

INSPECTION REPORT

**KENTISH TOWN CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

London NW5

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100034

Headteacher: Helen Tyler

Reporting inspector: Anne Currie
25429

Dates of inspection: 25th – 26th June 2002

Inspection number: 197217

Short 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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Islip Street Kentish Town London
Postcode:	NW5 2 TU
Telephone number:	0207 485 1279
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Adam Leys
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kentish Town is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school in an inner-city area of North London. Church attendance by pupils is low but Christian values are taught. The school caters for boys and girls aged from three to eleven years and is larger than most other primary schools. It has 257 full-time pupils in the main school. Thirteen children attend the nursery full-time and 25 part-time. Children transfer to the reception classes in the September or January prior to their fifth birthday. They are joined by some children who have not attended the nursery, but most have had other pre-school experience. The school is over-subscribed in the reception classes and not all children in the nursery transfer to the main school. The number of pupils leaving the school is increasing, mainly due to families leaving the area or sending their children to private schools.

The area is very diverse and has a mixture of privately-owned houses and social housing, including some low-rise flats. There is a very wide range of ability on entry to the reception classes, which varies with each intake, but overall it is similar to that normally found. About a third of pupils claim free school meals, which is above the national average. The ethnic mix of the pupils is very diverse. A high percentage of pupils, nearly 40 per cent, speak English as an additional language. Of these, 69 are just beginning to learn English. The main languages are Bengali, Arabic, Albanian and Portuguese, but there are also over 21 other languages spoken. There are currently 29 pupils from Kosovan/Albanian refugee families. In 2000, the school was designated as a school with special resources, to enable children with physical disabilities to be taught alongside their peers, and currently seven pupils benefit from this arrangement. Overall, about a quarter of the pupils are recognised by the school as having special educational needs, which is above the national average. Nine pupils have statements of special educational need. As well as pupils with physical disabilities, the school also has pupils with a wide range of needs, including emotional and behaviour problems and speech and communication difficulties.

The school achieved Investors in People status in March 2002. The religious life of the school will be inspected at a later date by an inspector appointed by the diocese.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Kentish Town is a good, inclusive school which is providing well for its diverse intake. The headteacher, together with the deputy head, the assistant head and the governing body, provides very good leadership and management. Teaching is good. Staff establish very good relationships with pupils. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs receive good support. In 2001, compared to schools in similar circumstances, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were above average in mathematics and well above average in English. Pupils develop very good attitudes to learning and the standard of their behaviour is well above that normally found. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, most pupils have made good progress in English, mathematics and science from their varying starting points.
- Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher is extremely well supported by the deputy head and the assistant head. The knowledgeable governing body plays a very effective role in the running of the school.
- The quality of teaching is good and it promotes pupils' learning well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is very good. They are given very effective guidance and encouragement to enable them to extend their personal development.
- The ethos of the school is strong. It is a caring school with very good relationships between all those who work in it. There is a strong focus on extending pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- Parents are given very good information about the school's work and they support the school well.

What could be improved

- Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development, are not yet consistently applied and the information they provide is not used to plan the next step in pupils' learning.
- Standards achieved by higher-attaining pupils.
- Learning opportunities in the nursery and reception classes, to ensure consistent practice, more opportunities to learn through practical activities and greater use of the outside areas.
- Attendance and punctuality. Despite considerable efforts by the school, attendance is still below the national average and some pupils arrive late.

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. Since then, there have been considerable changes in staff, including four different headteachers. Little progress was made on addressing the issues for action identified in the previous inspection report until the appointment of the current headteacher in autumn 2000. Since then, a detailed school improvement plan has been drawn up which sets out clear targets and teachers with subject responsibilities have the opportunity to monitor teaching and pupils' work. The school has adopted nationally recommended schemes of work to ensure that the National Curriculum is covered and that skills and knowledge are gradually built up. The governing body is fully involved in the school's work. There have also been improvements in the teaching of writing, design and technology and musical composition. Assessment procedures are being introduced, but they are very new and have not yet been used consistently across the school. Standards are broadly similar to those at the time of the previous inspection, although there are now more pupils learning English as an additional language. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is judged to be satisfactory, although it is recognised that good progress has been made recently, with the establishment of the leadership team. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

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			
	all schools			similar schools*
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	B	A
Mathematics	B	E	C	B
Science	B	E	D	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

**similar schools selected on the basis of the percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.*

In 2001, compared to similar schools, Year 6 pupils attained standards in national tests in English that were well above average. In mathematics, standards were above average and in science they were average. The lower standards in science resulted from the lack of input into the subject in recent years. The school was very close to meeting its ambitious target for the percentage of Year 6 pupils reaching the level expected in English, but it missed its target in mathematics by 13 per cent. Year 2 pupils attained standards in writing that were well above average for similar schools and in reading and mathematics, standards were average. Results obtained by Year 6 pupils have fluctuated over the last few years with the varying capabilities of each year group. Inspection evidence indicates a wide spread of attainment. The current Years 2 and 6 groups have a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs compared to last year. Standards in those year groups are similar to those in schools with a comparable intake. Standards in science are improving because of recent initiatives to

ensure that topics are appropriately covered. Most pupils are making marked progress as a result of the good teaching they are receiving. Some more capable pupils do not reach sufficiently high standards. Pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, are well supported and, as a result, they are making good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and they enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils co-operate with each other well in lessons, especially when they work in pairs or small groups.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school is a harmonious community, with pupils from very varied backgrounds working and playing together very well. Pupils willingly carry out duties in class and around school. Relationships, especially those between adults and pupils, are very positive.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average, partly because of holidays taken in term time. Some pupils arrive late.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good and is leading to good gains in learning in lessons. Seventeen lessons were observed across the school, including whole-class work and sessions for small groups and individual pupils. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. One session was excellent, six very good, six good and four satisfactory. During the inspection, English and mathematics were taught well. Lessons are well planned, with learning intentions clearly identified. The intentions are shared with pupils so that they are aware of their own learning. Different activities are prepared for the varying levels of attainment in the class to ensure that the work is appropriately matched to pupils' learning needs. The support staff are well trained and they work well with teachers, giving effective support for individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English receive effective help. Overall there is a lack of opportunities for pupils capable of high attainment to work independently and further their skills. Staff manage pupils well. They establish very good relationships with pupils and create a purposeful atmosphere in the classroom.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and good use is made of visits and visitors to broaden pupils' experiences. There are inconsistencies in the provision for children in the nursery and reception classes, with some lack of emphasis on learning through practical activities and making full use of the outdoor areas.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Staff are well trained and the support for individuals or small groups is often very good. Pupils with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Well-trained staff work alongside class teachers to ensure that appropriate help is given to pupils. Pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition receive good support. As a result, they gain confidence and make good gains in learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils' own cultures are respected and pupils learn to respect the feelings and beliefs of others. Staff give very clear guidance and well-planned opportunities to help pupils extend their personal and social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school. There is a very consistent, positive approach to behaviour management. Procedures to monitor and guide academic progress are being introduced.

There are very positive relationships with most parents and the school gives very good information to parents about its work. Every effort is made to ensure that contact is made with as many parents as possible, for example by varying the timings of meetings and providing translators.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is extremely well supported by the deputy and the assistant head. Together, they manage the school very effectively. All staff work together well and there is a clear commitment to ensuring that each child achieves his or her best.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's work. They are extremely supportive of the school's ethos and they fulfil their role well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	In the last two years, the school has carried out detailed analysis of test results and the findings are used to highlight areas for future work. It closely monitors the implementation of the school improvement plan.
The strategic use of resources	The grants received are used very effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning and also to support individual pupils. The school has a very clear statement setting out how it looks to obtain the best value from its spending decisions. However, many initiatives are new and it is too soon to assess their full impact.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents appreciate the great efforts the school makes to involve all parents and to keep them well informed about its work. • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress at school. • Teaching is good. • Children behave well. • Children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of homework set. • The information provided about the progress their children are making. • Closer links between parents and the school. • The provision for pupils capable of high attainment. • More stability in staffing.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. The number of activities offered outside lessons is at least similar to that provided by most other schools and they cover a wide range of interests. The school accepts that there is scope for it to extend its provision for pupils who are capable of high attainment. After consultation with parents, a new policy on homework is being implemented in September. The school makes considerable efforts to establish close links with parents and keep them informed about their child's progress. There has been a high turnover of staff in recent years, which is not uncommon in inner London where the cost of housing is high and there is a high proportion of young staff. However, all posts are currently filled by staff on permanent contracts.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

By the end of Year 6, most pupils have made good progress in English, mathematics and science from their varying starting points.

1. There is a very wide range of ability on entry to the school. Across the school, nearly 40 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and just over 25 per cent are fairly new to the language. Pupil mobility is increasing. There is a rising number of refugee families. Other families are moving out of the area or they are sending their children to private schools. Taking all these factors into account, most pupils are achieving well by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence indicates that about two thirds of pupils in Year 6 are attaining the expected standards in English, mathematics and science.
2. The results obtained in English by Year 6 pupils in 2001 were well above those of similar schools. In mathematics, they were above average and in science they were average. The science results reflected the lack of emphasis on the subject in the last few years and inadequate coverage of the National Curriculum, especially in the mixed age classes. Comparing the results with those obtained by schools whose pupils achieved similar results when they took national tests at the end of Year 2 in 1997, pupils overall have made average progress and an above average percentage has achieved the level above that expected.
3. There are several factors that are helping pupils make good gains in learning:
 - the headteacher and the co-ordinators have ensured that the National Literacy and the National Numeracy Strategies are fully implemented in each class, ensuring that skills are steadily built up and staff have received appropriate training so that their confidence has grown;
 - there is an increased emphasis on science and steps have been taken to ensure that appropriate work is covered by all pupils;
 - teaching and learning have been closely monitored by the headteacher and the co-ordinators and any identified weaknesses have been addressed through further staff training or discussions and support for individual members of staff;
 - the amount and quality of in-class support have increased so that pupils receive the additional help they need to extend their understanding; this has been particularly beneficial in supporting pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language;
 - the school has taken part in initiatives such as Early Literacy Support, Additional Literacy Support and Springboard, which are aimed at raising the attainment of specific groups, involving extra staff training and focused work with groups of pupils;
 - the key issue from the previous inspection relating to aspects of handwriting in the upper part of the school has been successfully addressed, with higher staff expectations of the way work is presented and regular handwriting lessons; spelling and punctuation have also improved.
4. The scrutiny of pupils' work and the lessons seen indicate that teaching is generally good across the school and that it is enabling pupils to make good gains in learning, as well as giving opportunities to consolidate skills. In English, pupils are given the opportunity to write for a wide range of purposes and for different audiences, and there are also examples of drama being used to stimulate pupils' writing. There is evidence of pupils building up the skills they need to improve their writing, for example, by planning, drafting and editing their work. In the upper part of the school, there is evidence of pupils experimenting with words and phrases to create moods and feelings in their writing. In some classes, the turnover of staff has had a detrimental impact on pupils' work, but the good, consistent teaching they are now receiving is overcoming this.

5. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs. For example, the reading support sessions seen showed good use of previous assessment to identify pupils' learning needs. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and used it to help pupils improve. Effective additional help is also given to pupils who are beginning to learn English. Language support staff work alongside teachers well, for example when they reinforce the meaning of subject-specific vocabulary, which benefits all pupils, but especially those learning English.

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher is extremely well supported by the deputy head and the assistant head. The knowledgeable governing body plays a very effective role in the running of the school.

6. The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher has recruited a deputy head and an assistant headteacher who both share her vision for the school. They work together very well as a team and their varied backgrounds mean that they have valuable skills and experience to share. Together, they are working to raise standards in all aspects of the school's work. They are looking to ensure that the very varied needs of all pupils are effectively met and that their diversity is celebrated.
7. The school has experienced considerable staffing difficulties. There have been four headteachers, two in an acting capacity. The current head was appointed in Autumn 2000. The unsettled period was a time of considerable change in primary schools, for example the literacy and numeracy hours were introduced. The lack of consistent leadership between spring 1998 and autumn 2000 meant that the school did not keep pace with these changes and little progress was made towards addressing the key issues for action identified in its previous inspection report. There have also been considerable changes amongst teaching staff that have resulted in disruptions to classes and in the leadership of various subjects, with about three quarters of the teaching staff changing in the last two years. This has impacted negatively on standards and has also caused parents some concerns. Some of the main reasons for changes have been the high cost of housing in the area, staff taking maternity leave and their wish to fulfil personal ambitions, such as travelling. The situation is now more stable and the school is currently fully staffed with permanent teachers who work well with the leadership team and who are committed to raising standards. The headteacher is well aware of the groups of pupils who have been most affected and every effort is being made to ensure that their teaching next year is not disrupted.
8. Some of the features of the very good leadership and the effective management are:
- a very clear, effective school improvement plan (there was no plan prior to the appointment of the current head), which all staff and governors have contributed to; this has established the team approach to raising standards and also sets out the work which needs to be done, although it only covers a one year period and does not provide the school with direction over a longer term;
 - the clear management structure sets out the roles and responsibilities of all staff and the arrangements for ensuring that staff are kept well informed, for example, through the daily morning briefings;
 - regular monitoring of teaching, especially of literacy and numeracy, with effective action taken to address any areas of weakness found;
 - the strengthened roles of subject leaders, with staff having the opportunity to monitor work in their subject and to introduce initiatives to raise standards, as well as to extend their personal skills through training; this marks a clear improvement since the previous inspection; a good example of this is the work done by the information and communication technology coordinator;
 - the good support given to new members of staff, which is essential because of the high turnover; there is a good team spirit, with teachers supporting each other well informally, as well as the formal mentoring system; the staff handbook clearly sets out routines and useful information;
 - an effectively organised curriculum, with the adoption across the school of nationally recommended schemes of work, which ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are steadily built up, as well as ensuring that the curriculum is covered, and that the allocation of units of

work to each year caters for the mixed age classes; this addresses one of the key issues from the previous inspection;

- the award to the school of Investors in People status, which recognises its commitment to supporting staff and developing their expertise;
 - the analysis of test results and the action taken to address the weaknesses found; for example the provision of additional support in Years 3 and 4 for numeracy and in the upper part of the school for science, as well as using initiatives such as additional literacy support and early literacy support to give extra help to pupils identified as likely not to reach the standards expected; there has not yet been the opportunity to assess the impact of all of these measures as many are too new;
 - the good use made of funds to extend learning, especially through the use of a large number of well trained support assistants; the school also makes very good use of outside expertise, such as advisers within the local authority to give training and support, for example in information and communication technology and also therapists from the Tavistock Clinic;
 - the support for pupils learning English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs is well organised, and effective in helping the pupils involved make good progress;
 - the leadership team has a clear understanding of the school's wide community and the disparate needs of pupils; it is gradually making innovations to ensure that the varied needs are met, whilst recognising that making too many changes too quickly would be unsuccessful, as they would place an unrealistic burden on staff;
 - the effective use of a variety of initiatives to extend pupils' learning opportunities, for example, the use of composers, the school's participation in events such as the Camden Drama Festival and the link with business, with employees from Goldman Sachs regularly coming to school to read with selected pupils.
9. The role of the governing body has improved since the previous inspection and its contribution to the school's work is now very effective. Governors are closely involved with writing the school's improvement plan and individual governors are linked to classes and subjects so that they have a good overview of all aspects of the school's work. Governors are kept well informed. There are weekly meetings between the headteacher and the chair of governors, subject co-ordinators give presentations at governors' meetings informing them about standards and developments in their subjects and the headteacher provides a written report for governors' meetings.
10. The chair of governors and the governor with responsibility for special educational needs were instrumental in establishing the school as a resource base to enable pupils with physical disabilities to be educated alongside their peers.

The quality of teaching is good and it promotes pupils' learning well.

11. The quality of teaching is good across the school and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Of the 17 lessons observed, one was excellent, six very good, six good and four satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Although this was only a short inspection, most teachers were observed teaching. The evidence indicates that the positive features of teaching observed at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained, although most of the staff have changed.
12. The areas for improvement in teaching which were mentioned in the previous report have been addressed satisfactorily. The quality of writing and presentation in the upper part of the school has improved with the implementation of regular handwriting sessions, staff expectations of the quality of presentation have risen, and this has been made clear to pupils. There has also been an effective emphasis on improving spelling and punctuation. Staff subject knowledge has improved in the composition aspects of music and good use has been made of outside expertise, for example, the use of professional musicians to supplement the school's provision. Teachers' subject knowledge in design and technology has also increased. The co-ordinator plays a valuable role in teaching alongside class teachers so that her expertise is shared.

13. The lack of clear leadership in the past meant that the school introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies later than most other schools and some staff did not receive training at the appropriate time. This shortcoming has now been addressed; both strategies are fully implemented and their use monitored. Across the school, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good. There are strengths in the teaching of poetry in Years 5 and 6 where staff have good subject knowledge. In the lesson seen, the teacher shared his obvious enjoyment of the subject with pupils, stimulating their interest and helping them achieve work of a good and often very good standard. In a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher used very good strategies to extend pupils' writing skills. Pupils were encouraged to talk through their ideas with their partner to help them work out what they wanted to say and they also worked together to produce a caption so that everyone had a clear illustration of what was expected. Pupils were reminded that they could refer to the list of words on display to help them with spellings and that they should read their finished work through to check it. In a good numeracy lesson in a Year 3/4 class, the teacher demonstrated very good use of questions to encourage pupils to explain how they arrived at their answers to help them clarify their ideas.
14. A number of initiatives are in place to extend the learning of specific groups of pupils. An excellent one-to-one session was seen where additional support was given to an individual pupil to improve reading skills. Additional classes have also been provided for Year 6 pupils before school, to give extra support before the national tests, and extra mathematics lessons are provided after school for pupils who need reinforcement. These activities are fairly new and their full impact on standards has not yet been assessed, but they do give good examples of how the school is providing help to targeted groups of pupils to raise standards and to ensure that pupils make as much progress as possible.
15. Class teaching offers several challenges which staff generally meet well. Most classes have pupils from two year groups and there is a wide range of ability within each class. In addition, there are pupils in the school who are in the very early stages of learning to speak English and there are also pupils with complex special educational needs.
16. There are several general features of the good teaching that lead to good gains in learning across the school:
 - lessons are well planned, clearly focused on what teachers want pupils to learn and teachers give clear explanations so that pupils know what is expected;
 - learning intentions are shared with pupils at the beginning of each session to make them aware of their own learning and some teachers also refer back to the learning intentions when they are marking pupils' work;
 - teachers plan for four ability levels within the class to ensure that the work is well matched to individual pupils' learning needs; teachers know the pupils in their class well, although formal records are not yet kept consistently;
 - teachers manage pupils very well, make their expectations of good behaviour, and the amount of work expected, very clear and most lessons proceed at a good pace;
 - all adults working with pupils establish very good relationships with them and, as a result, pupils work hard and respond well to the activities they are given;
 - support staff, who are well trained and possess good skills, offer effective support to pupils, especially those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language; for example they sit next to individual pupils during carpet sessions, helping pupils understand what is being asked or reinforcing good listening skills; as a result, these pupils make good progress;
 - there are weekly meetings between class teachers and assistants who support pupils who have statements of special educational needs, to ensure that the work is well matched to individual pupils' needs, and their progress is monitored;
 - since January 2002, there have been examples of partnership teaching between class teachers and staff involved in supporting pupils who are learning English; this is working well, with the teacher responsible for Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) taking the lead in areas such as developing subject-specific vocabulary; this was effective in a Year 4/5 science lesson and led to pupils extending their understanding of the meaning of words relating to the topic.

17. There are three areas for improvement that the school has recognised as important in its drive to raise standards. They are:
- homework, which is used inconsistently across the school; however, a new policy has been drawn up after consultation with parents and is ready for implementation in September;
 - marking, as, although there are examples of good practice, it is not used sufficiently to highlight areas for improvement;
 - provision for pupils capable of high attainment; although class teachers plan for different levels of ability, there is scope for the use of additional staff to offer more challenging activities to this group of pupils and to give more opportunities for independent research.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is very good. They are given very effective guidance and encouragement to enable them to extend their personal development.

18. The high standards of behaviour, and the very good attitudes to all aspects of school life, have been maintained since the previous inspection. Parents are rightly happy with this aspect of the school's work. Pupils come to school happily and they settle quickly to their work. In some classes, for example, the deputy head's, they come into school early and settle to work which has been set out on the board. Most pupils show sustained interest in their work and concentrate very well, even when they are not directly supervised. They respond eagerly to questions in lessons and from visitors to the school. Support staff work very effectively alongside pupils, helping to extend concentration and motivating pupils who find listening difficult. Teachers share the learning objective for the lesson with pupils, so that they are involved in their own learning.
19. Behaviour, generally, is very good in lessons and around school. There are instances of unacceptable behaviour, but they are by a minority of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs. On occasions, pupils have been excluded following an incident, but they have then been incorporated back into school with additional help and support from school staff, as well as from visiting specialists. Staff have high expectations and a very consistent, positive approach to behaviour, which helps pupils learn to behave appropriately. Most pupils respond very well, know what is expected and are keen to please. They are aware of the rules and understand the reasons for them. Pupils respond well to the rewards that are given in class and in assemblies, which celebrate good behaviour and pupils' efforts, as well as good academic achievement. In the playground, pupils' play is lively, but no aggressive behaviour was seen. Pupils are aware of the school's approach to bullying and the provision of a box in the school entrance where they can report any incidents. A few pupils made use of the box when it was first set up and the issues raised were resolved, but it has not been used recently.
20. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills in the nursery and the reception class, and this ensures that children develop good skills in these areas early in their school lives. They are successfully extended as pupils move through the school. Pupils are very courteous and friendly. They show respect to adults, to each other, regardless of their ethnic background or physical disability, and to property. Staff show respect for pupils' backgrounds, for example, when they ask what a word is in their home language. Teachers give good opportunities for pupils to work together in groups and in pairs. Talk partners are used effectively to help pupils develop their speaking and language skills.
21. Pupils take the responsibilities they are given readily. They help in class and complete their tasks with a minimum of fuss. Members of the School Council are formally elected by their class and this gives pupils a good insight into the democratic process. The members have received training for their role and they have also taken part in a debate in the local authority's Council Chamber. They have very clear ideas about what they want to improve. Older pupils are given the opportunity to help younger pupils with their reading through the peer tutoring scheme. The tutors are given rigorous training which involves role play and tests, and the tutoring takes place three times a week for 15 minutes. Pupils take a very responsible attitude to their task. Pupils develop an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves through activities such as collections for

charity. During the recent Refugee Week, they learned how former refugees, such as George Solti and Sigmund Freud, had contributed to society.

The ethos of the school is strong. It is a caring school with very good relationships between all those who work in it. There is a strong focus on extending pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

22. There is a harmonious atmosphere in the school that contributes positively to pupils' learning. It is very obvious when staff work together, for example, during the singing assembly and during lessons when teachers are sharing a lesson. Christian values underpin all of the school's work. Pupils with disabilities participate in all aspects of school life, including educational visits and residential trips. Many of the support staff live locally and they have been involved in the school over a considerable period of time, for example as parents. They demonstrate a strong commitment to the school. Staff know individual pupils well, although few formal records are kept.
23. Staff, both teachers and support staff, develop very good relationships with pupils and pupils relate to each other very positively. Staff treat pupils' responses with respect and pupils gain confidence and willingly share their ideas. This is especially important where pupils are learning English as an additional language and they may be reluctant to speak out in front of the class. Staff who work specifically with them give great support and encouragement. There is a strong commitment by the whole school community to providing a well maintained learning environment. This is illustrated by the development and maintenance of the garden areas. The quality of display throughout the school is high, showing that pupils' work is valued. The current art display includes work by every pupil in the school.
24. There are very good procedures in place to ensure pupils' health and safety. There are regular risk management assessments of the building and its grounds. The school takes child protection issues very seriously. Staff have received appropriate training and are aware of the procedures to follow. An appropriate number of staff has received first aid training. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and cared for and the support of external specialists is enlisted as necessary, both for pupils and for their families. For example, pupils identified as having emotional difficulties are supported by visiting therapists.
25. Pupils are given very worthwhile opportunities for spiritual development. They learn about the Christian religion, as well as other faiths. They also benefit from opportunities to take part in musical events, for example, when they work with the composer in residence or take part in performances such as concerts at the Royal Albert Hall and the Camden Drama Festival. Many pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. They have good opportunities in assemblies to reflect on various topics and to take part in class prayers.
26. There is a clear behaviour policy, which all staff follow, and school and class rules are prominently displayed, giving good guidance to pupils. Staff help pupils understand the difference between right and wrong through their consistent approach to behaviour. Pupils are taught to consider the impact of their actions on others and to take responsibility for their actions.
27. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Effective use is made of the very varied cultural backgrounds of pupils in the school and of the opportunities available locally. For example, the whole school recently celebrated Eid and pupils visit the Mosque in Regent's Park. Pupils also celebrate diversity by singing songs from different cultures, some of which have been recorded on a CD produced by the school.

Parents are given very good information about the school's work and they support the school well.

28. Most parents are very supportive of the school. They find it approachable and appreciate the work staff do to keep them well informed. The school sees maintaining positive and constructive relationships with parents as an important part of its work in helping each pupil achieve his or her best. The inspection teams disagree with the small minority of parents who felt that the school

did not work closely with parents and judges that it provides a very good range of opportunities for parents to find out about the school and its work. It has built on the strengths recognised in the previous inspection. In the past two years, there have been initiatives to ask for parents' opinions and to inform them about their children's learning. There is a weekly newsletter, as well as notice boards displaying information, for example about daily events. Each class teacher sends home a termly letter, giving information about the topics to be covered and how parents can support their child's learning at home. Throughout the year, additional meetings are held to explain specific aspects, such as the recommended curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes and the arrangements for transfer to secondary schools.

29. The school makes a great effort to reach out to all of its parents by providing translations for letters and at meetings, and a crèche is usually provided at most meetings. The timing of meetings is varied to include as many parents as possible. Specific groups of parents are also targeted, for example there are regular coffee mornings for parents who have children who are learning English as an additional language. The bi-lingual support assistant translates at these events and there is usually a theme for the meeting. The recent numeracy meeting explained the school's approach and how parents could help at home, for example, by singing number rhymes in their own languages and playing games. The meeting is also usually attended by the Refugee Support Worker, who is employed by the local authority.
30. Parents' views have been taken into account through meetings, for example to discuss the drawing up of the school improvement plan and termly progress meetings to discuss the actions taken. The headteacher has also sent out questionnaires. The new format for school annual reports is a result of parents' requests for more information about how their child is progressing in relation to national expectations. Twenty two per cent of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that they were not kept well informed about their child's progress. The inspection team found that the school provides a good range of opportunities for parents to find out how their children are progressing. There is an open door policy and individual meetings can be arranged with the headteacher and teachers before or after school at a time to suit parents. Senior members of staff and class teachers are usually available before school each day for more informal meetings. There are regular meetings for parents to meet with their child's teacher to discuss their progress and the current reports contain a balance of information about what individual pupils can do and how well they perform.
31. The parents support the work of the school well. The Kentish Town Parents and Teachers hold a range of social events, which are well attended. They raise money for the school and the 'facelift' days have helped to improve the school environment. Class teas are well supported and the money raised helps to fund class outings. Parents willingly give their time to help in school, for example by making resources for the younger children or hearing reading. They also help on school trips. The festival which was held to celebrate Eid was very well supported, with parents supplying a range of food. This is a good example of the manner in which the school provides opportunities for parents to join together to share their cultural traditions.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development, are not yet consistently applied and the information they provide used to plan the next step in pupils' learning.

32. The previous report highlighted the need to use assessment information to plan the next step in pupils' learning. However, until recently, there was very little formal assessment information gathered to show how well pupils were attaining and to identify what they had to do to improve. This shortcoming is gradually being addressed, but it is taking time to put assessment procedures in place across the whole curriculum and then to ensure that they are consistently implemented by all staff. The deputy head, who was appointed in September, is also the assessment co-ordinator and he has issued an assessment file to all staff with a schedule of when tests and work samples are to be completed; this should be fully in use in autumn 2002. Subject co-ordinators are also putting assessment procedures in place for their subjects, taking guidance from advisers

within the local authority. Some have started to compile examples of pupils' work across the school to show how skills are gradually built up, but they do not contain indications of how the standard of work equates with the standards expected nationally.

33. The headteacher has put tracking procedures in place which will show how pupils are progressing as they move through the school, but there is not yet sufficient information to highlight pupils who are underachieving.
34. The records for pupils with special educational needs are also being improved. The setting of clear targets on pupils' individual education plans will give a benchmark against which to check progress and to ensure that pupils' learning is targeted to meet their individual needs. Without this type of record, it has been difficult to check on the progress pupils are making. Class teachers meet with support assistants working with pupils with specific difficulties on a weekly basis to plan the next week's work.
35. A review by an adviser from the local authority questioned teachers' knowledge of how to assess the competency in English of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. As a result, staff have received training and staff on the Ethnic Minority Achievement team are working with individual teachers to consolidate their learning.

Standards achieved by higher attaining pupils.

36. The comparison with similar schools, which are selected on the basis of the percentage of pupils known by the school to be eligible for free school meals, does not give an entirely accurate reflection of the school's work, as it does not take into account the very varied intake into the school. It gives a good basis for comparison for the results of most pupils, but not of the higher attaining pupils. A significant factor in the tests, carried out soon after pupils enter the reception classes, is the group of pupils who attain above and often well above that expected. The results obtained in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 pupils in the 2001 national tests reflect the standards on intake, indicating steady progress by most pupils, with some making good progress, especially when the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and the number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, are taken into account. An appropriate percentage of pupils just reached the standard expected, but fewer pupils exceeded this, indicating that the achievement of the more capable pupils could be improved.
37. In national tests in 2001, the percentage of Year 6 pupils exceeding the level expected was above the national average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. The higher results in English reflect the recent input into raising standards and indicate that standards could be higher in science, especially, but also in mathematics.
38. There have been several initiatives which are gradually raising the attainment of pupils capable of high achievement. The general provision for science was identified as a priority area in the school improvement plan for 2001-2 and a subject action plan was drawn up. Planning is monitored to ensure that the whole curriculum is covered and that appropriate work is carried out in the mixed-age classes. There is an increased emphasis throughout the school on extending pupils' investigative skills, which is providing more challenges for pupils.
39. Prior to last year, mathematics had not been a focus area and, before the appointment of the current headteacher, the National Numeracy Strategy was not implemented across the school; some staff had not received training. An intensive programme was put in place in September 2001, with input from the local authority and regular monitoring by the co-ordinator, to ensure that work was appropriately planned to match pupils' needs. More opportunities are provided for pupils to tackle problems and to carry out investigations. Teachers' expectations are rising and they are beginning to offer appropriate challenge for higher attaining pupils.
40. A focus of the monitoring of teachers' planning has been the emphasis on ensuring that the range of planned work matches the needs of pupils in the class. Class teachers plan work for four different ability levels in lessons and evidence from the lessons observed indicates that this is

effective. However, teachers give only limited opportunities for pupils to carry out their own research and this restricts the achievement of pupils in various subjects, for example, in history and geography. The school has a small library in the upper part of the school and it is underused to extend pupils' skills. The room is also used for piano lessons and support work with individuals and small groups of pupils. Although there is a socket in the room to allow access to the Internet, there is no computer available. A library is included in the plans for the new building, which was to have been started this summer, but which has now been postponed because of a lack of funds.

41. The headteacher shares the views of some parents that there is still insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils; there are plans to address this in September 2002.

Learning opportunities in the nursery and reception classes, to ensure consistent practice, more opportunities to learn through practical activities and greater use of the outside areas.

42. The school has adopted the recommended curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes, but, as yet, there is only limited formal joint planning by staff to ensure that there is continuity in provision and a consistent approach to learning. There are several factors which hamper closer ties:

- the nursery building is at the opposite end of the building to the reception classes; this limits the casual sharing of resources and opportunities for joint activities and means that such links have to be actively planned for;
- one of the reception classes also contains Year 1 pupils who are following the National Curriculum and planning needs to be very precise to show how the requirements of both groups of children are addressed;
- the co-ordinator is relatively new to the school and has had only limited opportunities to influence practice, especially as he is not working with nursery or reception class children on a daily basis.

43. Although there are examples of good and very good practice, in general, more thought is needed to ensure that there are appropriate opportunities for children to learn through practical activities, with chances to make their own decisions, for example about what they are going to use. This is especially important when there is a growing number of children from backgrounds where they do not have suitable opportunities at home. In addition, assessments made soon after children enter the reception classes indicate that, although attainment is very varied, there is a significant proportion of children who need to develop their personal and social skills. The more flexible, practical approach would also provide well for high attaining children by giving them the opportunity to become independent learners. In addition, not enough use is made of the outside area to give opportunities for children to learn outside as well as inside.

Attendance and punctuality. Despite considerable efforts by the school, attendance is still below the national average and some pupils arrive late.

44. In the 2000/2001 school year, attendance was well below the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence was above that normally found. Although there has been an improvement in the last year, attendance remains below the national average, despite the school having the seventh highest attendance rate in its local authority. The school analyses the results obtained by pupils in national tests. The recent analysis of pupils who failed to reach the standards expected at the end of Year 2 shows that the attendance of some was poor and provides a clear indication of the negative impact of absence on learning. The number of holidays taken in term time has increased, as has the practice of taking extended holidays to visit family members and holiday homes abroad. There also appears to be an increase in the number of days lost through illness.
45. The school is well aware of the problem and has introduced a very comprehensive set of measures to improve attendance, with which it needs to persevere to bring about even greater improvements. They include:

- regular meetings between the headteacher and the educational social worker to monitor attendance, which can lead to a variety of actions including letters home, meetings with parents or visits by a social worker;
- monitoring attendance on a database so that the school can very quickly access relevant information;
- reminders in newsletters to parents, on notice boards and posters;
- discussions with parents, for example at coffee mornings, with translations provided for parents whose first language is not English;
- input in assemblies to make pupils more aware of the importance of regular attendance.

46. Punctuality was recognised as an area for concern during the previous inspection and it still is. The headteacher adopts a very firm approach to lateness as she believes that punctuality is a life skill which all pupils should acquire. The registers are closed earlier than at most other schools. In response to concerns recognised in school, the educational social worker monitored punctuality at the school gate for a week and handed out leaflets and spoke to parents. This has led to an improvement, especially in the two classes which were causing most concern. Members of the leadership team are often outside at the start of the day to ensure a brisk entry into school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. To improve the quality of education provided the headteacher, governors and staff should:

i. Raise the attainment of higher attaining pupils by:

- using assessment information to identify the pupils concerned;
- extending the opportunities they have for independent work;
- focusing support to enable them to undertake more challenging work.

(paragraphs 17, 36 – 41)

ii. Ensure that the assessment procedures already devised are implemented in all classes and that the information gained is used to plan future work.

(paragraphs 32 – 35)

iii. Improve the curriculum offered to nursery and reception age children by:

- sharing the good practice already available;
- giving the co-ordinator more opportunities to work alongside teachers;
- monitoring planning to ensure that more opportunities are provided for children to learn through practical activities, especially in the mixed age class;
- extending the outdoor provision for all reception age children and ensuring that all children in this age group have equal access to it.

(paragraphs 42 – 43)

iv. Raise attendance and improve punctuality by:

- ensuring that the very good procedures already in place to improve attendance and punctuality are rigorously applied;
- implementing the planned rewards and incentives to make pupils more involved in improving attendance.

(paragraphs 44 – 46)

The first three items are already identified as areas for action in the school's improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	6	4	0	0	0
Percentage	6	35	35	24	0	0	0

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 almost six percentage points.

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)	26	257
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6	101

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	77

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	108

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

2000-2001	%
School data	6.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1

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
		2000-1	14	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	14
	Girls	21	24	23
	Total	33	38	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (90)	100 (76)	97 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	14	13
	Girls	22	22	18
	Total	33	36	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (73)	95 (71)	82 (66)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (89)

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	16	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	19	14	18
	Total	31	26	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (71)	67 (56)	79 (71)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	13
	Girls	18	15	14
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (56)	67 (59)	69 (59)
	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	3
Black – African heritage	17
Black – other	25
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	19
Chinese	1
White	154
Any other minority ethnic group	16

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)	15.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.2
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	302.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	908,387
Total expenditure	908,339
Expenditure per pupil	3,079.12
Balance brought forward from previous year	93,910
Balance carried forward to next year	93,960

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	283
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	35	5	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	45	7	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	51	9	4	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	32	18	11	6
The teaching is good.	55	32	6	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	32	17	5	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	29	5	4	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	34	7	2	4
The school works closely with parents.	46	30	11	6	4
The school is well led and managed.	47	37	4	6	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	44	5	4	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	28	23	13	10

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting were concerned about the high turnover of staff. Other parents felt that the school did not cater well for more able pupils. Parents who attended the coffee morning and the class tea held during the inspection, were very supportive of the school.