum in Year 1. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in many aspects of their mathematical and physical development to reach average standards in these areas of learning. They also make very good gains in knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage contains the children in the nursery and reception classes.

and understanding of the world, particularly in their use of information and communication technology and in their knowledge to prepare them for studying geography and history. The preliminary knowledge of science and design and technology are not so well developed. In communication, language and literacy, the teachers focus on their listening skills and these are developed well. Many children join the school with poorly developed speaking skills and these are still below average by the time they start in Year 1. The children's creative skills are developed well, particularly as the teachers encourage the use of role play to develop their speaking and listening skills. However, their abilities in art and music are not so well developed.

- 5 Standards in English and in literacy are below average by the end of Year 2. They are below average in all aspects of the subject by this age. In speaking and listening the pupils' listening skills are better than their speaking, reflecting the emphasis placed on listening by the teachers and the relatively poor standards of spoken English when children join the school. In both reading and writing a significant number of pupils attain average levels. The basic skills of reading are developed appropriately and those of word building are very well taught in Years 1 and 2. Standards in writing are improving owing to well planned structures that the school has put in place to improve the pupils' progress in this aspect. The pupils make good progress in English in Years 1 and 2.
- 6 The standards that the pupils achieve in English and literacy are average by the end of Year 6. The pupils make very good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. The pupils listen well but speaking skills are below average. Although they show that they have understood questions by their answers and comments, the pupils do not answer in depth sufficiently often. There is no structure for developing these speaking skills in all subjects of the curriculum. A significant number of the pupils reads very well, reaching above average standards. Most of the pupils read with understanding and expression. Their technical skills of writing are satisfactory, and these have improved since the last inspection.
- 7 Standards in mathematics and numeracy are average by the end of Year 2 and the pupils make good progress in this subject in Years 1 and 2. Standards in using and applying mathematics are sound. This is because of the recent emphasis the school has placed on this aspect. The pupils of this age have well developed skills in number work and good understanding of the properties of shapes. Their ability in using non standard measures is not so well developed.
- 8 The pupils achieve average standards in mathematics and numeracy by Year 6. They use and can explain a wide variety of strategies for solving problems. The school's recent emphasis on this aspect has led to rising standards, but as this initiative has only been in place for a fairly short time standards are still average. The pupils have well developed knowledge and ability with the four rules and can carry out complex calculations, often being able to manage these in their heads. This has improved as a result of the effectiveness with which the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The pupils have good understanding of shapes but their skills of measuring accurately are only just adequate. The pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of how to collect, collate and analyse data. Their use of information and communication technology, for example in creating spreadsheets, is developing but not consistent. The pupils make very good progress in mathematics from Year 3 to Year 6.
- 9 Standards in science are below average by Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. The pupils make good progress in science through the school, though this progress is faster in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6 at present. This is because of the opportunities for a particularly rich range of experiences in these year groups which engage and enthuse the pupils leading to faster learning. The major reason for the below average standards in this subject is that the teachers are not consistently challenging the more able pupils. Some of these pupils are not, therefore, always making the progress of which they are capable. Standards in experimental and investigative science are average, since the pupils have some freedom to engage in scientific enquiry and research at their own level. Standards in all other aspects of the subject are below average as too few pupils are attaining at the higher levels.
- 10 Standards of work seen during the inspection in religious education, art and design and music throughout the school are above standards normally expected of pupils of this age. The pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 have good knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, customs and traditions of a suitably wide range of world religions. This is partly because of the good use the school makes

of the variety of religions represented in the school. In art and design, the pupils have very good opportunities to work in a wide range of two dimensional media and the results they achieve are often very good. Opportunities for three dimensional work are more limited and standards in this area are satisfactory. Standards in music are good throughout the school owing to the high quality specialist teaching. Although this teaching has only been in place for a short time in composing and performing it is already having an impact on standards. Because of this teaching the pupils are currently making very good progress in music. Standards in all other subjects are in line with expectations by Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils of all ability levels make very good progress through the school in the range of subjects. However, this progress is faster in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, than in Years 1 and 2.

- 11 The level of attainment of pupils who have special educational needs is low. The pupils make very good progress relative to their abilities because the school is committed to inclusion and has organised a very strong programme of support. Their progress has improved since the previous inspection. The Caribbean pupils benefit from the well structured Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant programme. As a result they reverse the national trend, as boys achieve as well as girls. The level of attainment of pupils with English as an additional language is overall below average. All the pupils, except those in the nursery afternoon session, make very good progress. The school has identified a number of pupils with particular gifts and talents and is making good provision for them ensuring that they are making very good progress according to their abilities.

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

- 12 Throughout the school the pupils' attitudes and values are very good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when attitudes were considered to be generally good.

Strengths in this aspect are:

- the pupils' attitudes, including enthusiasm for school and interest in activities;
- the pupils' behaviour;
- the pupils share well; they are thoughtful and caring;
- the pupils work well together;
- the school is an harmonious community;
- relationships are excellent;
- there is mutual respect between pupils and staff.

An area for improvement is:

- attendance.

- 13 The pupils are very enthusiastic and eager to come to school. They have extremely positive attitudes to their work and this is very supportive to teaching and learning. All pupils are very keen and involved in all of the activities, which take place throughout the school. The pupils are extremely attentive in lessons; they follow instructions very well and settle quickly to any tasks set. They exhibit very good levels of concentration. In groups, pupils share well and exchange ideas; they also work well independently. At lunch and play times they all play very well together with older pupils often seen looking after younger ones.

- 14 The children in the Foundation Stage display a lively interest and concentration particularly in those activities which they find relevant to their stage of curiosity. For instance when a teacher gives them a splodge of red, blue or green paint directly on the desks in front of them, they hesitate for a moment, thinking "can this be real?" then they are busy exploring, and experiencing the joys of hand printing. Throughout the inspection their behaviour was very good. They respond particularly well to the opportunities for free choice of activities which the teachers give them. They develop very good relationships with each other, based on the excellent model which the staff present to them.

- 15 There is a very calm and caring atmosphere in the school. All members of staff provide excellent role models for the pupils. As a result of this all pupils are interested in the life of the school and behave very well, complying with school and classroom rules. All the children are very clear of the difference between right and wrong and of the outcomes if they do misbehave. The pupils are extremely polite

and say good morning and afternoon to any adult they see as they go through the school. Doors are held open and they wait for others to go through before them. Behaviour on the playground and in the dining hall is very good, supported well by the midday staff who are clearly well regarded by the pupils. Behaviour in lessons is very good. Although there are some children who exhibit some difficult behaviour, this is well managed by the teachers. All pupils benefit, as lessons are not disrupted by the behaviour of the few. Although there is a relatively high incidence of exclusions this is because the school takes a strong line on discipline matters. The result of this is the very good behaviour seen during the inspection. Pupils spoken to were very supportive of the stance taken by the school. Parents are pleased with the standard of behaviour throughout the school which they feel is a credit to the school.

- 16 Relationships throughout the school are excellent. This supports the very good behaviour as pupils do their best to please all the adults and there is mutual respect between pupils and staff. In discussion, the pupils confirmed that they feel the school is “like a big team”, a judgement the inspection team confirms.
- 17 No examples of any oppressive behaviour, bullying, racism or sexism was seen during the inspection and all pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They show a very good level of respect for the feelings of others. Resources are always handled carefully and no graffiti or vandalism was seen during the inspection.
- 18 In lessons pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and they respond well to these opportunities. In a Year 2 art and design lesson, resources were laid out for pupils but they were encouraged to cut out additional pieces to weave in and out. In a science lesson they were encouraged to experiment with water. Children are also encouraged to take other responsibilities such as taking the registers to the school office. Two children from each class, with the exception of the reception classes, are elected on to the school council and they take their role very seriously. Older children have responsibility for looking after the lunch trolleys, collecting the lunch boxes, then bringing the trolleys into school.
- 19 Many pupils who have English as an additional language initially feel strange and sometimes bewildered in their new surroundings. The staff have a good awareness of this and deal with the pupils very sensitively. Consequently the pupils soon feel more at ease, and after a short period are quite at home here. They develop a positive self image as the teachers and support assistants strive to help them relate well to their peers and to master the language sufficiently to work effectively in class.
- 20 The pupils who have special educational needs develop a positive self image as the teachers and support assistants strive to help them to achieve success in their work. The pupils with the most severe difficulties keep up their interest and concentration because of the cheerful encouragement from their teachers and support assistants. The adults have established close bonds of trust and friendship, so that the pupils develop a positive attitude to their work and display steadily improving behaviour.
- 21 At the time of the last inspection attendance was in line with the national average, this has now fallen and is below the national average, with very high unauthorised absence. Attendance is therefore unsatisfactory. Registrations are very efficient, but often disrupted by the significant number of pupils who regularly arrive late to school.

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

- 22 The quality of teaching is very good and the consequent quality of learning is therefore very good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good. The quality of teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.

Strengths in teaching and learning are:

- specialist teaching for music;

- the teachers' management of the pupils, so creating a good working environment;
- the teaching and the learning of basic skills;
- the teachers' expectations of the pupils' performance and behaviour;
- inclusion as a teaching component and particularly the inclusive use of questions;
- the use of support staff and resources;
- the teachers inspire pupils to learn.

An area for development is:

- the needs of the more able pupils are not always met in science.

23 Nearly nine out of ten lessons observed during the inspection were good or better with nearly half being very good or excellent. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The standard is consistently at least good for all year groups in the school, though it is particularly good in the reception classes and in Years 5 and 6. This results in the overall teaching in the Foundation Stage and for Years 3 to 6 being very good. This very good teaching is having a significant impact on the learning and the progress of the pupils, which is also very good. A significant factor in the above average standards being attained in music is the specialist teaching that the pupils are enjoying for this subject. This teaching is providing very valuable experiences for the pupils and they are consequently learning very well in this subject.

24 The teachers have particularly high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and of how they should behave. The high standards of discipline set, and the teachers' very good classroom management skills, ensure that there is a purposeful working environment in which it is easy for the pupils to learn. The high expectations and encouragement given ensure that the pupils of all ability levels try their hardest and they consequently achieve very well. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson on fractions and percentages in Year 5, the teacher had provided very carefully planned and very challenging work for all groups in the class. The pupils were consequently very well motivated to learn and worked very hard and achieved very well throughout the lesson. This enthusiasm for learning and the resulting productivity and interest was a feature of many lessons. For example, in an excellent English lesson in Year 5, the teacher set a scene of excitement and anticipation in her introduction that inspired her pupils to learn through the lesson.

25 The teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects that they are expected to teach. This ensures that they deliver lessons confidently and particularly teach basic skills very well. The pupils therefore acquire these basic skills very well. For example, in an excellent lesson in a reception class, the teacher knew exactly how best to teach the particular sounds that were the focus for the day and the pupils learnt these very well. The teachers plan very well when extra help is available in their lessons. All support staff know exactly what is required of them and which pupils they are expected to be working with. The clear instructions provided for them lead not only to the pupils with whom they are working learning very well, but the teachers are then able to focus their attention more effectively on the smaller group remaining, who also learn very well. The support staff are well guided in how to help while the teacher is presenting the lesson and engaging in a question and answer session. The support staff ensure that individuals or small groups are involved and are participating fully in the session, often by rephrasing questions so that the less able pupils can understand at their level. The teachers also use resources very well. For example in an excellent history lesson in Year 5, the pupils had been encouraged to use a wide range of resources, such as the Internet, inspectors reports, photos and a visit, to produce very good work on comparisons between a Victorian school and Holbeach.

26 Although the teachers mostly share the learning objective for the lesson with their pupils, this is not always the case. Some teachers ask the question: "What do you think you have achieved?" at the end of the lesson, but again, this is not always the case. An opportunity is therefore sometimes missed to enhance the pupils' knowledge of what they are to learn or have learnt. This results in the work in some lessons lacking sufficient focus, as the pupils are unsure of where the work is leading. The school has had to abandon a formal scheme of homework that had been set up as few pupils were being supported to complete it. However, the teachers often set work to be done at home that is both relevant to the interests and needs of the pupils and supports well the work they are doing in class.



- 27 All the teachers know their pupils very well and are well aware of the needs of all the pupils in their classes. They make good provision within their planning, setting appropriate tasks for the various ability groups, thus ensuring that all pupils are fully included in their lessons. They are particularly good at ensuring that all are included in all aspects of their lessons, particularly by focusing questions at different individuals and groups. However, there are occasions when the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This is particularly noticeable in some science lessons, when all pupils are expected to do the same worksheet, which are neither challenging nor exciting for the more able pupils. The school has identified some pupils who have particular gifts or talents and these pupils are often catered for very well, particularly in English and mathematics.
- 28 The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is very good. At times it is excellent. Teaching for these pupils has improved since the previous inspection. All class teachers are involved in drawing up the pupils' individual education plans in consultation with the special needs teacher and the coordinator. The staff know the needs of these pupils exceptionally well. The teachers target their questioning and support very effectively to encourage the pupils and help them feel included in the class activities. They give them many opportunities to experience success in front of their peers. The teachers communicate regularly with the support staff to ensure that pupils get the maximum benefit from the work planned. The school has organised a wide range of support programmes to meet the range of needs identified.
- 29 The teaching of pupils who have English as an additional language is very good. The specialist teachers give them good support with carefully planned programmes of work. Some pupils need only language enhancement and interpretation. Others need the first elements of English putting in place. The specialist staff track progress carefully, so that they can act quickly if any pupils are not making the progress expected. The relationships and communication between all the types of teachers are excellent. Consequently there is a true partnership and sharing of expertise. The class teachers are an integral part of this provision, which works to the maximum benefit of the pupils. Other pupils also willingly play their part in sharing language and experiences with English as an additional language pupils, which enhances their learning.

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

- 30 The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities. They are suitably broad and balanced, meet the national requirements and the requirements of the local authority agreed syllabus for religious education, and above all, they are socially inclusive. The acts of corporate worship meet legal requirements. All the pupils have very good access to the whole curriculum, as it is particularly relevant. There are very strong strategies in place to ensure that all the pupils gain maximum benefit from the curriculum, according to their needs and aptitudes. In addition, it is very effectively enriched through educational visits and visitors. As a result, the school offers its pupils a curriculum that is rich, varied, relevant and vibrant. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.

Strengths in the curriculum are:

- the curriculum is rich, vibrant and varied;
- the focus on investigations in mathematics;
- the range of visits and visitors;
- the provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education;
- the excellent provision for the pupils with special educational needs;
- the range of extra curricular activities;
- the very good provision for the pupils with English as an additional language.

An area for development is:

- the commercial schemes of work have not been adapted for some subjects.

- 31 The key issue for action from the previous inspection was the full development of schemes of work across the curriculum. Since then, the school has made very good progress towards addressing it.

There are now schemes of work for English, mathematics, science and religious education. The school has steadily adapted the commercial publications for other subjects, but there are still some which are in need of attention by the coordinators. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills have been effectively implemented and consequently, they are having positive impact upon pupils' standards in those subjects and across the curriculum. These strategies have been implemented without neglecting standards elsewhere. A particular strength of these arrangements is the way that these Strategies have been adapted to the needs of the pupils. There are good links with other subjects, which help the pupils to apply their skills and to improve them. Consequently, standards in basic skills are improving across the school.

- 32 Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is excellent. This is a commendable improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum for these pupils is particularly well adapted to their needs by means of individual education plans. The targets in these plans are detailed and precise and are accompanied by useful outlines of work programmes. The teachers, support assistants and specialist teachers use these programmes very effectively to promote the pupils' progress in basic skills. This aspect of inclusion is a strength of the school.
- 33 The support is given both in class and in special sessions outside the classroom. The school achieves a thoughtful balance between these two strategies. The coordinator is pioneering a system where the group teaching of special pupils acts as a fourth set for English on three days of the week. On the other two days of the week they rejoin their class as normal. This strategy worked very effectively during the inspection. The special pupils did not feel excluded and maintained a very positive self image. In fact, all the Year 6 pupils know how good the school is at including everyone in its wide range of activities. One boy expressed their pride in the school well in saying, "This is the top school in London. All the staff are working to get the best deal for us."
- 34 Provision for the pupils who have English as an additional language is very good. The support is given both in class and in special sessions outside the classroom. It is based upon utilising the best expertise available at the time, for the objectives needing to be achieved. The provision for an unusually large number of pupils in the nursery afternoon session does not give a sufficient level of support.
- 35 The opportunities for enrichment of the pupils' learning outside the classroom are good. Parents expressed concerns that the school could do more to provide an interesting range of activities outside the lessons. However, the judgement of the inspection team is that there is a good range of activities outside school, including a residential experience to the Isle of Wight, where the pupils experience rich and varied outdoor pursuits. For example, the pupils participate in climbing, fencing, canoeing, orienteering and archery. In addition, there is a wide range of clubs, such as reading, gardening, gym, French, music, dance and computer. In addition, there is a wide range of interesting visitors to the school, such as the London fire fighters, theatre groups and a variety of speakers including a Sikh. The list is not exhaustive. These experiences help the pupils to take up interests and to mix socially with others.
- 36 The previous report identified a weakness regarding personal, social and health education, including drugs awareness. Since then, the school has made great strides to address the issue and, therefore, this area of the curriculum is now very good. Towards this end, a coordinator has been appointed specifically for this important area of the pupils' development. A very good link has been established with Healthy Schools Partnership, involving parents and governors, to assist with the setting up of workshops. Members of the local police are involved with talks about the dangers of drugs misuse and the school nurse helps the pupils with sex education. Commendably, this is not undertaken in isolation but very much as part of education about relationships.
- 37 The school has developed good links with the local community. The school seizes opportunities to be involved in a variety of activities. For example, these include celebration of the Queen's Golden Jubilee in Catford. This year, the school was awarded the Children's Society gold medal in the daffodil competition. A particularly outstanding example of curricular richness on offer is the school's participation in the Comenius Project. Some pupils have visited schools in Norway and Holland, who then returned the visit. All pupils in Year 6 were involved in this experience, even though few

were able to make the trip. There are few links with partner institutions, partly because of the wide range of these institutions. There are appropriate links with the local secondary schools in the area, which arrange taster days for pupils to attend prior to their transfer to secondary education. There are no formal links with any of the local pre school facilities.

38 The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good overall. Its provision for the pupils' social development is excellent and provides a very harmonious place of work and learning. This is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school places a great emphasis on these aspects of the pupils' personal development. It is very effective in broadening and deepening pupils' experiences, and awareness of the meaning of citizenship.

The strengths of this aspect are:

- the very good development of pupils' spirituality through reflection in assemblies and sharing of experiences;
- the very good development of moral values through all aspects of school life;
- the excellent provision for social development in and out of school;
- the very good provision for giving the pupils understanding of cultural diversity in their everyday lives and the world.

An area for development is:

- the inclusion of specific plans to provide for the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development within lessons.

39 The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. The teachers ensure that the pupils have opportunities to wonder and think about events. This begins in the Foundation Stage when, for example, the children gazed in amazement as they listened to the sounds of flying kites. This continues throughout the school where activities during lessons often provide opportunities for pupils to reflect and wonder. For example, during a poetry lesson the pupils explored their feelings when contrasting different poems, "it made me want to hug a friend". Another unsolicited expression of sympathy came from a Year 3 pupil on hearing that an adult's mother had died. "I'm sorry. Come and sit by me". The school does not make enough use of planned opportunities for the pupils to reflect on their achievements. For example, the summing up sessions at the end of lessons is sometimes rushed. There are, however, many carefully planned opportunities during daily assemblies for quiet thought and reflection. An example of this was seen in a whole school assembly where the pupils reflected on the meaning of friendship. In another assembly the younger pupils explored the meaning of care and related this to their own experiences. These opportunities give the pupils insight into themselves and a deeper understanding of matters beyond the material.

40 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. It is very effective in teaching the pupils the difference between right and wrong. The scheme of work for personal, social and health education emphasises the need to tell the truth and be fair in all dealings. All classrooms have a code of conduct prominently displayed and all pupils are well aware of how they should behave in and out of school. All adults who work in the school give the pupils positive images of socially acceptable behaviour. They deal with issues firmly, fairly and patiently and respect the opinions of the pupils and their carers. This is very effective in developing consideration for each other and mutual respect throughout the school community. The pupils' values are reflected in their discussions with adults during the inspection. For example, they stress the fact that they live and work in racial harmony and that any disagreements are about fairness of actions. This is reinforced during assemblies where the pupils increase their understanding about the consequences of their actions. There is very effective development of moral issues within the curriculum. For instance, the pupils debated good and bad facets of well known public people such as David Beckham. This increases their understanding that there are always two sides to an argument. There is no systematic planning to include opportunities for the pupils' moral development in all lessons. This means that some opportunities are lost because there is insufficient time for informed debate.

41 The provision for the pupils' social development is excellent. The school gives all pupils many opportunities to take responsibility and to become independent learners. This increases their

knowledge of their own abilities and deepens their awareness of social responsibility. Older pupils work happily with younger pupils to support them in their reading and take great care when going through doors and using the stairs. This contributes to the very harmonious atmosphere throughout the school. All members of staff are consistent in their use of the school's code of conduct to promote good behaviour at all times. During lessons, the pupils have ample opportunity to work both collaboratively and cooperatively in groups of two and larger groups. This makes a very effective contribution to the improvement of their social skills as the pupils learn to work together and resolve disagreements amicably. The school fosters the pupils' awareness of interdependence through activities such as the blindfold walk and residential visits. These successfully promote the pupils' independence, awareness of acceptable group behaviour and of belonging to a community. The school's provision for its pupils' personal, social and health education development is outstanding. It already incorporates issues about relationships within its sex education programme and consistently promotes very good relationships throughout the school. This is increased further by the pupils' participation in the Comenius project. This has involved them in debates in Lewisham Town Hall and in giving a multi media presentation to invited members of the public about their work. These opportunities increase the pupils' awareness of social responsibility and citizenship very effectively.

- 42 The school makes very good provision for the cultural development of the pupils. The pupils develop an appreciation of a range of cultures through their work in subjects such as art, music, geography, history and religious education. For example, the pupils are currently working on a musical performance involving music from around the world. This increases their knowledge of how different cultures use music to express feelings. The school uses history very effectively to increase the pupils' awareness of western and non western cultural development. For example, the pupils learn about African and Asian cultures and beliefs as well as the rich variety of cultures within Britain. The school celebrates a wide range of festivals and religious events and encourages the pupils to compare and contrast these cultures with their own lives. This very good provision and teaching in lessons ensures that the pupils learn to respect and value cultures other than their own. The school provides a very wide variety of visits and visitors to increase the pupils' cultural awareness. These include visits to museums, theatres, concerts and places of worship as well as visiting dance groups, puppeteers, musicians and speakers. The school's provision is enhanced further by the visits the pupils make to schools in Norway and Holland and the welcome they give to pupils from these countries. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant and English as an additional language teaching team contribute significantly to the wider cultural life of the school. They organise displays of the culture of the wide range of races in the school. They organise popular events such as the Black History month, which is firmly fixed in the memories of the Year 6 pupils.

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

- 43 The steps taken by the school to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety, including the school's arrangements for child protection, are very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when they were judged to be sound.

The strengths in this aspect are:

- staff care very well for all pupils;
- the support and guidance for the pupils' is very good;
- support staff work well with children and make appropriate demands on them;
- midday staff are caring and good with the children;
- the procedures for promotion of discipline and good behaviour;
- assessment in English, mathematics and science;
- assessment of the progress of the pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language;
- the good start made in the tracking of the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science.

Areas for development are:

- seeking parental support to promote good attendance;
- recording of assessment in some subjects.

- 44 The welfare of children is given a high priority at the school and is handled very well. The school environment is safe and all staff care very well for the pupils. Staff know their pupils and their medical and personal needs very well and have a caring attitude both in and out of lessons. The school identifies and deals with any hazards found on site and regular health and safety checks are carried out. Equipment, grounds and buildings are all checked as part of a regular cycle of health and safety checks and governors are always informed of the outcome. There are good procedures in place for the administration of first aid. A member of staff is always available; either in the medical room, or, at break times she is based just inside the building, near the playground. All accidents are dealt with and recorded appropriately.
- 45 Learning mentors play a major role in the personal development of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Class teachers identify children who they feel would benefit from this support.
- 46 The school's procedures for child protection are very good. The policy for the protection of children follows the guidelines of the local committee. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection matters and all staff are kept up to date with the procedures and are well aware of who they need to go to if they have any concerns.
- 47 The school is very good at monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Parents and children all confirm that they feel safe in the school. There are few incidents of bullying or racism and staff are always there to listen to and take action where pupils have concerns.
- 48 The level of attendance at the school has fallen since the time of the last inspection despite efforts by the school to improve the levels. Parents are reminded through newsletters or in person, of the need to send their children to school. There are good monitoring procedures in place and the electronic system of recording attendance allows the school to monitor the attendance of individuals as well as different groups, and to pick up any poor attendance very quickly. Regular monitoring is also carried out by the education social worker who visits the school regularly and will visit parents if appropriate. A significant number of parents take their children out of school for extended holidays during term time and this has an adverse effect on the level of attendance. The level of unauthorised absence is well above the national average, however the staff at the school are diligent in their recording of absences appropriately and the overall level of absence is monitored very closely.
- 49 There are very effective measures in place to promote good behaviour and all staff are consistent in applying them. The procedures are clear and pupils understand what is expected. Although there is a relatively high number of exclusions, this is because the clear boundaries have been crossed and pupils and parents agree that all are justified. The procedures for monitoring behaviour are generally good. They are informal, but staff are well aware of children whose behaviour gives cause for concern and monitor those children very well. Lunchtime staff look after children well and lunch times are a very harmonious and social time for the children.
- 50 Monitoring of the pupils' academic performance and personal development is good and helps to promote very good standards of teaching and learning. All the staff, and most especially the headteacher and her deputy and the learning mentors, know their pupils really well and have a clear picture of their strengths and weaknesses. The outstanding relationships that exist in the school is another factor in these developments.
- 51 Since the previous inspection, systems to assess the pupils' academic performance have improved. Procedures are now very good overall and they are helping to raise standards. To resolve a major weakness identified in the previous inspection, a new system of record keeping has been devised. Each class teacher has a mark book with a section for each pupil, where progress in the English, mathematics and science is recorded. Information from these records forms the basis of setting targets for the pupils' improvement and these are regularly reviewed with the pupils. A particular strength in the arrangements is the way that the school carefully analyses attainment by gender, ethnic group, background and month of birth. In addition, staff have undergone training to enable them to be specific and realistic in deciding the areas for improvement and how assessment and planning can be made into a more cohesive system. The teachers use this information well to plan

work for different groups in literacy and numeracy, and lessons are amended for the class or for individuals as necessary. The governors are kept fully informed of these developments.

52 The school carries out statutory requirements with regard to assessment. However, while there are very good systems for assessing the pupils' progress, recording in some subjects is less consistent. Nevertheless, the weekly records which are maintained by the teachers, show which pupils have not reached or exceeded objectives in the subjects. Information from these is used very well to plan the next steps of pupils' learning.

53 The identification of pupils who are likely to experience learning difficulties is very good. Teachers identify pupils at an early stage, and monitor their progress regularly. The school has excellent relationships with many specialist agencies. They give valuable help with the precise testing of pupils who go on to the more specialised stages known as School Action Plus. They also support the school with the crucial training programme for staff. The staff give pupils who need it sensitive help, counselling and guidance in both schoolwork and behaviour. The specialist teachers use their expertise well to identify the stage of language acquisition of pupils with English as an additional language, so that appropriate programmes can be provided. Progress is tracked closely. The staff are careful to distinguish between needs which are language based and those which are connected with learning ability.

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

54 Although the school works hard to involve parents in the life of the school, few parents support the school. This is a deterioration in the situation since the last inspection, which found that partnership with parents was an improving feature of the school.

Strengths in this aspect are:

- the very positive views of parents;
- the school works very hard at improving relationships with parents.

An area for development is:

- to continue to try to get more parents involved in supporting the school and supporting their children at home.

55 The parents generally have very positive views of the school. The responses to the pre inspection questionnaire and the pre inspection parents' meeting show that parents are supportive in a number of areas, however, they do have concerns over the amount of homework pupils receive and the range of out of school activities.

56 The impact of the parents' involvement on the life of the school is satisfactory. The school works very hard at encouraging parents into school, but despite this only a very small number of parents supports the school by helping in the classroom. A small but dedicated group runs the Holbeach School Association, which organises social and fund raising events. These events are well attended by parents and provide funds to purchase materials and resources. On occasion parents do support the school well as was shown with the recent problems concerning the parking facilities outside the school.

57 The information provided for parents by the school is good. They receive regular newsletters, which keeps parents informed about general day to day events in the school. In addition, information is given about what children will be studying during the coming term, if they will be making any visits and how parents can help their children at home. The school has recently canvassed parents on the provision of homework. The responses received by the school show that parents would like children to be provided with more homework, and this was reinforced by the responses received to the pre inspection questionnaire. The school currently provides homework in a much more informal way by providing reading, some spellings and relevant small tasks for the pupils to do at home. More was provided in the past, but this was not well supported by parents. A small minority of parents continues to support their children's learning at home by helping them with reading and other homework. There are very good opportunities for parents to keep informed about their children's

progress. They are able to meet staff informally at the beginning and end of the school day to ask a question, or to exchange information. An excellent initiative is that all the teachers are available at the end of the school day every Tuesday for more formal discussions. There are formal parents' evenings where the pupils' individual targets are discussed with parents. The written reports for parents are satisfactory, they provide parents with information about what their children know, understand and can do, but do not clearly set out areas for development.

58 The school prides itself on its close involvement with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. They are fully involved in the procedures at every stage, and are kept well informed of their children's progress. Most of them attend the important annual review meetings. Parents are very pleased with the effort put in to support the special pupils. They are heartened by the school's readiness to help. A few parents are concerned about high numbers of pupils with behavioural difficulties. The inspection findings are that the numbers are not particularly high. The severe disruption of lessons, which worried these parents, did not occur during the inspection.

59 Parents spoken to indicate that staff are always available to discuss any concerns and during the inspection senior members of staff as well as class teachers were all available for parents to speak to if they wished.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

60 The quality of leadership and management of the school is very good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a very good evaluative culture in the school which ensures that all that is done is monitored and checked for validity.

Strengths in leadership and management are:

- excellent leadership of the headteacher;
- delegation to staff with management responsibilities and the very good way that they fulfil their roles;
- the leadership of special educational needs is excellent;
- very good support of the governing body to the management of the school;
- very good monitoring and evaluation of all that is done in the school;
- an excellent ethos of teamwork and shared commitment to improve;
- support staff are very good and well trained;
- resources are good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and for special educational needs pupils.

Areas for development are:

- the role of some coordinators;
- the accommodation for the Foundation Stage;
- support for children in the nursery with English as an additional language.

61 The headteacher gives excellent and very clear leadership to the school and is very ably supported by her deputy. Subject coordinators and the Foundation Stage coordinator have been given considerable responsibility for raising standards in their own subjects. They have taken on this role very well and most contribute significantly to the shared commitment to improve. The role of some is not so well developed as they do not have as clear a view of what needs to be done to develop in their subject. There is effective communication between subject coordinators in terms of cross curricular links and the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The school has an ethos of striving for high standards that is very much at the heart of everything that is done in the school. Standards in this area have improved since the last inspection.

62 The governors provide very good support and a good range of expertise, which is used very well. Their role has developed since the last inspection. An improvement is that they are now very well informed about the school. For example, after the drop in standards in the National Curriculum tests in 2001, they asked the headteacher to prepare a presentation for them to explain this drop. They work very effectively with the headteacher and staff and play an effective role in shaping the future direction and work of the school. Many of them spend considerable time in school and this ensures

that they have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Governors have responsibility for particular curriculum areas and this gives a focus to their visits and ensures that the curriculum coordinators have a link to the governing body.

- 63 The leadership of special educational needs is excellent. The coordinator has established an ethos of teamwork. This has led to a commitment to high standards of provision and care for pupils, in keeping with the school's aims. This is a further significant improvement since the previous inspection. The coordinator organises the training of the support staff well, and is raising their expertise to a high level. Careful organisation of the very complex timetable ensures that this expertise is in the right place at the right time, ready to begin interacting with pupils from the start of lessons. The school has already put in place the requirements of the new national Code of Practice for special educational needs. The administration is first class. The coordinator has at her fingertips all the tracking data about the pupils' progress. This means that she is able to apply best value principles to show the governing body that special needs provision is providing excellent value for money. The leadership of English as an additional language and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is very good. The administration is carried out very effectively within the terms of the local education authority service provision. The teachers can call upon a wide range of good quality resources, such as dual language books, quickly. The specialist teachers communicate closely with other services within the school. They fully share in the community of learning that is at the heart of the ethos of the school.
- 64 The school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance is very good. The senior management team and subject coordinators monitor learning very effectively. This monitoring is well planned and clearly aimed at raising standards. It has resulted in improved teaching and learning since the last inspection. Curriculum coordinators have some opportunities to monitor teaching and this is effective in raising standards. Some very good analysis has been carried out of results in the national tests in order to plan for improvements. This analysis is being effective in providing the school with areas for development. For example, the school's analysis has shown areas of weakness within writing, which it has already begun to address.
- 65 The school development plan is a useful document in planning for future developments. It is very clearly set out with the areas for development established by analysis within school. All staff have an input into areas for development and a very careful overview is kept of the whole process of forming and monitoring the plan. As well as the detail for the current year, the plan also contains strategic developments over a longer timescale, in some cases as far as five years ahead. It also contains a very useful overview of the review timetable for policy documents. This ensures that all involved are fully aware of the state of development of all aspects of the school.
- 66 The school governors and the headteacher make very good use of all the specific grants available to them. They also seek additional funding wherever they can find it. Day to day management of finances is very efficient within school, the school having brought in the services of a bursar. The school also benefits from the services of the bursar in that he gives an added dimension to strategic budgetary planning and financial commitments. Finances are very clearly linked to educational priorities both in the school development plan and in the day to day management of the budget. The school office is run very efficiently, exuding friendliness and efficiency, and releasing the day to day administration from the shoulders of the headteacher and other teachers.
- 67 Staffing is very good overall. There are enough teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and a very good number of support staff who provide valuable help to all pupils. Specialist staff work with pupils who have special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language. There are a number of other visiting teachers, including a musician and a dance teacher, who enrich the learning experiences of pupils. Learning mentors give additional support to some pupils. There is a very good induction procedure for newly qualified staff. They have a mentor who provides guidance and support, and time is made available for the new teacher's development. There is a noticeable team spirit among staff, which contributes to a positive working atmosphere.
- 68 Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The Victorian building has a good deal of space which is used well for teaching and learning. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the internal



appearance. Generally, the buildings provide adequate classroom space. There are a number of small rooms, which can be used for group work or for visiting staff, and a spacious library. A new information technology suite is a noteworthy feature and has resulted in rising standards in information and communication technology. However, the classroom used for the nursery children is a room formed from two smaller rooms, and a pillar in the room makes it difficult to view the whole class at one time. In addition, the reception classes are at the other end of the building and the girls' toilets are a long way from the classroom for these young pupils. There are also two other small classrooms in the school, which are not adequate for larger classes. There is a long term plan for improvement of the premises.

69 Learning resources are satisfactory overall, and are used adequately by staff to support learning. The resources are good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and for the pupils with special educational needs. Class libraries are good in quality and quantity. The main library is well stocked with non fiction books. There is also a good range, quality and number of mathematics books, posters and equipment to support work in lessons. However, much of the equipment in the Foundation Stage is older and worn, and the range of outdoor play equipment is not sufficiently wide to develop the necessary learning areas effectively.

70 The school has established very good financial procedures that are based firmly upon the principle of best value. Taking into account all relevant factors, the school provides very good value for money.

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

71 In order to continue to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) raise standards in science by ensuring that the more able pupils are challenged consistently in this subject; (paragraphs 9, 26, 113)
- (2) continue to adapt the schemes of work presently being used for many subjects so that they are relevant for the pupils in the school; (paragraphs 31, 113, 120, 125, 130, 136, 144)
- (3) put in place a planned scheme to improve the pupils' speaking skills in all subjects of the curriculum; (paragraphs 5, 6, 89, 90, 91, 100, 103)

In addition to the areas for development above, the governors should consider the following for inclusion in their action plan:

- (1) work together with the local education authority to improve the accommodation for the children in the Foundation Stage; (paragraphs 68, 76, 85)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	84
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	68

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	33	35	9			
Percentage	8.3	39.3	41.7	10.7			

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### 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)	24	400
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	141

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13	168

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	66

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.5

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	36	24	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	29	31
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	48	51	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (70)	85 (75)	87 (82)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	32	32
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	53	53	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (82)	88 (84)	92 (82)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	35	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	18	17
	Girls	24	22	29
	Total	37	40	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (75)	70 (84)	81 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	17
	Girls	24	24	26
	Total	37	40	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (82)	71 (91)	75 (93)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	60
Black – African heritage	28
Black – other	100
Indian	1
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	1
White	167
Any other minority ethnic group	81

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.2
Average class size	28.6

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

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	448

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of FTE pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	
Black – African heritage	3	
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups	3	

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	1,317,963
Total expenditure	1,295,716
Expenditure per pupil	3,042
Balance brought forward from previous year	-23,271
Balance carried forward to next year	-1,024

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	447
Number of questionnaires returned	83

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	40	10	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	24	32	24	2
The teaching is good.	52	39	5	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	43	10	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	34	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	38	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	48	13	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	43	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	46	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	30	20	10	13

*Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding*

## **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**

72 Children enter the nursery class part time either in the morning or afternoon sessions, in September. They enter one of the two reception classes either in September or January. The children start on the Foundation Stage curriculum from the start of the nursery and make very good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> by the end of the reception year. Although on balance they are still below the levels expected for their age when they transfer to Year 1. Their starting point is measured by a simple baseline chart or test. This shows that their attainment overall on entry to reception is well below expectations. Standards on entry to the nursery are, therefore, poor in many areas of learning.

Strengths in the Foundation Stage are:

- the very good progress that children make;
- the provision made for them;
- the quality of leadership for the Foundation Stage;
- the quality of teaching;
- the quality of the support available to the children from other adults;
- the children's use of information and communication technology.

Areas for development are:

- the accommodation;
- improving the children's speaking skills further;
- creative development.

73 The teachers plan the curriculum well to make it appropriate for the stage of learning. The nursery works very closely to the spirit of Foundation Stage learning. It provides the children with many very good opportunities to explore and investigate inside and outside the classroom. The staff support the children very well as they embark on the early stepping stones to learning. The teachers of the older reception children make the curriculum gradually more formal. This enables the children to transfer smoothly from the later stepping stones into the first level of the National Curriculum in Year 1. Provision for the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection. The staff have developed very good teamwork. Very good coordination has helped to create a very effective first stage of learning, after a period of staffing difficulties. This area is now a strength of the school, creating a very strong foundation for the children's future education.

74 The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. Teaching in the nursery is good overall. In all areas of learning the teaching is very good except in physical development and creative development where it is good. The children love the role play in the outdoor spaces. So many of them choose to go there that the balance for other areas, such as creative development, is disturbed. Consequently, in creative development the teaching is good. The reception teaching ranges from good to excellent. On occasions, it is inspired. For instance, on a windy afternoon, when the children were not too interested in phonic sounds, the teacher took them out kite flying. Their intense concentration proves once again that learning is best when it is relevant and fun. Consequently they love coming to school, and work well throughout the busy day.

75 The teachers keep a good record of the children's interests, abilities and progress. They observe the children closely and make quick and efficient notes. This information guides their next stages of planning, and this is the secret of successful inclusion, enabling all groups of children to make secure progress. The teachers are very ably assisted by the classroom assistants and nursery nurses, who give valuable planned support to the groups identified. The nursery teacher has started to make this system more structured and therefore more effective.

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<sup>2</sup> The Early Learning Goals are the expected levels of attainment for pupils as they start the subjects of the National Curriculum in Year 1. Progress towards these goals is divided into a series of stepping stones.



76 The classrooms are at separate ends of the ground floor. This separation of nursery from reception is not ideal. It brings difficulties with access to toilets for reception girls. Neither of the two secure outdoor play areas is big enough for ambitious play projects. The covered play facility for bad weather is inadequate. The school is working to a five year plan for redevelopment of the Foundation Stage. The staff have done their best to enhance the space with bright posters and careful display of children's work. Some of the nursery resources are bright and imaginative, like the bubble paints or the coloured thick paint that children love to squeeze their hands in. Other equipment is not as good. For example, the children do not get a clear picture of the mini beasts they are studying with the old and scratched lenses they have to use.

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

77 The children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. The teaching is very good because the staff expect the children to behave well, set a very good example for them and gently encourage them to show their best sides. They soon settle to the expected routines, which the staff have explained clearly to them. After a term the nursery children are confident and display a sense of ownership. They chat happily with visitors and each other, and are capable of concentrating well.

78 By the end of the reception year all the children socialise well, mix appropriately with older pupils and understand the class rules and the behaviour expected of them. In both classes the teachers use well established routines to train the children in polite behaviour, and require them to tidy up after activities. Relationships are excellent. When the middle reception children are feeling a bit down, the teacher sings her instructions to them. They are soon bright and alert again. The children's behaviour during the inspection was very good. The nursery and reception children get on well with the Year 1 pupils. They line up to go to the hall sensibly, and in assemblies they sit quietly and pay attention. From a fairly low starting point most of the children achieve the expected final stepping stones in self confidence, behaviour and self control. The skill of conversation in relationships is the weaker area, which means overall they are still below expectations.

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

79 Children start school with language skills that are well below expectations. They make very good progress. By the time they leave the nursery some of the children exceed the middle stepping stones in recognising letters and writing their names and other words. They listen well to each other and to the teachers. Children speak readily in informal free activities, and in role play. The fire station has captured the imagination, and children rush about saying "we're attending emergencies." They do not respond as well to question and answer sessions, usually because they are engrossed with a new experience like blowing paint bubbles. There is insufficient modelling of sentences and, for example a kind of running commentary to give children the vocabulary to work with.

80 The planning and teaching in role play is very good, and very good progress continues into the reception year. By the end of the reception year the deficit has not been fully made up, and the children still achieve below the final stepping stones. The afternoon session in the nursery has a particularly high proportion of children with English as an additional language. Although the teacher works hard to see that everyone is included, the afternoon sessions progress more slowly. The children do not receive sufficient outside support. The teachers use a simplified form of the literacy hour well to introduce the children to the letters and sounds needed to build their reading and writing skills. The particular strength is the support given to groups of different abilities, to push them as far as they can manage. The children love reading the big books with expression. The teachers aim to encourage children to enjoy writing. The children are well motivated, and continuously increase the amount they write. The writing materials used are not ideal for promoting horizontal print as recommended in recent national guidelines.

### **Mathematical development**

81 Children start school nearer to expected levels in mathematical awareness. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and many are likely to achieve the last stepping stones at the end of the reception year. The teachers plan and resource good practical activities to give the children the hands on experience which leads the children to understand shape, size, weight and capacity. The nursery staff stress the importance of correct vocabulary, and ensure that the children know full and empty, short and long. In making the headlights for the fire engine, for instance, the children had to find the card that was brown and circular. All the foundation teachers seize many opportunities to point to numbers, for instance setting problems around the register, or singing number jingles. The regular play with construction kits enables the children to see different shapes, how they fit together, how heavy they are and how to make patterns with them.

82 The staff track where the foundation children are in relation to the mathematical stepping stones, by careful observation. They can plan accordingly, and match tasks to ability. During the simplified numeracy hours the children are separated by ability so that the faster children can move ahead, while the slower are given more time and help to gain a confident understanding. They learn how to solve simple problems, and how to record features on a chart for example. For instance, the middle infants became confident in putting down features from their 'Lazy Farmer' story to show which were from the country and which from the town. Very good teaching through the Foundation Stage promotes equally good learning, with children enjoying numbers and eager to learn more.

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

83 The children enter the school with well below expected levels of knowledge and understanding of the world. They make very good progress and by the end of the reception year most are nearly ready to meet the required learning goals. The teaching is very good, and creates a lively learning environment filled with objects to stimulate the children's curiosity. Teachers plan topics to capture the children's interest. They marvel, for instance, at the mini beasts they have searched for, and at activity in the wormery. The teachers go to a lot of trouble to provide resources which extend the children's ideas about new life. Children learn to classify ideas, for instance the difference between creatures with many and few legs, those that eat leaves and those that eat soil.

84 The children learn about the world in and around the school, making good use of the school's site and further afield, on numerous visits to widen their horizons. They receive good direct teaching on the use of computers. They develop an awareness of past times from events they recall in their family lives, and from looking at the life cycles of insects and frogs. They talk about the seasons, the changes in the weather and the passage of time. The teachers introduce the children well to cultural richness of various faiths and nationalities in the locality. This very good teaching promotes the very good progress, so that most children reach near the expected levels.

### **Physical development**

85 The children start school with expected levels of general physical development, but below expected levels in control of more precise movement such as hand movements with pencils or other tools. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage, but not all are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they finish the reception year. Teaching is good in this area. The school provides two secure outdoor play areas, where nursery and reception children can grow in confidence and practice running, jumping and playing imaginatively. The nursery trike drivers role play the controller at the fire station, filling up with petrol and driving safely. The reception children do not have this interesting range of equipment, and it is the coordinator's priority to develop this area.

86 All three classes have hall sessions where children learn to coordinate and control their bodies well as they move around. The reception children take more care than the nursery to use the space well and show concern for the safety of others. The children are agile, alert and enthusiastic. The nursery children, however, have developed good confidence in unusual situations, such as diving under the parachute and being wriggly worms. The wide range of equipment and media planned and provided in the nursery and reception, allows children to learn to use tools and materials safely and

with increasingly fine control. The teachers explore aspects of health and exercise. The children know, for instance, that their heart beats faster after an active lesson.

## **Creative development**

- 87 The children's creative development is below expected levels on starting school. Children generally know what the various equipment is for, but have limited skills in using it. They make good progress, but by the time of leaving the reception year not all the children have reached the final stepping stones. The progress is due to the wide experiences provided, and to good teaching of basic skills in the nursery and reception classes. Not all the children make use of them, or sometimes not for long enough to develop their own imaginative response. They gain a good knowledge of colour, texture and shape, for instance when printing hand patterns or painting pictures of the worms. They do not delve deeply into their own imaginations.
- 88 Many activities lend themselves to song and the adults lead the children in singing a range of popular rhymes and jingles. The three classes have a regular music session with the specialist teacher to extend their experience and musical knowledge. With the encouragement of the staff the children are developing enthusiasm and confidence in handling instruments. They develop skill in singing, even in two parts, but are limited in exploring their own ideas with the instruments around the classroom. Children do develop their imaginations well in role play. They explore a wide variety of imaginary situations in their play with the construction material, run cars along the routes provided or order their pet's food in the classroom pet shop. Creative development overall, extending the children's curiosity, imagination and ability to investigate and discuss, is an area for further development in the Foundation Stage.

## **ENGLISH**

- 89 Standards attained by the pupils at the end of Year 2 are below average and by the end of Year 6 they attain standards which are average. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make very good progress. As a result, the pupils' achievements in English are very good. Since the previous inspection, the school has made very good progress in the subject.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the very good quality of teaching and learning;
- good subject management which is making a positive impact upon standards;
- very good systems of assessment;
- the pupils have very good attitudes to their learning;
- the pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good;
- the outstanding relationships that exist between all staff and pupils;
- good use of pupils' developing literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum;
- paired reading arrangements;
- the way that all pupils are fully included in all learning activities;
- the teamwork among all staff.

An area for development is:

- planning for the development of speaking skills.

- 90 Standards in speaking are below average at the end of Year 2, but listening skills are better. The majority of pupils listen well, but when speaking, their skills are often limited to single words or to phrases, rather than sentences. Nevertheless, these pupils make very good progress, starting from a very low base in their language development when they enter school. There are examples where the pupils have good opportunities to extend their vocabulary, as observed in Year 2. The teacher encouraged the pupils to consider other adjectives to describe cars, beside colours. They produced words such as shiny, rusty, fast, old and new.

- 91 In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good and often very good progress. By the time they are 11, standards in speaking and listening are still below average overall, although standards of listening are average. However, there is a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and also a high proportion with special educational needs. These pupils listen carefully and participate in

discussions with increasing confidence. A very good example was observed in Year 6, where the pupils were encouraged to articulate their own ideas for newspaper headlines. For those pupils who are not in either of these two groups, attainment is average. Most have a good command of standard English vocabulary and grammar and show increasing confidence. For example, the pupils explain meanings of 'community rehabilitation', 'insurance' or 'banned from driving', found in a newspaper article.

92 Standards in reading reached by the pupils in the present Year 2 are below average, but in Year 1, standards are around the national average. In Year 2, a good proportion of pupils use pictures, phonics and context to help read the texts, and have built up good skills to read unfamiliar words. The pupils with average, and a few with above average attainment, can talk about the main events in the story and thoroughly enjoy reading. The less able pupils are at a very early stage of their reading. They are taught phonics carefully. Through the paired reading arrangements with Year 6 pupils, pupils are given extra practice in their reading.

93 By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are in line with the national average. This represents very good achievement for these pupils and is the direct result of very good teaching. A particular strength in the teaching is the infectious enthusiasm that teachers have for the subject. The pupils are inspired not only to read but also to enjoy all that is best in the English language. In guided reading, the teachers give due attention to research skills and the pupils are beginning to scan the text to gain an overall impression and to extract the information required. In a discussion with the pupils, it is clear that they enjoy a wide range of books by different authors and poets. Against the national trends, boys are keen and enthusiastic readers.

94 The school works very hard to encourage the parents to be involved in their children's reading, through home school reading diaries, for example. Around the school there are posters, encouraging parents to hear their children read and to read to them. However, there are some parents who do not hear their children read at home. This lack of involvement is a major factor in these pupils' slower progress.

95 The pupils who learn through English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make very good progress in both reading and in writing. This is a direct result of specific targets being set for their progress and carefully planned activities to meet these pupils' needs. A partially sighted pupil, for example, is provided with suitably enlarged and adapted material, so that she can participate fully in literacy lessons. These pupils receive very good support in lessons. The classroom assistants and the learning mentors, for example, unobtrusively encourage the pupils in discussions and they give skilful help with reading and writing. In addition, the excellent relationships that exist result in an all inclusive climate, which is conducive to the pupils' learning.

96 The pupils make very good progress in writing. By the end of Year 2 the standards are below average. However, a significant proportion of pupils attain the appropriate levels for their age. The strong focus on teaching writing skills is beginning to pay dividends. The pupils write for different purposes, including stories, poems, instructions and letters. They use an increasingly wide range of punctuation marks. The higher attaining pupils use inverted commas accurately. The less able pupils begin to spell commonly used words accurately and their sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. Pupils' handwriting is legible and clear and letters are generally of even size.

97 In Years 3 to 6, the pupils also make very good progress in writing, so that, by the time they are 11, they attain the expected levels. In Year 6, the average and the higher attaining pupils write confidently in a variety of writing forms. There are very good examples of biographies of authors, stories, poems, persuasive letters and pamphlets. The higher attaining and some of average ability pupils organise their writing into paragraphs, using extended sentences. They employ a wide range of punctuation marks accurately. The pupils are aware of the reader and use a variety of phrases to enrich writing. They use words to good effect, for example 'I am standing here, relentlessly gawping at this outstanding, eccentric painting, when suddenly, from nowhere....', ensuring that the reader's interest is aroused.

- 98 Throughout the school, the pupils use their developing literacy skills to support learning in other subjects. For example, the pupils write about their favourite meals in science and describe how the Second World War affected people. There are examples of sensitive writing, such as in Year 5, 'I was alone in the cold labyrinth'. Information and communication technology is satisfactorily used, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to draft and redraft their writing using the computers. The pupils use computers for practising word processing skills. Since the acquisition of the computer suite, there is now a stronger focus on the wider use of the subject. There are examples of pupils using text in a multi media presentation.
- 99 The quality of teaching is very good, and occasionally excellent. Throughout the school, teachers and their assistants ensure inclusion of pupils irrespective of their background, gender, ability or ethnicity. Individual pupils are valued for themselves. This creates an environment in which all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, feel welcome and confident. All pupils are clearly very well integrated into all aspects of their learning in English. This is another factor in pupils' very good progress.
- 100 While there are insufficient planned opportunities for the pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, nevertheless, in the best lessons the teachers use English and other subjects for this development. The final sessions in the very good lessons are used effectively to develop skills of speaking aloud to an audience and for ordering thought. The teachers in Year 6 involve their pupils in lively debates on a variety of topics, such as the school uniform, or whether a famous footballer is of a good character. The pupils state that their teachers 'play the devil's advocate' to encourage opinions. A particularly notable aspect of these arrangements is the way that the teachers prepare their pupils for active participation in democratic processes by inviting the pupils to vote before and after each debate.
- 101 The teachers inspire their pupils to learn through their lively and animated approach that motivates the class to listen attentively. A very good example was observed in Year 5, where the pupils were excited in exploring the power of the English language, using prepositions, such as 'In my head, there is a world of adventures' for the first lines of poems. The teachers give constructive feedback to the pupils in lessons and in the marking of work, where the teachers provide their pupils with guidance how to improve the quality of writing. The teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and in conjunction with classroom assistants. In addition, tasks are carefully modified for those pupils who have special educational needs and those who learn through English as an additional language. The more able pupils are provided with consistently challenging work, to meet their specific needs. As a result, pupils of all abilities are challenged appropriately and to make good progress. The setting of learning targets for the pupils is another factor in accelerating progress.
- 102 English contributes well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Moral and social issues are discussed in debates in Year 6, where the pupils learn to consider their opinions. They learn to appreciate literature and poetry, through their teachers' enthusiastic approach.
- 103 The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy, and homework in the form of reading or researching information, and the learning of spellings is beneficial to the progress the pupils make. The strategy has been sensibly adapted to the needs of the pupils. There is good guidance to teachers about role play in the literacy hour. However, as yet, opportunities for speaking and listening, and the use of computers are not fully integrated into the planning of the English curriculum.
- 104 The subject coordinator and the headteacher both have a very good overview of approaches to literacy and what individual pupils are achieving in relation to their potential. This has a positive effect on standards. Analyses of pupils' performance and tracking of their progress are allowing the school to focus on areas of weakness and target pupils in need of further support to reach the next level of attainment. The subject is generally resourced well. The library is attractively arranged, but as yet, it is not used independently by the pupils. This limits pupils' personal development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

105 Standards in mathematics meet those expected for most pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement from last year's national tests and reflects the current emphasis on the investigative element of mathematics. All pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make very good progress and achieve very well in all aspects of the subject. Progress and achievement is better for the older pupils and reflects the provision for those who have particular talent in mathematics. This shows a good level of improvement since the previous inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the emphasis on the investigative element of mathematics;
- the well structured implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
- the pupils' achievement, particularly that of the older pupils;
- the rate of progress throughout the school;
- the pupils' very positive attitudes and enjoyment of mathematics;
- the very good quality of teaching and learning;
- the very good and enthusiastic subject leadership and management.

Areas for development are:

- the ability of pupils to use measures in other subjects;
- the use of information and communication technology in mathematics;
- the way the time at the end of lessons is used for the pupils to increase their knowledge of what they have learnt.

106 There is a marked improvement in the provision for mathematics since the previous inspection. The scheme of work provides clear steps of progress for all abilities and age groups. This ensures that the work is well matched to the pupils' identified abilities and effectively extends the learning of all, including more able pupils. The school has clear and very effective procedures for assessing pupils' achievement and progress. Results of the national tests are analysed by gender, ethnicity and ability and the findings used to provide work that meets the pupils' differing needs and interests. This ensures there is no noticeable difference in attainment between boys and girls.

107 The subject coordinator's enthusiasm ensures that all teachers are confident in their teaching and the pupils enjoy their work. The quality of teaching is very good overall and reflects the teachers' increased confidence. This is very noticeable in the effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy that gives the pupils a carefully structured session of mental and written mathematics each day. The school groups the pupils in Year 6 according to their ability and ensures that all pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their mathematical targets. It deals very sensitively with those pupils who have English as an additional language. The high quality support they receive enables them to learn and achieve at a similar rate to the rest of their classmates. The current standards and achievement represent very good progress since 1997 when standards were low. It is a direct result of the high quality of teaching and the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is giving a sharper focus on number and on quick mental recall of facts. The mathematics curriculum is broadly based, well balanced and relevant to the needs and interests of pupils. The issue from the previous inspection about the level of challenge for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 no longer applies. These are all improvements since the previous inspection.

108 Many pupils start in Year 1 with an average range of skills in number. They develop and increase these effectively in Years 1 and 2 and achieve well. The teachers ensure that all pupils build well on their early work in the Foundation Stage. The pupils develop the use of accurate mathematical language effectively and work practically to solve problems. The majority of pupils are confident in explaining the reasons for their answers but many have difficulty in listening carefully to each other. By Year 2, most of the pupils recognise amounts of numbers and complete accurate written calculations. They are secure in their use of ordinal numbers and in their understanding of the principles of multiplication. The teachers use questions skilfully to involve all pupils in discussion sessions. For example, when making three dimensional pyramids one pupil says, "It'll be easier if we make a triangle base because that's only three to the point". The pupils with special educational needs receive a high level of effective support that enables them to join in class discussions. They achieve well in relation to their identified targets. The more able pupils develop a clear understanding

of the language specific to shape such as 'edge, face and corner'. They use the terms accurately in their writing and make effective links with two dimensional shapes. This makes a positive contribution to increasing the pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary.

109 By Year 6 the increasingly high quality of teaching ensures that most pupils have very secure skills in their ability to use and apply mathematics. They use suitable mathematical vocabulary, and the teachers encourage them to find different ways of solving problems. For example, a group of Year 5 pupils explored ways to find how to convert fractions to decimals. The teacher insisted that the pupils clarify and justify their work as the lesson progressed. This increased the pupils' self confidence, interest in mathematics and their ability to work independently. All the teachers work hard to increase pupils understanding and use of vocabulary specific to mathematics. This improves the competence of all pupils, including those who have English as an additional language, to deal with numbers mentally and in writing. The teachers build very effectively on the pupils' skills as they progress through Year 6. For example, in one lesson the teacher referred to the learning intention and asked the pupils to indicate their level of understanding. This increased the pupils' awareness of their learning and helped the teacher plan the next tasks. The more able pupils reach above average standards in their ability to work out timetables using the 24 hour clock. The teacher encouraged them to explain their reasoning and to apply their knowledge to everyday situations. For example, one pupil explained that she cooks for her sick mother, "this will help me time the meal better".

110 The analysis of work shows that most pupils understand the relationships between decimals, percentages and fractions. Most pupils have a secure level of understanding in using metric weights and measures but do not apply this consistently to work in subjects such as design and technology. Many pupils find the perimeters of simple shapes accurately. The more able pupils use their knowledge to work out the perimeter of irregular shapes. All pupils use bar charts correctly to represent collected data. The school is developing the use of information and communication technology to support work in mathematics. An example of this is in Year 5 when the pupils create spreadsheets. This use is still under developed across the school.

111 The effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy provides a clear structure for the teaching of mathematics. All lessons begin with a short mental arithmetic session and end with a structured summing up session. The summing up session is rushed and too short in some lessons. This does not give the pupils enough time to share, understand and explain what they have learnt. The school constantly seeks ways to increase further the pupils' confidence and ability in decision making, mathematical investigation and problem solving. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

112 The quality of learning and achievement in mathematics reflects the quality of teaching. It is, overall, very good throughout the school. There is some excellent teaching for pupils in the upper end of the school. This reflects the quality of provision for more able pupils and the enthusiasm of the teachers. They make learning fun and the pupils respond accordingly. A direct result of the teaching is the speed with which pupils acquire new skills and their ability to consolidate previous skills. They relate these skills to their current tasks and to other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 5 pupils used percentages to work out discounts on goods. All teachers use questions carefully to ensure that pupils give logical reasons for the problem solving strategies they use. This is particularly noticeable as they progress through Years 5 and 6. The ability grouping for the older pupils has a positive effect on achievement, learning and standards. All the adults provide good examples for the pupils in their respect and value for each other and for the pupils' contributions. This increases the pupils' self respect, respect for each other's contributions and cooperation skills. It ensures that all pupils behave very well in lessons, concentrate hard and enjoy their work. All the teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. They plan work carefully, use questions effectively to extend the pupils' thinking and make good use of formal and informal opportunities for them to practise their number skills. They teach the basic skills of computation well. This makes a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and achievements.

## **SCIENCE**



113 Attainment in science is just below average overall for the pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is because fewer pupils than might be expected are gaining the higher levels for their ages. However, progress is good throughout the school, which is an improvement for the pupils aged seven years since the previous inspection. Learning through scientific enquiry and experimental work contributes strongly to this good progress throughout the school. The pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also progress well, mainly because of the extra help they receive from the staff who support them.

The main strengths of the subject are:

- the good quality of teaching throughout the school which ensures good progress is made by all pupils;
- the links made between science and other subjects;
- the pupils' interest in science, the care given to the presentation of work and their good behaviour during lessons.

The areas for development are:

- the adaptation of the current scheme of work to the needs of pupils within the school so that planning for higher attaining pupils is included;
- the use of information and communication technology in science.

114 The good quality of teaching throughout the school is at the heart of the pupils' good progress. All the pupils have the opportunity to engage in a range of rich experiences through experimentation and investigation. The pupils in Year 1 become used to making observations, such as noticing which objects magnets will attract. Later in Year 3, the pupils move on to making predictions about whether plants need leaves to grow, then communicating what they have found out. Skills of recording gradually become more sophisticated so that by Year 5, with help, the pupils can plot a simple graph of falling temperature when they investigate the best way to 'keep heat in'. Discussions with the pupils in Year 6 revealed that their most secure knowledge and understanding in science was associated with practical experience. Where this is not possible, as in understanding the reasons for night and day, pupils were less confident.

115 Lessons are made interesting and valuable in many ways. The teachers give a scientific 'feel' to lessons when they use a good variety of vocabulary associated with the topic. For example, when the pupils in Year 2 were growing beans, the teacher talked about needing 'evidence to show how well the plant grows' so that the pupils realised they might need to measure its height, or note whether the plant was in sunlight or not. Good progress is made by the time the pupils are in Year 4. The pupils developed their understanding of the way nearly all food chains start with a plant when the teacher explained the meaning of words like 'producer' and 'consumer'.

116 The teachers make interesting introductions to lessons. In Year 6, the teacher led a very good brainstorming session about the factors that affect dissolving, making sure that all the ideas pupils had were explored. The pupils were at once interested and suggestions like 'it might depend on the liquid' by one pupil subsequently gave rise to much useful discussion.

117 The teachers make good preparations for experimental work and manage their pupils well. In a lesson about the pitch of sounds in Year 5, the teacher used a well organised system of rotating groups to test out sounds on a variety of plucking and blowing instruments, so that all the pupils were able to listen to sounds without the classroom being overwhelmed with noise. Group work involving discussion contributes to the progress in understanding concepts that pupils with English as an additional language make.

118 There is a good breadth of study in science. The teachers ensure that science is taught in familiar contexts and they make good links to other subjects. In a lesson in Year 1 where the pupils are familiar with the travels of Billy the Bear, the pupils investigated which materials might be the most suitable for Billy to wear when it rains while he is on holiday. The holiday destinations were marked on the globe relating the work to geography. The pupils' work shows that they have also made good links with design and technology in Year 6 when they developed their knowledge of electricity while

learning how to control a robotic car. The pupils use familiar contexts like the playground to examine the habitat of mini beasts living there to broaden their scientific knowledge of their own surroundings.

119 The pupils enjoy science, particularly when they are experimenting. They take turns and share willingly, and behaviour is generally good in science lessons. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils happily managed to use several fabrics, water, droppers and small containers whilst working in groups. There are opportunities in most lessons to improve literacy skills, both in written work during report writing or recording, in listening and speaking during discussions. The pupils' work shows that the Year 3 pupils have written clear observations on kinds of soil. When pupils make bar charts, like those showing the length of elastic compared to the force used to stretch it, these are carefully drawn. The pupils listen to each other's views. The emphasis on discussion in practical work helps the youngest pupils with limited vocabulary to be able to describe a material as 'shiny' or 'bendy'.

120 The current scheme of work, which is based on national guidelines, has not been adapted to the needs of pupils in the school. For example, conclusions to experiments are not always supported by an explanation or reason, so the learning of the more able pupils is not sufficiently extended. Where the pupils are learning about pitch, for example, the pupils are not always expected to notice that a string is vibrating faster at a higher pitch, or that vibrations which make sounds are not always visible. The coordinator has already made a good start on thinking about pupils' progress and is beginning to adapt the scheme.

121 A use of information and communication technology in science was seen when the pupils used a programme about food chains, but insufficient use of information and communication technology is made as a source of data and information. Computer simulations are not used in areas of study such as the earth and beyond as a route to enhancing the pupils' understanding in this area. Sensors are in school but their use is in the earliest stages of development. However, the coordinator has completed a course of training in information and communication technology and has many ideas for using this to enhance the pupils' learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

122 Standards being achieved by the pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above expectations. Although only two lessons were seen during the inspection, it is possible to make a valid judgement on the quality of teaching and learning from these lessons and other sources of evidence. For example, a considerable quantity of pupils' work was analysed, planning was scrutinised and discussions were held with teachers and pupils. The pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, are making good progress owing to the good teaching of the subject. This good progress is largely due to the good quality of teaching. Standards have improved for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and the above average standards in Years 3 to 6 have been maintained since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the quality of teaching;
- the progress that the pupils make;
- the high quality of much of the two dimensional work;
- leadership of the subject;
- the pupils' attitudes to their work.

Areas for development are:

- to increase the range of three dimensional work;
- to increase the use of information and communication technology;
- to improve the recording of assessment.

123 The standard of two dimensional work being carried out by many of the pupils is well above average. For example, the pupils in Year 2 have collaborated to produce a most unusual and effective collage representation of the Fire of London using newsprint and coloured tissue. They have also produced some very individual observational pictures of flowers. The pupils in Year 5 have created some very well made textile pictures using paint and a variety of stitching techniques. Their pastels in response

to the poem "The Highwayman" are evocative and show very good use of dark colours. There are examples throughout the school of the range and quality of work undertaken in all year groups. A good start has been made to using sketch books, but these are not yet used in every class.

124 There are two main reasons for these high standards. The coordinator has worked hard to enthuse and inspire her colleagues and they have responded very well. The quality of teaching is therefore good, with many lessons which are very good. The pupils are learning the necessary skills well. A particular example of this is in Year 3 where a teacher from a Beacon School has been working alongside the class teacher for some weeks. The focus has been on portraits in a variety of media and styles. The breadth of experience and skills of the two teachers is ensuring that the pupils are learning a whole new range of techniques very well.

125 The enthusiasm of the teachers throughout the school ensures that the pupils are also enthused by the range of experiences that they have. The pupils have very good attitudes to their work and thoroughly enjoy their art lessons. An example of this desire to learn was seen when an inspector asked some pupils in Year 6 if they knew which artist's work their mathematical tessellating patterns were based on. They did not, but found out from research they did at home that evening. In all lessons seen there was a buzz of activity and hard work that led to good learning. The pupils share resources very well, work together very well when appropriate and are supportive of each other when they are evaluating their efforts.

126 The coordinator has begun to adapt a commercial scheme of work to suit the needs of the school. She is aware of the need to include more three dimensional projects as this aspect of the subject, whilst still satisfactory, is weaker than the work seen in two dimensions. For example, the coil pots seen were of the quality that one would expect from pupils of this age. Some use is made of information and communication technology, particularly with younger pupils, but the more sophisticated use is another area for development recognised by the coordinator. The coordinator is also aware of the need to produce a system of recording assessments so that the teachers are aware of the skills that have already been learnt.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

127 Standards are in line with expectations both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. As the children enter school with limited skills, the pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make good progress. The quality of teaching is good overall. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the progress that the pupils make;
- the quality of teaching;
- the pupils' skills of making;
- the pupils' attitudes.

Areas for development are:

- to improve the recording of assessment;
- to ensure that the full design process is always followed.

128 The pupils throughout the school have good skills in making. Their finished products are usually well constructed and pleasing to the eye. For example, in Year 1 the pupils have made some very effective puppets to help tell the story of 'The Frog Prince'. The pupils in Year 3 have made some interesting paper strip models, with dimensions half their size. These demonstrate good links with numeracy and are accurately produced. The pupils in Year 6 have produced some interestingly designed packaging, which again demonstrate good making skills.

129 The projects seen show that the pupils are making good progress through the school. This is largely due to good teaching. Although a limited number of lessons was seen, these were all good, and other evidence such as the work produced in the pupils' books indicates that teaching is good overall. This good teaching ensures that the pupils are interested in their work. Whilst talking to the

pupils they spoke of their enjoyment of this subject. In a lesson observed in Year 6, where the pupils were making vehicles, the teacher had ensured that all the necessary equipment was available. The pupils were expected to select and use the tools and materials appropriately and this they did successfully. This was aided by the teacher ensuring that health and safety requirements were met. For example, there was another adult assisting with the glue gun and the teacher also made good safety points with interventions during the lesson. This lesson demonstrated one of the areas for development in the subject. Some of the pupils had constructed their framework without the necessary preparation of drawing their design. This indicated that the cyclical process is not always carried out. There were indications in some of the pupils' written work that the evaluation of projects is not always as good or thorough as the other aspects of the process.

130 The coordinator has created a series of good planning sheets to try to ensure that the full process is carried out. The commercial scheme being used is adequate but not yet adapted for the needs of the pupils in the school. The coordinator also recognises the need for a system of assessment to enable the teachers to record what skills the pupils have learnt.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

131 Attainment in geography is in line with expectations both for the pupils in Year 2 and those in Year 6. The pupils make good progress throughout the school. This is a similar situation to that of the previous inspection. The pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also make good progress, often because of the help they are given by support staff.

The strengths in the subject are

- the good progress that the pupils make;
- the good quality of map work throughout school;
- the pupils' knowledge of geographical features and of human effects on environments;
- the good number of visits which enhance learning.

Areas for development are:

- further adapt the scheme of work to suit the pupils in the school;
- the further use of information and communication technology to enhance geographical enquiry.

132 The pupils improve their knowledge and understanding of the local area well using geographical skills to support their learning. The pupils in Year 1 identify features that they see on the way to school. The pupils in Year 2 talk in detail about Catford. Geography is mainly taught within topics for the younger pupils in the school which is often when pupils begin to think about the wider world. The topic on transport in Year 1 is associated with travelling to places outside the pupils' immediate locality, while a study of toys from other lands gives the notion of places even further afield. By Year 4, the pupils draw detailed maps of the West Indies, with an associated key. The pupils develop an increasing awareness of the effects of human activity on the environment when they consider pollution in rivers in Year 5. In a lesson seen in Year 6, very good questioning and an informative introduction by the teacher enabled the pupils to think about the effects of tourism on mountainous areas. Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills, to work together and to share resources. The pupils are well behaved and enjoy discussions. All this good progress is a sign of good teaching, though no specific judgements can be made about the quality of teaching because few lessons could be seen.

133 Using and making maps is a strong aspect of the pupils' learning. The pupils develop the ideas of position and direction. When in Year 1 the pupils make simple maps of the way to the park and in Year 2 the pupils learn about the compass directions. They improve mapping skills by making a map of a treasure island. In Year 3 the pupils link their work to history well by drawing maps of the countries involved in World War 2 and of the Japanese empire. The use of keys is a strong element of pupils' map work. Year 4 pupils learn about the symbols and signs on an ordnance map while the pupils in Year 5 include these in a detailed map of the Thames basin.

134 The pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of characteristic features of other places. The pupils in Year 2 begin to appreciate wider geographical location and improve their cultural development when they learn about St. Lucia as a contrasting locality. By Year 6 the pupils make well presented and detailed studies of mountains including British mountains and the Himalayas. They use sources of information well to find out about climate, flora and the lives of people who live in these regions. There is some particularly good use of geographical enquiry when the pupils learn how environments can be affected by human activity. In a good lesson seen in Year 4, the pupils charted the kinds of rubbish collected at school, and ways that this could be recycled. This culminated in the pupils writing a letter to the headteacher asking if they could have a composter. Other kinds of pollution like noise and river pollution are considered in Years 4 and Year 5.

135 Many visits provide valuable opportunities for fieldwork. Catford is used a great deal by the school for local studies. The teachers in Year 3 make good links to science when the pupils investigate rocks and soils during a visit to Horton Kirby, and many geographical skills are developed through a week long visit to the Isle of Wight by the pupils in Year 6.

136 The scheme of work used currently is a published scheme. This is not yet developed so that where geography is taught within topics there is continuity and progression of skills. The coordinator is aware of this, and has set this as her target for the near future. The use of mind maps or concept maps at the beginning and end of topics is helpful to assessment. Though some information and communication technology is used to enhance skills of enquiry, further use could be made of information and communication technology throughout the school, for example to use the internet for research.

## **HISTORY**

137 Standards of attainment in history are in line with expectations both for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6. The progress that the pupils make is good throughout the school. This is an improvement for the pupils in Year 2 since the time of the last inspection, when it was reported that pupils of this age were making inconsistent progress. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. Classroom assistants make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning in history.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the good progress that pupils make throughout the school, and the good quality of recorded work;
- the wide range of artefacts that are provided for pupils;
- the good number of visits and visitors and links made to other subjects which enhance learning.

Areas for development are:

- the development of the scheme of work;
- to develop further pupils' enquiry skills through the wide use of information and communication technology.

138 Since only a few lessons were seen in history, no secure judgement can be made about teaching. However, the good progress that the pupils make is indicative of good teaching. As the pupils progress through the school, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they develop an increasingly good sense of chronology. The pupils in Year 1 gain an idea of time when they think about the kinds of toys they had when they were young. Timelines are a feature of most topics. The pupils in Year 2 develop a feeling for the order of events in history when they add the dates and names of the main events and characters in history to a class timeline running from 1500 to 2000. By Year 4 and Year 5 the pupils can extend this timeline back to the Romans and to Ancient Greece.

139 The main events and knowledge of the lives of people in the past feature strongly in the pupils' recorded work. The pupils in Year 2 write about the Great Fire of London, and Florence Nightingale. By the time the pupils are in Year 6 they have had opportunities to learn about Julius Caesar, Henry

VIII, John Lennon, and of the lives of Celts or Ancient Egyptians. These studies widen the pupils' knowledge and enable them to relate our own period of history to others.

140 From the earliest years the pupils have clearly thought about the characteristic features of past societies and periods. The pupils in Year 1 realise that there have been differences in the ways people travel in recent times during their topic on transport. Links to other cultures and societies are made when Roman houses and clothing are studied in Year 4 and when the pupils in Year 5 learn about inventions of Victorian times. The changes there have been in life in Catford since 1843 provide Year 6 with a good example of how societies change over time.

141 The pupils are able to develop their enquiry and observation skills well because of the good number of artefacts provided for them. These are often authentic items on display in classrooms or in the hall which give the pupils the opportunity appreciate fully the nature of the period. An informative and interesting display of items associated with the Second World War, including pictures and articles of London during the Blitz, enables the pupils in Year 3 to have a feel for this time in the area where they live. In a lesson seen in Year 5, the teacher had prepared very many lively information sources about aspects of Victorian school life, for the pupils to compare with their own lives. The pupils enjoyed this lesson, were very well behaved and made excellent gains in their learning.

142 History lessons provide many opportunities for the pupils to enhance their literacy skills. Older pupils have made very good records of topics they have studied. Written work is almost always illustrated and well presented, showing that the pupils care about their work. Often, good links to other subjects are made, particularly to geography when the pupils draw maps of the area they are studying at that time.

143 A good number of visits and visitors provide colour and authenticity to all the pupils' learning in history. There have been visits to several museums, and to a Roman villa this year. Earlier in the year, there was a focus on Black History Month, during which some pupils had costumes made by a designer for a carnival. The pupils in Year 3, when learning about the Second World War, had the opportunity to hear a mother talking about evacuation which helped them when they had to think what it felt like to be evacuated.

144 The scheme of work is based on a commercial scheme and is yet to be fully adapted to the school's needs. The new coordinator is aware of this. In one lesson seen, pupils used a CD-ROM about Victorian schools successfully to enhance their understanding of these times. The use of more information and communication technology sources throughout the school is not used sufficiently to develop further enquiry skills in history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

145 Throughout the school standards are in line with those expected for the pupils' ages. All groups of pupils make good progress. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the improved curriculum which enables teachers to plan in small sequenced steps;
- the balance in the curriculum, giving equal attention to all strands of this technology;
- the growth of the teachers' expertise, leading to good teaching and progress;
- the much improved resources and management of the subject;
- data handling in Years 1 and 2 and multi media presentation in Years 3 to 6.

Areas for development are:

- to extend the networking and increase the use of computers in classrooms;
- to develop the portfolio of pupils' work into an accurately levelled system of tracking the pupils' attainment and progress.

146 The teaching in lessons is good. The teachers share the objectives of the lessons with pupils in a way that enables them to see the links with earlier learning, and learning in other subjects. Year 2

pupils, for instance, could see how the work they were doing on the computers linked with work they had done for mathematics. The surveys they had compiled, for instance jobs they like to do, were made more effective by being displayed on the screen as graphs. The teachers' confidence in using computers has improved since the previous inspection. In some lessons the teaching is very good. In these lessons the teachers create practical learning situations where pupils can develop their understanding by solving problems. The teachers only needed to give a few clear instructions and pupils tried to work out solutions for themselves.

147 The pupils not only have a positive and enthusiastic attitude to using computers in school, but they are also willing to persevere to think through the challenges provided. This enables them to make very good progress in lessons in the information and communication technology suite. For instance, the Year 6 lesson moved at a rapid pace as pupils worked out how to add animation to the cover page of their multi media topic about mountains. Some of the pupils got ahead of the teacher when they realised that the principle could be used on the following pages. They were racing away to the third and fourth pages. Year 4 pupils learned how to save their work in different areas of the computer's memory because the hard disk had a technical fault. They were fascinated to see their designs from an art lesson transformed into mathematical patterns as they flipped and rotated them, getting nearer and nearer to symmetry.

148 The coordinators have compiled portfolios of pupils' work, new since the previous inspection. These do not yet act as a guide to progress and tracking pupils' development, but they do demonstrate the good range of subjects in which teachers use information and communication technology. Assessment does not, for instance, contribute to pupils' knowledge of their own learning. Classroom computers are not used to their full extent at present. This is linked to the limited networking available in the classrooms. The coordinators are monitoring this situation. The school wisely interprets information and communication technology as wider than just computers. Pupils are able to learn about scanners, audio tapes, fax machines and how to use a digital camera.

149 Information and communication technology is sometimes used well for pupils to sharpen their literacy and numeracy skills, for instance when word processing a range of styles of writing. The staff are careful to ensure that all pupils can do the information and communication technology work, by giving support to groups of pupils who need it for various reasons. Particularly good attention is given to the pupils with special educational needs by the support assistants. They bring these pupils up to nearly the same level as their peers. The pupils with English as an additional language are also well catered for. The staff ensure that pupils with limited English language skills are not held back in the use of the computers. The school has a permanent support assistant to oversee the information and communication technology suite. This is a valuable resource for school and pupils.

## **MUSIC**

150 Standards are above expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils of all abilities make very good progress throughout the school. The quality of teaching is very good. This is an improvement from the good teaching at the previous inspection. Overall, there has been very good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were in line with expectations.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the quality of singing;
- the quality of performing, composing and listening skills;
- the quality of teaching and learning;
- the pupils' attitudes, response and behaviour in lessons;
- the use of subject specialist teachers.

An area for development is:

- the provision of time for the pupils to reflect on their learning and achievement.

151 By the age of seven the pupils' singing is enthusiastic, joyful and tuneful. This reflects the enthusiastic and very skilled teaching. It is particularly noticeable in singing practices where the pupils sing songs such as "A Pizza Hut" and "Kum Ba Yah" with clear enjoyment and feeling for the

music. The pupils achieve very well and sing in a two part round with real enthusiasm and surprising accuracy. This enthusiasm, accuracy and enjoyment continues through into lessons where the pupils perform rhythmically and maintain an accurate beat. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the pupils used percussion instruments effectively to create horse, thunder, wind, and rain sound effects.

152 This high level of achievement continues as the pupils progress through to Year 6. The teacher builds effectively on the pupils' previous skills and ensures they learn new skills in singing. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the pupils practise to improve their ability to sing together in three part harmonies. The quality of their singing shows improvement during the lesson and the pupils sing with much enjoyment and enthusiasm. All the pupils have very good opportunities to increase their skills and techniques in performing and composing. Very skilful teaching enables the pupils to build up layers of sound quickly with tuned and untuned instruments to create music. They thoroughly enjoy this work and improvise to a given melody and rhythm.

153 The quality of teaching is very good and results in very good learning by the pupils. The school makes very effective use of teachers with special expertise in music to teach in all the classes. This results in very good progress by all abilities, including the pupils who have special educational needs. The teachers explain specific music vocabulary carefully. This ensures that those pupils who have English as an additional language learn and achieve at a similar rate to their classmates. The teachers use every minute of lesson time to improve the pupils' standards and increase their rate of learning, but they do not always give the pupils enough time to reflect and think about their work during the lessons. This results in the pupils not fully understanding what they have learnt and how they could improve.

154 The pupils take part in two productions each year and the school ensures that all pupils have opportunities to join in. This makes a very valuable contribution to the pupils' personal, social and cultural development. The school takes every opportunity to provide its pupils with a range of good quality music through visits and visitors. For example, during the inspection a talented young violinist from a nearby secondary school played in a school assembly for the younger pupils. This increased the pupils' awareness of what they could achieve and their appreciation of other's skills. The teachers use day to day evaluation of the pupils' achievements very effectively to plan what the pupils are to learn next. There are some missed opportunities to enable the pupils to appreciate what skills they have learnt. For example, the teachers do not use recordings of pupils' performances for them to listen to and improve. They make very effective use of the wide range of good quality percussion resources. This increases the pupils' skills and techniques, particularly their drumming and steel pan playing skills. There are not enough tuned instruments, such as keyboards, for the pupils' use. This restricts their instrumental playing. The specifically designated music room makes a positive contribution to the pupils' achievements.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

155 The pupils in Years 2 and 6 are working at the levels appropriate for their age, and many reach good standards in dance. Overall, the school has maintained the standards identified in the previous inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the good quality of teaching;
- the good quality of learning;
- the very good management of the subject, with its positive effect on teaching and learning;
- the pupils' very good attitudes to their learning;
- very good behaviour in lessons.

An area for development is:

- swimming.

156 Throughout the school, the pupils make good progress. By the time they are seven, they understand that they must warm up before taking exercise and cool down at the end of it. They have appropriate coordination, when twisting, spinning and turning in gymnastics. They explore how they



can move their bodies over, under, along and around when using apparatus. The pupils comment on each other's movements and suggest improvements, such as how to improve the twists and turns of the body.

157 The pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Regular practice of the basic skills is enhanced by the opportunities to attend clubs. For example, dance and gym clubs are very well attended by both boys and girls. The pupils thoroughly enjoy these activities and behave very well. By the end of Year 6, the pupils develop increasing control and can bowl and field with considerable accuracy in a game of cricket. Higher attaining pupils show skill and flair in the games.

158 The pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, achieve well and they benefit from the good demonstrations by other pupils and the teachers. Group work, where these pupils have to discuss a sequence of movements, for example, make a positive impact upon their progress. This was particularly evident in a very good dance lesson where the teacher imaginatively combined literacy and numeracy for a sequence of dance movements. The pupils created a series of movements to make a repeating pattern using work from their literacy lessons as a stimulus.

159 At present, pupils in Year 4 have swimming lessons. Some of them attain 10 metres, using a variety of strokes. No other year groups have swimming lessons. This arrangement means that, by the time the pupils leave Holbeach School, many do not attain the basic requirement of being able to swim 25 metres.

160 The quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons, the teachers make effective use of their knowledge of the subject to develop the pupils' skills. Clear instructions are given so that pupils know exactly what to do. There is good emphasis on safety. All the lessons have a good structure with appropriate warm up and cool down activities. The teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate good practice. Staff are suitably dressed and expect similar standards from their pupils. The teachers generally manage their pupils well and lessons move at a brisk pace.

161 The subject is managed very well. The newly appointed coordinator has already made a positive impact upon the quality of teaching and learning, such as in service training for all staff, setting up of an athletics club, adapting the commercially published documentation and undertaking the Top Sport training. She monitors planning and gives assistance if necessary.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

162 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 most pupils achieve standards that exceed those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were average. The quality of teaching is consistently good. There is a significant improvement to the quality of teaching for the older pupils. This is now very good instead of satisfactory as at the previous inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the pupils' standards in learning about religions;
- the quality of achievement and progress across the school;
- the quality of teaching and learning;
- the pupils' attitudes, response and behaviour in lessons;
- the interest, knowledge and enthusiasm of the coordinator.

Areas for development are:

- the pupils' understanding of the effect of religion on people's lives;
- the provision of time for the pupils to listen to each other and think about what they have learnt.

163 By the age of seven the pupils have a well developed knowledge about books that people consider holy. For example, they know that the Qur'an is very special to Muslims and that all religions have

special books. The pupils understand why the Muslims treat the Qur'an with respect, veneration and care. Careful questioning enables the pupils to make effective links between the code of conduct in the Qur'an and the Bible. This increases the pupils' awareness of the similarities between different religions. The analysis of the pupils' work shows that all have a clear understanding of how families and friends care for each other. They have a limited understanding of how people's beliefs influence their lives. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, work hard and enjoy their work. They listen carefully to their teachers and this makes a positive contribution to the above average standards. Some of the pupils have difficulty in listening to each other. This restricts their learning because their teacher has to stop and remind them to listen.

164 The teachers build carefully on pupils' knowledge as they progress to Years 3 to 6. This ensures that the pupils increase their level of learning and achievement. All the teachers plan work to ensure that all pupils learn about a suitably wide range of different world religions. Very careful and skilful questioning enabled the pupils in Year 5 to increase their understanding about the effect that Mary Seacole's belief had on her actions. This included the pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. These pupils related Mary Seacole's actions to those of Jesus. They explored the meaning of caring for others and of selfless giving. This effectively increased the pupils' understanding of how faith and belief changes lives. In this lesson the teacher ensured that the pupils had enough time to discuss and reflect on their work. This gave them an increasing awareness of care and concern for others' "We can look after them if they're upset". "You can play with someone if they haven't got anyone to play with". "Ignore their colour because we're all people". Mature and sensible thought was a significant feature of this very good lesson.

165 The school uses visitors from the local community and visits to the local community to make the pupils aware of the different faiths around them. An example of this is the preparation for the forthcoming visit to a local synagogue. Throughout the school the pupils explore the origins of Judaism and recognise the role of Abraham in founding it. Behaviour in lessons is very good and the pupils enjoy learning about different religions. They know that all religions have rules for people to follow, and understand the need for order in society. This has a very positive effect on the pupils' personal and social development.

166 The quality of teaching overall is very good overall. It is consistently very good for the older pupils. This makes a positive contribution to the above average standards and attainment. All the lessons are interesting and the pupils enjoy them. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The teachers make their expectations of behaviour clear. This is successful and the pupils learn very well. All the teachers make effective links with literacy by encouraging pupils to read and write carefully and take part in discussions. They do not place enough emphasis on insisting that the pupils listen carefully to each other. This restricts the quality of learning for the younger pupils. The coordinator ensures high quality achievement by checking the pupils' books and observing some lessons. This gives a clear over view of progress and standards and enables the teachers to plan work that meets the pupils' differing needs.