

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **AMBLER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

London N4

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100397

Headteacher: Ms M Terry

Reporting inspector: Carole Skinner  
23160

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 197710

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## 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:	Blackstock Road Finsbury Park London
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Telephone number:	020 7226 4708
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Ambler Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Ms L Cross
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Carole Skinner	Registered inspector	Information and communications technology Art	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils' taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Tony West	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?
Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, Geography, Physical education, Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Tony Fiddian-Green	Team Inspector	Religious education, Music, Special educational needs	
Judith Howell	Team Inspector	Science, Design and technology, Children aged under five	
Rosalind Johns	Team inspector	English, History, English as an additional language	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ambler Primary School is situated in Finsbury Park, within the London Borough of Islington. The school is part of the North Islington Education Action Zone. It educates boys and girls between the ages of three and 11. There are 428 pupils on roll, of whom 19 attend part-time in the Nursery. A further 74 children aged under six are taught in the Nursery and the two Reception classes. The school is much bigger than most other primary schools. The roll has increased since the school's previous inspection. There are 13 more boys than girls on roll. Just under 80 per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and about half of these pupils speak English as an additional language, which is very high compared with most schools. Altogether, 31 different languages are spoken by the pupils in the school. About 20 pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. Approximately 42 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The school has 90 pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is higher than average. Five pupils have statements of special educational need, which is broadly in line with the national average. During the last school year, 54 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission, and 66 pupils left it at times other than those of the normal leaving or transfer. A significant proportion of pupils are housed in temporary accommodation and this contributes to the high turnover of pupils each year. Pupils come from a very wide variety of social backgrounds. Attainment on entry is also very variable but is below average overall.

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

Ambler Primary School is an improving school which makes good provision for its ethnically diverse community and the very high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Although pupils do not achieve good results in national tests, the teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment. The headteacher, governors and staff work together well and are constantly looking for ways to improve the standards pupils achieve and the quality of education they receive. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching is good, overall. It is particularly strong for children aged under five and at Key Stage 1.
- The school makes good provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their work and good relationships with each other and with adults.
- Pupils achieve good standards in music, art and dance throughout the school.
- The financial management of the school is very good.
- The headteacher and governors provide clear direction for the work of the school and are committed to improving the quality of education that the school provides for its pupils.

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

- The teaching of information technology does not meet statutory requirements because the school does not have enough resources to ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. As a result, standards of attainment are unsatisfactory.
- The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are in the early stages of development and are not yet rigorous enough.
- The role of staff who have responsibility for different subjects in monitoring standards and the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- The quality of teachers' planning in subjects other than English and mathematics is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected in September 1997, Ambler Primary School was found to have a number of serious weaknesses, mainly in the leadership and management of the school, but also in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 and in some aspects of the curriculum. There has been good improvement in most of these areas. However, this is not reflected in the pupils' results in national tests, which have been affected by a number of factors, including high turnover of pupils and teachers, staff absence and high numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Evidence shows that pupils are now achieving well in relation to their earlier attainment, especially in mathematics. Teaching has improved significantly. This has also contributed to improved standards in art, design and technology, geography and music at both key stages, and in religious education at Key Stage 2. The school's increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills is bringing about marked improvements in reading and mental arithmetic. The quality of teaching for pupils who are learning English as an additional language has improved significantly at Key Stage 2. Although many improvements have been made in information and communications technology, the shortage of resources prevents the school from fully meeting requirements in this subject. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are continually improving. The new headteacher has brought about significant improvements to the leadership and management of the school, which are giving clear direction for the future. Staff and governors are fully involved in school development planning and target setting, and all are strongly committed to raising standards. The school's capacity to continue to improve is good.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	D	E	D	
Science	C	B	E	C	

The information shows that the pupils' results were well below the national average in all three subjects in 1999. When compared with similar schools, the results were below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. However, these comparisons do not take into account the fact that almost 50 per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The school also has a very high turnover of pupils. For example, four pupils, whose knowledge of English was limited, arrived just weeks before the national tests were taken. The data show that the trend in the school's results in English, mathematics and science, taken together, was broadly in line with the national trend. The school has set formal targets for 63 per cent of its pupils to reach or exceed the expected level in the English tests for 11 year olds in 2000, and for 70 per cent of pupils to do so in mathematics. These targets represent a good degree of challenge.

The findings of the inspection are that, by the age of 11, standards are below average in English and science, and average in mathematics. Although standards fluctuate from year to year, as a result of the factors mentioned above, the school's efforts to improve the teaching of literacy and numeracy are also having a positive impact on standards, particularly in mathematics. The improved teaching for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is also helping these pupils to achieve better standards. Standards in art, music, dance and religious education are above average. In information

and communications technology, standards are below average. Overall, pupils' achievement is good in relation to their earlier attainment.

Children aged under five make good progress and reach expected standards in most areas of learning by the time they are five. Attainment in mathematics is slightly below average in numeracy, and in creative development, it is above average.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to the teaching that they receive. They concentrate well and apply themselves to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall. In many lessons it is good, especially in the younger classes. Occasionally it is poor when the teacher's control is weak.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are good. There is a high degree of racial harmony and pupils respect the views of others. There are too few opportunities for pupils to exercise their initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is just below the national average, but unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. A number of pupils take extended leave to return to their home country.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Satisfactory

*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*

During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of the lessons observed. It was good or better in 69 per cent of lessons, and very good or better in 19 per cent. In four per cent of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory or worse. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In mathematics, it is good at both key stages. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. Particular strengths of the teaching include effective planning for children aged under five and at Key Stage 1, and the teaching of basic skills, especially in numeracy. The quality of teachers' planning at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory in subjects other than English and mathematics. The teaching of music is excellent throughout the school and leads to high standards of achievement for all pupils. The quality of teaching for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good throughout the school. The teaching meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and those pupils who are identified as gifted and talented. Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and prepares them well for the National Curriculum in all areas of learning. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the school provides a worthwhile range of learning opportunities for all pupils. The statutory requirements for information and communications technology are not met. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' creativity and imagination through music, art and dance.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Provision is good when pupils receive support individually or in small groups, but this is not always possible. On a few occasions, pupils are withdrawn from lessons for additional support at inappropriate times.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Class teachers and specialist teachers work well in partnership to provide good support for pupils in learning English. Increased emphasis on teaching mathematical and scientific vocabulary is helping pupils to make better progress in these subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good, with appropriate emphasis on living and working together as a community with agreed rules. Provision for cultural development is good across the curriculum. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory but there are too few planned opportunities for this across the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The staff know the pupils well and take good care of them in a safe and supportive environment. There are some shortcomings in the school's health and safety procedures. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and those for monitoring and improving behaviour are good.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory and assists the progress that the pupils make.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and has a clear vision for the future development of the school. Some key staff are making a significant contribution to the leadership and management of the school, but most have not yet fully developed their role.



How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and make an effective contribution to shaping its future direction. However, they are not fully meeting their statutory obligations for the curriculum and for communicating information to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and governors analyse the school's performance in national tests and set appropriate targets for improvement. Pupils' work and teachers' planning are not monitored rigorously enough. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are unsatisfactory, as they are in the very early stages of development.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning is effectively linked to educational priorities. Spending is monitored very carefully. The principles of best value are applied well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources support teaching and the curriculum satisfactorily, except in information and communications technology, where resources are insufficient and there is a need to develop teachers' expertise in the subject.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like coming to school.</li> <li>• Teachers expect their children to do their best and work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• It helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work that their children are given to do at home.</li> <li>• The range of activities that is provided for pupils outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

The findings of the inspection largely agree with the positive views of the parents. However, the findings of the inspection are that homework is used appropriately to reinforce what pupils learn in school and the school offers a satisfactory range of extracurricular activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The pupils' results in the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999 were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. They were below the average for similar schools in English and mathematics, and in line with the average in science. Over the four years since 1996, there have been significant fluctuations in the pupils' results from year to year, which reflect the particular circumstances of the school. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, and the school has identified that some pupils do not perform well in the tests because their grasp of English is limited. Thirty-one different languages are spoken by pupils at the school. There is also a high turnover of pupils such that, of the 57 pupils in the present Year 6 classes, approximately one third joined the school during the past four years. Only half of the pupils in Year 6 have spent the whole of their primary school education at Ambler. In 1999, four pupils who had limited English joined the school a few weeks before the national tests were taken, and this inevitably affected the school's results. Comparisons with similar schools should be treated with caution as they do not take these factors into account. Variations between different groups of pupils from year to year partly account for the fluctuations in pupils' test results. There has also been a very high turnover of staff during the past two years, as well as several long-term absences, which were covered by a number of temporary teachers.

2. Originally, the school set an appropriately challenging target for 63 per cent of the pupils in the current Year 6 to attain Level 4 in English and mathematics in 2000. In view of the improvements already achieved in mathematics, this target has now been raised to 70 per cent. These targets represent a good degree of challenge. The school is on course to achieve the targets set and is constantly reviewing pupils' progress to identify those who need extra teaching to help them reach the required standard. The support provided for these pupils is good.

3. The school's last inspection, in September 1997, found that standards at Key Stage 2 were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. The findings of this inspection are that, by the age of 11, standards are average in mathematics, including numeracy, but below average in English and science. Standards in literacy are also below average. These judgements are based on the proportion of pupils who are on course to achieve the average Level 4 by the time they leave the school. This is inevitably affected by the number of pupils who enter or leave the school during the year and their stage of development in learning English. Improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, coupled with the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. There have also been significant improvements in the provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. For example, teachers are focusing successfully on developing the pupils' mathematical and scientific vocabulary, which is enabling them to make better progress in those subjects.

4. In information and communications technology, by the age of 11, pupils are not meeting national expectations in all aspects of the subject because the school does not have enough resources to enable teachers to cover the whole curriculum effectively. Pupils were seen to be achieving average standards in word processing and in some aspects of data handling, but there was no evidence of work in control technology, modelling or monitoring. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection as a result of training for teachers, the introduction of a new scheme of work, the direct teaching of skills and teachers ensuring that computers are used more frequently to support pupils' learning in other subjects. However, with only one computer in each classroom, pupils still do not have enough opportunity to use information and communications technology. As a result, they are not able to make satisfactory progress in their learning.

5. In religious education, pupils exceed the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the age of 11. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and results from good teaching, which enables pupils to develop a good understanding of the key features of major world faiths. Standards are also above average for the pupils' ages at Key Stage 2 in art and music. In both subjects, standards have improved since the last inspection. Teachers clearly have high expectations of the pupils and

provide a good level of challenge in these subjects. The school places great emphasis on developing pupils' imaginative and creative responses through the arts. This is also evident in the above average standards achieved by pupils in dance. In other aspects of physical education, standards are average for the pupils' ages. In the previous inspection, standards were found to be below average in design and technology and geography, because neither subject was being taught effectively throughout the school. Standards in both of these subjects have improved as the weaknesses in teaching have been addressed, and pupils now attain average standards for their ages at Key Stage 2. Pupils also attain average standards in history at this key stage.

6. In English, by the age of 11, although pupils readily engage in discussion, many use a limited range of vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils read with accuracy, fluency and expression but most pupils do not read a sufficiently challenging range of books, and their research skills are underdeveloped. Pupils write for a satisfactory range of purposes and readers and choose appropriate vocabulary, but they do not sustain ideas consistently and many produce small amounts of writing. Some pupils make many errors in spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, by the end of the key stage, pupils convert simple fractions into decimals, draw, estimate and measure angles accurately and calculate the area of regular and irregular shapes correctly. They understand the concepts of mode and median. By the age of 11 in science, pupils describe the functions of the eye and explain how mirrors can change the direction of a light beam. They classify materials as solids, liquids and gases and know that some solids dissolve in water whilst others do not. Many pupils do not have a sufficient understanding of correct scientific terminology and are unable to devise their own investigations. In information and communications technology, pupils have acquired sound word processing skills and are competent in some areas of data handling, but their knowledge, skills and understanding in other aspects of the subject are limited. In religious education, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the beliefs and practices of Judaism, Sikhism and Islam.

7. In design and technology, pupils design and make a healthy sandwich and make a poster to advertise it. In geography, they understand the differences between urban and rural areas and, in history, they gain sound insights into how people lived in Ancient Egypt and in Britain during Tudor times. In art, pupils create pictures using a variety of materials and collage techniques, and in music, they sing confidently and tunefully in three parts. In physical education, pupils achieve good standards when building up a sequence of dance movements in response to Tudor music and most are able to swim unaided for 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

8. The pupils' results in the national tests for seven year olds in 1999 were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were broadly in line with the average for similar schools in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Over the past four years, the pupils' results have improved in reading but have remained relatively static in writing and mathematics. As at Key Stage 2, there have been significant variations from year to year, reflecting the different groups of pupils, and factors such as high turnover of pupils and staff, and the high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. One in seven of the pupils in the present Year 2 has been in school for less than a year, and more than half of the pupils have attended other schools before coming to Ambler. Twenty-three of the 51 pupils in Year 2 are learning English as an additional language, and about half are at an early stage of language acquisition.

9. The findings of this inspection differ from the results of the 1999 national tests. They show that standards are below average in English, but average in mathematics and science. These findings are in line with those of the previous inspection in mathematics and science, but indicate lower standards in English. The judgements in this inspection are based on the proportion of pupils who are on course to attain the national expectation (Level 2 or higher) by the age of seven. In English, this is affected by the very high proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language and by the high turnover of pupils during each year. Improved teaching for these pupils is having a positive effect on the progress they make in English. In mathematics, the introduction of the daily mathematics lesson is already having a significant impact on pupils' achievements. In information technology, pupils attain average, and sometimes good, standards in word processing and handling data. However, they do not have enough opportunity to learn about control technology and modelling in order to achieve the expected standards in the subject overall. In religious education, pupils' standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

10. As at Key Stage 2, pupils attain above average standards in art and music. Standards are average for the pupils' ages in design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved in art, design and technology, and in some aspects of information technology. High standards have been maintained in music, and average standards in religious education, history and physical education.

11. By the age of seven in English, pupils attain below average standards in speaking and listening. Some pupils express their ideas confidently and use a growing vocabulary, while others have a limited understanding of the English language. Attainment in reading is also below average because many pupils are still at an early stage of learning English. Pupils read simple texts accurately and higher attaining pupils are able to tackle relatively difficult words and use their knowledge of phonics to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils attain below average standards in writing. Most pupils show a sound awareness of sentence structure, but standards of spelling and punctuation vary greatly. In mathematics, by the end of the key stage, pupils have quick mental recall of number bonds and are able to order numbers to 100. They have a sound understanding of odd and even numbers and recognise two and three dimensional shapes. In science, by the age of seven, pupils understand that animals and plants are living things and know the differences between some habitats. They explore how to make a bulb light and know that pushes and pulls can make things start or stop moving. In information and communications technology, pupils use a CD-ROM dictionary to find words and draw a picture using a graphics program, but their experience of other aspects of the subject is limited. In religious education, pupils know some of the stories from the life of Jesus, such as *'The Good Samaritan'*.

12. In art, pupils create effective large models from junk in the style of Picasso, and in design and technology, they make vehicles by joining and combining materials carefully. In geography, they understand the concept of a map as an aerial view and know what a map key is used for. In history, pupils understand why the life of Rosa Parks, the civil rights heroine, was significant. In physical education, pupils interpret the characters and events of *'The Sleeping Beauty'* successfully in dance.

13. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below the national average. Most children enter the Nursery able to communicate their needs and ideas using their own family language. Although some children are able to express themselves well in English, a considerable number of children are at an early stage in their ability to communicate in English. However, most children indicate that they understand what is said to them. From this starting point, most children make good progress and, on entry to the Reception classes, early assessments show that the children from the Nursery fall into the expected range of any similar school. However, a minority of children in the Reception classes, who have not had the benefit of pre-school provision, lack the social skills to co-operate with other children. By the age of five, most children are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in some, but not all, of the areas of learning. In their personal and social development, language and literacy, physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, most children attain the expected standards by the age of five. Standards in creative development are particularly good. In mathematics, children achieve at appropriate levels, in part. Although their practical knowledge and understanding of mathematics are appropriate in some of the skills of numeracy, they are not on course to meet the standard that would be expected of them by the age of five.

14. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement in mathematics, including numeracy, is good. Improvements in the quality of teaching throughout the school, but especially at Key Stage 2, through the successful implementation of the daily mathematics lesson, are clearly having a positive impact on standards. In English, especially literacy, although pupils' attainment is below the national average, they are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their earlier attainment, and when taking into account the high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The provision for pupils who are learning to speak English has improved significantly since the last inspection, and is now good. It enables pupils to make good progress in learning English and this enables them to make satisfactory or good progress in other subjects. There are no significant variations in attainment between boys and girls at either key stage. Analysis of the pupils' test results by the Local Education Authority indicates that, in the tests for 11 year olds, Turkish pupils do not achieve as well as other groups of pupils. The school is aware of this and is making every effort to improve the provision for these pupils and communication with their parents.

15. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs contain appropriate targets and help teachers to address pupils' needs in the classroom. When pupils receive individual support from a teacher or assistant during a lesson, or when they are withdrawn for additional tuition in a small group, they make good progress in their learning. However, when this support is not available, their progress is less marked. Class teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs monitor pupils' progress carefully and review their targets frequently. Higher attaining pupils are catered for well in most lessons and are given suitably challenging work, which enables them to progress at a satisfactory rate. The proportion of pupils who were identified during the inspection as attaining higher than average standards is broadly in line with the national picture. When gifted and talented pupils are identified by teachers, they are given appropriate opportunities to progress at an accelerated rate. For example, in the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds, one pupil achieved the very high Level 6 in English.

16. The many pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. By Year 2, nearly all pupils who started in the Nursery speak distinctly although their vocabulary is limited. By Year 6, their oral and written skills are satisfactory but, although they have a sound grasp of concepts, many pupils do not have the mathematical and scientific language to record results fully. Specialist teachers are addressing this problem and are also improving pupils' comprehension skills well.

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

17. Throughout the school, most pupils are keen, enthusiastic and eager to come to school. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and usually settle quickly to the task given. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are good and are strongest amongst pupils at Key Stage 1. Behaviour is satisfactory, overall. The great majority of pupils concentrate well, especially during the morning. After lunch, application is not always quite as good. Occasionally, when the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils' attitudes and behaviour deteriorate. In most lessons, pupils work well, independently and in different group situations. They are interested in the life of the school and most behave well, complying with school and class rules. They know right from wrong and are polite and courteous to teachers, their peers and to visitors. Most pupils move sensibly about the school and behaviour in the playground is satisfactory. However, some pupils run noisily up and down the stairs, occasionally bumping into other pupils and adults as they do so.

18. Pupils who have special educational needs also respond and behave well. In some instances, they have targets which include behavioural support, and teachers and support assistants use these to good effect. In general, pupils who speak English as an additional language are enthusiastic and highly motivated learners and behave well in and outside the classroom. Mutual respect and tolerance of others' feelings, values and beliefs underpin relationships in the school.

19. Pupils form constructive relationships with their peers and with adults. Pupils are caring in their support for those with special educational needs and for pupils new to the school and to the English language. Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and will be firmly dealt with, and there are few instances of it. In the past year, one pupil was excluded for a fixed period and the trend is static. There is good racial equality amongst the pupils, who show respect for other faiths, traditions and cultures, and for the opposite sex. Pupils handle resources with care and respect the school premises. No examples of damage or graffiti were seen during the inspection.

20. There are opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they do and its impact on others. The pupils discuss various topics and accept that others may have a different view or belief from their own. They have the opportunity to take some responsibilities, particularly in the school and class councils. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to show initiative. The findings of this inspection regarding the pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are broadly in line with those noted in the school's previous inspection.

21. Children aged under five settle quickly into the school routines. They are friendly and, overall, their behaviour is good. They have a positive approach to their learning activities, both in the Nursery and Reception classes, and quickly become independent in making choices. Similarly, when presented with specific problems, children work hard to solve them and make good progress in their learning.

Most children show independence in dressing and personal hygiene. There is good racial harmony within the Nursery and Reception; diversity is a way of life.

22. For the last reporting period, pupils' attendance was shown as 93.7 per cent, which was just below the national average. Unauthorised absence for the same period was 0.66 per cent, broadly in line with the national average. In this school, pupils take extended leave to return to their home country and this, together with the transient nature of much of the school population, has depressed the overall attendance figures. The school works hard with the educational welfare service to improve attendance. The school has successfully addressed the morning lateness problem, identified in the previous inspection, by raising pupils' and parents' awareness through the use of a "ticket" system. Lessons now begin punctually in the morning and throughout the day.

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

23. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and has a significant impact on the pupils' learning. There is some variation, as teaching and learning are good in the Nursery and Reception classes and at Key Stage 1, and satisfactory, overall, at Key Stage 2. During the inspection, 80 lessons were observed. Of these, two were excellent, 13 were very good, 40 were good and 22 were satisfactory. Two lessons were unsatisfactory and one was very poor. The quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes was at least good in nine of the 11 lessons seen, and it was very good in two. The other two lessons were satisfactory. At Key Stage 1, teaching was never less than good, and it was very good or better in six of the 23 lessons observed. Teaching at Key Stage 2 was at least good in half of the lessons seen. It was excellent in one of the 46 lessons seen, very good in six, good in 16, and satisfactory in 20. Two lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 and one was very poor. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was regarded as a serious weakness, which was affecting pupils' attainment and progress. At that time, one third of the lessons observed at Key Stage 2 were either unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. There was also a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 1. The key issue from the previous inspection, to improve teaching, especially at Key Stage 2, has been addressed successfully. Teachers now use suitable methods to meet the diverse needs of all pupils. The provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language has also improved significantly and now meets their needs more effectively. The teachers' use of time during the day is significantly better. At the time of this inspection, two temporary teachers were covering for staff who were absent through illness.

24. The quality of teaching for children aged under five is good and promotes good learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. They are very good in the area of creative development. Planning is excellent and is carefully matched to the nationally recommended areas of learning for these children. Teachers recognise the need for first-hand experiences, and set specific objectives for all tasks for the children to achieve. They then assess very well whether these have been met. The good balance between structured and free play activities helps to build good relationships with other children and to extend their independent learning. All staff listen with interest to what the children have to say and, through careful questioning, develop their language skills. Within the Nursery, the teacher and nursery nurse work very effectively as a team, both in planning lessons and teaching the children. In the Reception classes, the primary helpers provide very good support to both the teachers and children. Together they form an effective Early Years team. The well-established systematic observations to identify aspects of the children's development in both the Nursery and Reception classes are excellent and ensure good progression in the children's learning.

25. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good, overall, and there are some very good features. The skilful teaching of basic skills, especially in literacy and numeracy, enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Lessons move at a brisk pace, which sustains pupils' interest and enables them to produce a good amount of work. Class teachers work closely with specialist teachers and assistants to support pupils who are learning English as an additional language. This makes for effective partnership teaching, which helps those pupils to make good progress in

lessons. In English, the quality of teaching and learning is good, and in some lessons, very good. Teachers are implementing the literacy hour effectively and this is having a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning. There is a good emphasis on teaching the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, which lays a good foundation for the future. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics, including numeracy, is also good, and in some lessons, very good. The daily mathematics lesson is being taught well and there is a good emphasis on developing pupils' mental mathematics skills and their mathematical vocabulary.

26. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning vary in quality between year groups, and, in some year groups, they vary from class to class. Teaching in Year 4 is strong; here there were no unsatisfactory lessons, and more than three lessons in five were at least good. The lessons that were unsatisfactory or very poor at Key Stage 2 all had one significant weakness in common, which was ineffective planning. The teaching was not well structured and did not help pupils to acquire new skills, knowledge or understanding. In the very poor lesson, the teacher's management of the pupils was not firm enough to maintain discipline in the class. As a result, the pupils made no progress in their learning. At this key stage, the quality of teachers' planning is unsatisfactory. In English and mathematics, where planning follows the recommended format for the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson, it is mostly good, and shows clearly what pupils in different groups are expected to learn. In all other subjects, teachers' planning is sketchy and there is no indication of how different groups of pupils within the class will be catered for. The absence of a structured framework for planning at Key Stage 2 means that temporary teachers have insufficient guidance about what they are meant to be teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics.

27. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory, overall. It was good in just under half of the lessons seen. Pupils' literacy skills are developed satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum, as when pupils carry out research in history or write about places they are studying in geography. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. Teachers develop pupils' numeracy skills well in the daily mental mathematics session, and are careful to pitch questions at different levels to meet the varied needs of the pupils in their class.

28. At both key stages, the quality of teaching and learning in music is excellent and this is a significant strength of the school. The specialist teacher's considerable expertise in the subject inspires and challenges pupils of all ages to perform well and to strive for high standards. He has very high expectations of all pupils and his teaching methods are very effective. The pupils make excellent progress in their learning as a result. The quality of teaching is also good in art at both key stages. There is effective teaching of basic skills in all aspects of the subject, and pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to explore the work of different artists from around the world, and relate it to their own work. In information technology, the quality of teaching seen in the two lessons observed during the inspection was good at Key Stage 1, and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory at both key stages, because there are insufficient resources to allow teachers to cover some aspects of the curriculum, such as control, modelling and monitoring. At Key Stage 2, the number of computers is inadequate to ensure that all pupils have sufficient access to the whole curriculum. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to work on computers in order to make satisfactory progress in their learning. In science, design and technology and history, teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In geography and physical education, they are good at both key stages.

29. A very good Year 2 art lesson embodied features of successful teaching and learning at both key stages. This lesson represented the culmination of several weeks' work on sculpture, based on Picasso's junk modelling of animals. The series of lessons was planned very thoroughly to build on and increase pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The teacher explained clearly to the pupils what the purpose of the lesson was and made sure that they understood what to do. The teacher's very high expectations of the pupils were evident in the challenging nature of the activity, and inspired pupils to produce work of an above average standard for their age. Above all, the teacher's own considerable expertise and infectious enthusiasm for the subject were communicated very effectively to the pupils, and made a significant contribution to their learning. Pupils worked at a productive pace, concentrated very well on finishing their sculptures and applied considerable creative effort to the task.

30. A Key Stage 2 religious education lesson exemplified the most important shortcomings in teaching. The lesson was ill prepared and the teacher was unclear about both its structure and content. An overly brief introduction gave the pupils very little useful information, and they were then divided into groups of five or six and asked to find out what they could about different aspects of Judaism. As each group had only one or two reference books to consult, many pupils were wasting time chatting or arguing over the books. Four pupils were working on computers on unrelated tasks and missed the lesson altogether. The quality of learning in this lesson was unsatisfactory as many pupils were passive and applied little effort, and there was limited acquisition of knowledge or understanding.

31. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs who are withdrawn from the class for specialist teaching is good. The needs of the individual pupils are clearly identified and addressed, using a variety of appropriate methods. When pupils are given individual support in lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is also good. On these occasions, pupils who have special educational needs learn well, due to the teachers' good knowledge, expertise and experience, which are clearly used to good effect. However, when this additional help is not available, the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, as is the progress they make.

32. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is carried out in mainstream classes. Class teachers work together with specialist teachers to plan appropriate activities for the pupils and to support them in their learning. This partnership teaching is very good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Pupils are grouped according to their stage of learning and language development. Teachers encourage careful listening skills and provide good models of speech and written language. They modify their approach very effectively so that, if necessary, pupils are engaged through visual and interactive teaching. More advanced pupils also receive sound continuing support from teachers to achieve the full range of academic language.

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

33. The school offers a broad and reasonably balanced curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, with a sound range of relevant and worthwhile learning opportunities. The previous inspection found that there was insufficient teaching of information technology, design and technology and geography. Key issues from that inspection included the need to meet statutory requirements for these three subjects, the need to ensure that schemes of work were put into place for all subjects and the need to ensure a daily act of collective worship. There has been good progress on most of these key issues. However, too much of Year 6's geography is crammed into the summer term alone and the school is still awaiting national guidelines for schemes of work in physical education and religious education. In addition, the school's lack of sufficient computers means that its provision for the teaching of information technology still does not fully meet statutory requirements in either key stage. Religious education complies with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Selected pupils have the opportunity for instrumental music tuition. All pupils in Key Stage 2 have swimming lessons during the school year. Total weekly teaching time is in line with the national average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2.

34. The curriculum has an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics, which meets the needs of the relatively high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Indeed, provision for these latter pupils is a strength of the curriculum. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the standards attained by the pupils and the progress they make. It has made a good start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and this is currently having a positive impact on standards in mathematics. Further strengths of the curriculum are the provision for children aged under five and for the creative arts, including music, art, and dance, throughout the school.

35. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum for children aged under five are good. The planning for children in both the Nursery and Reception classes is excellent and takes full account of the recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes. A strong emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences of good quality, and helping the children to acquire language skills. More formal work, linked to literacy and numeracy, is carefully planned for and introduced appropriately to the children in the Reception classes. Provision for outdoor play in the Nursery is very good, and although



the Reception children do not have frequent outdoor play, good use is made of the Nursery facilities at times other than break times to allow the children access to the appropriate equipment.

36. The curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils. Provision for those with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is a special educational needs co-ordinator who provides individual support for pupils, both in lessons and by withdrawing small groups for additional help. Support staff work closely with teachers to plan and provide valuable help for pupils, and they have a good knowledge of pupils' targets in their individual education plans. The school has identified the need for additional support from either another teacher or more classroom assistants. In general, all pupils have equality of access and opportunity to the full curriculum, although pupils are sometimes withdrawn for additional literacy support at inappropriate times during lessons. As a result, they sometimes miss the introduction to a new topic. Pupils who have special educational needs have full access to the school's entire curriculum, including any extracurricular activities. The school's provision for music, both in and out of school time, is of considerable value to pupils with special educational needs. It often helps to build their self-esteem and gives them opportunities for success.

37. The school provides pupils with English as an additional language with a curriculum that reflects a positive attitude towards their languages and cultures. Pupils, except those at a very early stage of language acquisition, have full access to the curriculum and their language skills are not a barrier to learning. New pupils are enabled to participate in the curriculum at an appropriate level. During the inspection, no significant variation in attainment by different ethnic groups was observed. The school's broad curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to gain confidence through the arts, such as music, dance and drama. Links with the community include Bengali, Yoruba and Arabic classes. The school's celebration of its rich ethnic diversity is at the heart of its ethos.

38. There is satisfactory provision for extracurricular activities for pupils in Key Stage 2. During the inspection, twelve pupils were observed participating in an after-school dance club, ten at an animation club and eight at a Turkish language club. There is also a choir and a recorder club. Normally, there is a football club and matches are played against local schools. Last year, the school team won a Fair Play award. The teachers enhance pupils' learning by making good use of visits within the locality and further afield in London, and by taking advantage of the knowledge and expertise of visitors.

39. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. A clear policy is in place, with appropriate targets for development. However, the school's sex education policy has not been reviewed for five years and there is no formal drugs education policy. In practice, relevant issues are dealt with in science lessons. The local community police officer talks to the pupils about the dangers of drug misuse. There is no formal sex education programme for older pupils. Questions are dealt with openly and honestly as they arise. There are opportunities for pupils to develop social skills on the school council and on class councils and through taking part in school musical productions and the school's cycling proficiency scheme. Personal and social development is also enhanced by visits to galleries and museums. Last year, Year 6 pupils won Islington's Junior Citizen Award scheme.

40. The quality of pupils' learning is enhanced by good links with the local community. Visiting staff from Arsenal Football Club and the London Cricket Association help to develop sports skills for Key Stage 2 pupils. The Green Candle Dance Company is currently providing very good opportunities for pupils to develop skills in movement and dance. Links with Gillespie Park ecology centre, visits to local shops and building sites and a good number of visitors all contribute well to the curriculum. Weekend classes are held in the school for Bengali, Arabic and Yoruba speaking pupils. There are, however, no opportunities for the pupils to develop worthwhile links on a wider scale through access to the Internet or electronic mail. There are good curricular links with the on-site playgroup. However, such links with the large number of secondary schools to which Year 6 pupils transfer are very limited.

41. Overall, the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils. When taken overall, this represents an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when moral development was good, and social development very good. Spiritual and cultural development had weaknesses, but these have been addressed, resulting in generally good improvement. More particularly, there has been some good improvement in the opportunities provided to develop pupils' appreciation of different cultures.

42. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils have the chance to participate in some reflective moments in assemblies and in some religious education lessons. There is a garden area where pupils can be quiet and appreciate the natural surroundings. Year 1 pupils were observed in a lesson about the Hindu faith, where they were taught the reflective nature of the Hindu symbol 'Om', which they repeated quietly after the support teacher. However, there are not enough planned opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness through the curriculum. The school has improved its provision for a collective act of worship since the last report, and now fulfils the statutory requirements. The act of worship is well planned and generally makes a sound contribution to the pupils' moral and social development.

43. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school has a positive behaviour policy, and rules are posted both inside the school and out in the playground. There is an effective anti-bullying policy. Teachers frequently reinforce their expectations for pupils to show respect and good behaviour towards everyone in the school community. There is a positive rewards system, which encourages good behaviour and effort in pupils. The school council formulates some of the school rules and pupils are proud to have the ownership of these. They are encouraged to help others and they are taught right from wrong. In religious education lessons, some pupils have had the opportunity to study the Ten Commandments, and to see how these may apply to everyday lives. Also in religious education, there is a strong emphasis upon tolerance and respect for other people's faith and beliefs. Pupils are often asked to talk about, or show the class what they have learned from their own religion.

44. Opportunities for pupils to develop both their social and cultural awareness are good. Pupils have many opportunities to work together, such as in teams playing matches against other schools. In the school council, they have the opportunity to offer some service to the school and there are representatives from the year groups who meet regularly. In music, pupils work together well as a choir or an orchestra, or in the steel band. Twice a year, the school produces a concert or a musical, which gives pupils the chance to be part of a production team. They learn to contribute to the whole for the benefit of the school and the audiences. In an assembly, pupils from Year 4 showed their art and colour work to celebrate what they had been doing and how well they had worked. Pupils attend local festivals of music and dance, and a group went on stage at Sadlers Wells. There are opportunities for older pupils to help the younger ones and some pupils are paired in order to help each other.

45. Culturally, the school has a rich diversity of faiths and family backgrounds, and these are used to very good effect. For example, Muslim children were able to show their class how they are taught to pray. Year 1 pupils watched and took part in a Hindu naming ceremony. Music, dance and art all make good contributions to pupils' cultural development, which is further enriched by visiting theatre and musical groups. Pupils also visit art galleries, places of historical importance, an ecology park and some local places of worship. A particular strength is the school's provision for pupils to learn to play instruments and to have the use of them, such as violins, cellos recorders or the steel pans. Pupils hear stories from Africa, watch drama from India and experience the dress, art and music of many different cultures.

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

46. Members of staff are very caring and know and support the pupils well, especially those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. The quality of information made available to staff about the pupils is very detailed and comprehensive. The school provides the pupils with a safe and secure environment that supports their education successfully. The different religions represented in the school are respected and celebrated. Pupils from all backgrounds are supported very well and with sensitivity. The school nurse provides expert advice and help as well as monitoring pupils' health. External agencies, including the education welfare service, give valuable support to the school.

47. The school's procedures for health and safety do not fully comply with statutory requirements and the monitoring of health and safety has been unsatisfactory. There are no written risk assessments, no checks of portable electrical equipment and no formal system for the control of substances hazardous to health. Fire protection equipment is checked appropriately and regular tests of systems are made, but

these have not been documented. There are satisfactory arrangements for administering first aid, but a full written assessment of the provision has not been made. The school will be subject to a full fire risk assessment by the Local Education Authority. The condition of parts of the school, particularly some of the pupils' toilets, is unsatisfactory because of the age of the school.

48. The school's policy and procedures for child protection are satisfactory and follow the guidelines of the local committee. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection arrangements and members of staff are fully aware of the school's procedures and arrangements.

49. As in the previous inspection, attendance at the school, for the last reporting year, was just below the national average. The removal of pupils from school without prior notice and the extended holiday periods taken by some pupils to return to their home country, have depressed the school's attendance figures. The school works hard with the educational welfare service to improve attendance. The school has addressed the morning lateness problem identified in the previous inspection, by raising pupils' and parents' awareness through the use of a "ticket" system. The unsatisfactory recording of attendance noted at the time of the previous inspection has been rectified.

50. The behaviour policy plus the regular reminders, and promotion of the school and class rules, give pupils and parents a clear understanding of the school's expectations. Although there is no whole-school system to record unacceptable behaviour and incidents, the staff and parents confirm that there are few cases of poor behaviour, bullying or racial tension in the school.

51. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory overall, even though they are fragmented. Sound assessment and record keeping procedures are in place in English, mathematics and science and they are particularly well used in mathematics. Since the previous inspection, when assessment was identified as a key issue, the school has worked hard and has made satisfactory progress in developing a number of assessment systems to monitor and record pupils' progress across the school. There is a clear policy and set of procedures that closely link planning and assessment. The school has recently adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's schemes of work for science, information technology, design and technology, history and geography. These provide good models and examples for the accurate assessment of pupils' understanding according to the lesson content. The school has introduced the optional standardised tests in English and mathematics for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 and, together with the reading tests that are administered annually, these provide teachers with a clear overview of pupils' achievement at the end of each year. The results of these tests are given to the next year's teacher and are used to set targets for the pupils. The computerised tracking system now in place will, in time, provide a profile of each pupil's progress as he or she moves through the school. Assessment in music is good and is often carried out by the class teacher while the music specialist teaches the subject. All teachers keep an evidence file to show examples and photographic evidence of subjects other than English and mathematics. However, these files vary in quality. Where they are best, teachers set the work in context to the subject and provide annotated notes of what the pupils can achieve. Currently, there is no collection of pupils' work to illustrate the different National Curriculum levels or ways of involving pupils in self-assessment. The school has introduced many effective systems for assessment, but, at present, they lack cohesion. All teachers provide effective support and advice for pupils but there is no whole-school guidance or formal system on the monitoring of personal development.

52. The school efficiently monitors results of assessments to identify the achievements of different ethnic groups. It is the first school to set National Curriculum targets by ethnic group for English and mathematics and has acted as a model. Challenging targets have been set to improve pupils' skills in comprehension and academic language and to address the specific needs of pupils with English as an additional language in literacy and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed in their home language and class teachers and specialist staff liaise to assess the language needs of new pupils. A study pack has been developed containing ideas and activities to give good support to new arrivals and the new pupil is introduced to a child mentor and to others across the school who speak the same language. An additional admission form gives the school useful extra information to help the child settle in quickly. Simplified induction procedures to support the pupil who has returned after a protracted absence abroad are appropriate.

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

53. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. In the previous inspection, inspectors noted that more needed to be done to improve the dialogue with all parents. The present headteacher is working to improve parental communication.

54. Parents' views of the school and the impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school are both good. Parents are invited to attend assemblies, performances, social events and curriculum events as well as the normal briefings and parents' evenings. At the parents' meeting with the registered inspector, parents felt that the school was improving under the leadership of the headteacher and that pupils behave well. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents felt that the school is approachable and that they feel well informed about their child's progress. The school welcomes parents into school to discuss concerns and many parents with English as an additional language come to seek help from the school on other matters. The inability of some parents to speak English makes communication on all matters difficult, however, the school uses interpreters, including children, to help include these parents in school activities. The school provides satisfactory information on the curriculum for parents. Notice boards in the Reception class areas were particularly noteworthy examples. However, a few parents felt that they had not been adequately consulted about the school's inclusion in the Education Action Zone some months before the inspection.

55. Parents and carers are welcomed into school to help with a variety of activities, including hearing pupils read and helping with specific projects. Parents were observed assisting with preparations for an assembly. A Hindu family came into school to give pupils experience of a naming ceremony. Staff and parents work well together. Interpreters are provided when possible and other parents are very helpful as translators. As language makes communication difficult, the school is constantly seeking alternative ways to make sure that parents feel included in school life. The school uses parents effectively to act as translators in several languages for other parents. The school's parent teacher association, through the encouragement of the headteacher, is working hard to raise funds for the school. Parental support for children's homework varies widely as demonstrated by a sample of pupils' home reading books.

56. The end of year reports to parents provide detailed information on pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science, but they do not provide sufficient information about other subjects. Comments on information and communications technology and design and technology are combined, which is unsatisfactory. Of the sample reports seen, a minority included helpful guidance on the ways children could improve. Not all reports included details of pupils' attendance or their results in national tests. The school prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents do not contain all the information required by legislation.

57. Induction procedures for children aged under five are appropriate for this school. The mobility of families within the area makes it difficult to involve parents before their children start in the Nursery. However, once they do attend, parents are provided with an informative booklet for both the Nursery and Reception classes that outlines how they can help their child settle and what they can do at home to help. The notice boards for parents in both Nursery and Reception are very good and provide an overview of the planning and helpful advice on how to help their child with reading and mathematics work at home. Parents' help is valued in both the Nursery and Reception. An induction booklet is being prepared in different languages and there are videos in Bengali and Turkish.

58. The school maintains good contact with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. They attend annual reviews, and are able to give and record their views on their child's progress. In general, parents are very supportive of the school's special educational needs provision, and they are kept well informed. The school very effectively meets its aim to reassure the child and the parents that the school is a safe and welcoming place.

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

59. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, overall, with a number of good features, and also some areas that require further improvement. The previous inspection report identified serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school that formed the majority of the key issues for action. The present headteacher was formally appointed to the post in January

1999, following the long-term illness and eventual retirement of the previous headteacher. Since that time, there has been good improvement in the leadership and management of the school. The post of deputy headteacher has been replaced by four key stage co-ordinators, who play an increasingly active part in the management of the school. The headteacher and governors have improved the use of statistical information in evaluating how well the school is doing and setting targets for improvement. The process of school development planning is now much more effective and involves governors and all staff in identifying appropriate priorities and deciding what action must be taken. Although there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, especially at Key Stage 2, rigorous procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are in the early stages of development. The headteacher is receiving training in this aspect of her role.

60. The role of subject co-ordinators has greatly improved since the last inspection. They have clearly delegated responsibilities and are enthusiastic about developing their subject. However, procedures for monitoring the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning are in the early stages of development. They are, however, identified as priorities for development during the current school year. Effective systems are now in place to track and record pupils' progress, and teachers are beginning to use this information to influence curricular planning. Governors are meeting their statutory obligations in most areas. However, the requirements for teaching information technology are not being fully met, and there are still some omissions from the school prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents. Overall, the school's improvement since the last inspection has been good. The serious weaknesses identified have been addressed successfully through a well-thought out and implemented action plan, which has continued to inform the school development plan, to ensure that improvements continue. The school's capacity to continue to improve is good.

61. Since her appointment, just over a year ago, the headteacher has worked hard to improve morale amongst the staff and to develop a shared vision for, and commitment to, the future of the school. She provides strong but sensitive leadership and a clear sense of direction. She has successfully raised the profile of teachers who have management responsibilities and has increased their effectiveness as key stage and subject leaders. At the time of the previous inspection, the role of the deputy headteacher was underdeveloped and subject co-ordinators had not been given the opportunity to do much more than write schemes of work and order resources. The headteacher has encouraged the recently appointed key stage managers, who take the place of a deputy headteacher, and subject co-ordinators to play a more decisive role in shaping the direction of the school and in identifying priorities for development. Each co-ordinator contributes to the school development plan and has responsibility for a budget. The two co-ordinators for mathematics, for instance, have already had a significant impact on the development of the subject throughout the school and are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic in carrying out their delegated responsibilities. Developments have been introduced at an appropriate pace, and the headteacher has wisely allowed co-ordinators to find their feet before taking them further. However, plans are in place for them to monitor colleagues' planning and the standards achieved in their subject. The literacy co-ordinator has observed other teachers' lessons, and it is intended that other co-ordinators will do the same later in the year.

62. Key stage managers lead and monitor developments and provide good support for colleagues. The management of the provision for children who are under five is very good. The co-ordinator for the Early Years is the Nursery teacher, who has excellent knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. She has a clear overview of provision and planning for children aged under five and provides effective support to all staff, both in the Nursery and Reception classes. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator also provides very good leadership and support for colleagues, and has already had a significant impact on developing an effective and consistent approach to curricular planning in Years 1 and 2. She also liaises closely with the co-ordinator for children aged under five to ensure that there is continuity when children enter Key Stage 1. The co-ordinators for upper and lower Key Stage 2 are relatively new to the school and are developing their leadership and management role. They provide good support for colleagues and discuss important curricular issues at regular key stage meetings.

63. Although there has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous. Until recently, the only monitoring of teaching was carried out by outside agencies. However, this has been identified as a priority for development by the headteacher and governors. Most of the monitoring of the quality of

teaching that has been carried out by the headteacher has been informal. She has now begun a programme of formal monitoring, under the guidance of a link inspector from the Local Education Authority, which involves observing lessons and giving teachers verbal feedback on their performance. There is no formal appraisal of teachers. However, the headteacher includes performance targets in each co-ordinator's job description that relate to the priorities in their subject action plan for the year. The governing body has set performance targets for the headteacher, which are also clearly linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan.

64. There is good leadership and management of the school's special educational needs provision. This ensures that resources are used effectively and that pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. The co-ordinator works hard to provide help for all the pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. She has a clear vision for the future of the provision, which includes increasing the number of staff to work with pupils who have special educational needs.

65. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide good support for the headteacher and staff. Through their committees, they develop a clear idea of how well the school is doing and what it needs to do in order to improve further, thus helping to provide a sense of direction for the work of the school. Meetings with co-ordinators enable governors to maintain a good overview of curricular development, and discussions with the headteacher keep them alert to newly emerging issues. Along with the headteacher, governors analyse statistical information, compare the school's performance with that of other schools and assess their own effectiveness in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. The governing body both supports the school effectively in its role as a critical friend, and also holds the school to account for the standards it achieves and the quality of education it provides. Governors seek to improve their own effectiveness by attending regular training sessions and are fully aware of their statutory obligations.

66. Clear analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school by staff and governors has informed and improved the process of school development planning. Effective use of assessment and performance data has enabled teachers to predict pupils' potential and to focus effort on supporting groups of pupils who were identified as underachieving. For example, a teacher was employed to work with small groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6 who were not achieving expected levels in reading. This has had a positive impact on the pupils' achievements and has raised the level of their attainment in reading. All teachers and governors play an active part in identifying priorities for development and deciding on the action to be taken. They then monitor the outcomes of their work and re-evaluate what needs to be done. For example, the school's formal targets in mathematics for 2000 have been raised as a result of evaluating the progress made to date.

67. There are very effective links between the process of school development planning and the setting of the annual budget. This ensures that the school's resources are targeted wisely to support educational priorities. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure and the quality of financial control and administration is very good. The school's administrative officer is very efficient and rigorous in her monitoring of expenditure. She liaises productively with the headteacher and governors to ensure that all are kept well informed throughout the year. The school's higher than average carry forward figure in the last financial year resulted from uncertainties surrounding the absence of the previous headteacher. Plans are in place to reduce this figure to an acceptable level by the end of the current financial year by improving the number and quality of learning resources in some areas of the curriculum. All specific grants that are received by the school are used well for their intended purpose. The administrative officer monitors this very closely. The principles of best value are applied well in determining the school's management and use of resources. The school compares its performance against that of other schools and evaluates its expenditure in terms of its impact on pupils' learning. For example, the school is currently evaluating the cost effectiveness of buying in the services of a professional dance group in terms of its impact on the pupils' learning.

68. The school's clearly stated aims and values are reflected in the quality of relationships that exist at all levels and in the attempts made by the school to provide for the needs of its ethnically diverse community. Its aim to create a happy, secure and stimulating learning environment in which all members of the school community can grow in self-esteem is well met. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils is not yet fully met in the curricular provision for information and communications technology and in the arrangements for withdrawing some pupils from lessons.

69. In its administrative procedures, the school is making very good use of new technologies, including information and communications technology. The administrative officer has developed very efficient procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' attainment and progress and is able to extract a variety of statistical information for analysis. However, this is not yet reflected throughout the school for the reasons outlined elsewhere in this report.

70. The number, qualifications and experience of the school's teaching staff meet the needs of the curriculum well. There are 23 full and part-time staff who, between them, provide the school with good levels of expertise in most areas of the curriculum. All staff have job descriptions in which their duties are outlined. They are aware of others' roles and responsibilities and form a good team who are committed to the pupils' learning and welfare. Support teachers for pupils with English as an additional language and for the additional literacy programme contribute significantly to pupils' good progress. They have attended appropriate training courses to enhance their knowledge.

71. The school has a music specialist, who also provides non-contact time, and a full-time non-teaching co-ordinator for special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides all the withdrawal or in-class support that is given by the school. The school has identified the need for more trained special educational needs support staff. Pupils with behavioural problems are supported by the behaviour management teacher and art therapists. The administrative and premises staff provide good and valued assistance for the day-to-day running of the school and contribute positively to the welfare of pupils. The school has appropriate measures in place to support staff and reduce levels of absence. Newly qualified teachers and initial teacher training students are given good support by their mentor.

72. In general, the accommodation is satisfactory and enables effective teaching to take place. Since the previous inspection, which described the building as 'well-maintained', classrooms have been reorganised and the Nursery floor replaced, which were identified as weaknesses. The classrooms are appropriately furnished and there is adequate storage and space for resources. Although the accommodation is large and contains three halls, it is fully used and the special educational needs room is shared with English as an additional language. Teachers make good use of classrooms and corridors to promote teaching and learning by imaginative and colourful displays. The school has also enhanced the play environment for its pupils including a garden, equipment and an outside play area.

73. Overall, the quality, quantity and accessibility of the school's resources are satisfactory to support teaching and learning. In most subjects, there is a satisfactory level of provision with very good provision in music and good provision in design and technology, mathematics, and physical education. It is unsatisfactory in information and communications technology where there are insufficient computers and associated hardware and software. Good use is made of the Barnsbury loans library to supplement resources in some subjects. There is an adequate range of fiction and information books in classrooms, and listening corners promote language learning well. The libraries have a good selection of multicultural books although there are gaps in general provision. The junior library does not act as a focus for the school and is not intensively used to promote independent study skills and foster a love of books. The school makes effective use of the local environment and people as a resource and a good range of educational visits and visitors from the area add relevance and breadth to pupils' learning.

74. For children aged under five, the qualifications and experience of the teachers, nursery nurse and primary helpers meet the needs of the children who are under five well. The level of assistance provided by the school is high, with a full-time nursery nurse attached to the Nursery and a primary helper attached, full-time, to each Reception class. The Nursery accommodation is spacious and has its own outdoor play area which, although rather small, is very well used. The Reception classes, however, are rather cramped for the number of children on roll and do not have their own outdoor play area. They do, however, make appropriate use of the Nursery outdoor facilities. Learning resources are good, overall. They are better in the Nursery than in Reception due, in part, to the lack of space indoors and the lack of their own equipment for outdoor play.

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

- 1. Improve the school's provision for the teaching of information technology and raise standards of attainment in the subject by:**
  - meeting fully the statutory requirements for each aspect of the subject;
  - improving the number and range of resources to support teaching;
  - providing further training for all staff;
  - ensuring that the scheme of work is adapted to meet the needs of the school;
  - increase opportunities for pupils to use information technology in other areas of the curriculum.  
(Paragraphs 4, 5, 9, 11, 28, 33, 69, 73, 99, 100, 108, 119, 128-132, 145)
  
- 2. Continue to improve the arrangements for the rigorous monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching throughout the school, as has already been initiated by the headteacher.**  
(Paragraphs 59, 63, 109)
  
- 3. Develop the role of subject co-ordinators so that they are fully involved in monitoring colleagues' planning, the implementation of schemes of work and the standards achieved by the pupils.**  
(Paragraphs 60, 61, 99, 103, 109, 119, 121, 126, 138)

This key issue is already identified in the school development plan for the current year.

- 4. Improve the quality of teachers' planning in subjects other than English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, so that learning objectives are made clear and the progression in teaching skills, knowledge and understanding from week to week is evident.**  
(Paragraphs 26, 30, 127, 132, 138, 144)

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Meeting statutory requirements for the provision of information to parents.  
(Paragraphs 56, 60, 65)
  
- Improving the procedures for monitoring health and safety.  
(Paragraph 47)
  
- Ensuring that the withdrawal of pupils from lessons for specialist teaching does not compromise their full and equal access to the rest of the curriculum.  
(Paragraphs 36, 68)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

80

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

35

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	16	49	29	3	0	1

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26.5	402
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		169

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		90

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	182

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	54
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	66

**Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	21	33	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	9	15
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	35	32	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (40)	59 (52)	72 (53)
	National	82 [80]	83 [81]	87 [84]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	16
	Girls	27	26	21
	Total	39	40	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (51)	74 (49)	69 (55)
	National	82 [81]	86 [85]	87[86]

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	24	24	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	15
	Girls	14	14	19
	Total	24	25	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (64)	52 (75)	71 (70)
	National	70 [65]	69 [59]	78 [69]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	12
	Girls	19	17	18
	Total	31	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (79)	63 (83)	63 (77)
	National	68 [65]	69 [65]	75 [72]

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	42
Black – African heritage	61
Black – other	7
Indian	9
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	35
Chinese	7
White	96
Any other minority ethnic group	166

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

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.4
Average class size	28.7

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	169

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Number of pupils per FTE adult	18
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	910294
Total expenditure	853197
Expenditure per pupil	1994
Balance brought forward from previous year	8490
Balance carried forward to next year	65587

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	428
Number of questionnaires returned	79

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	39	6	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	47	37	9	3	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	44	5	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	38	18	3	4
The teaching is good.	46	39	9	4	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	36	15	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	27	6	5	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	42	1	1	7
The school works closely with parents.	35	43	15	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	41	47	5	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	49	6	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	34	19	3	11

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Some parents feel that they were not consulted sufficiently about the school becoming part of the North Islington Education Action Zone.

## **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**

75. The school's last inspection judged progress to be good in the Nursery and Reception classes and attainment to exceed the expected standards in language and literacy and creative development. In mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, attainment was judged to be in line with what is expected. Teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes was judged to be good. The findings of this inspection differ slightly in terms of standards, due to the different cohort of children and the significant number of children who have not attended either the Nursery or other pre-school provision before entry to Reception. The quality of teaching remains good overall.

76. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below the national average. Most children enter the Nursery able to communicate their needs and ideas using their own family language. Although some children are able to express themselves well in English, a considerable number of children are at an early stage in their ability to communicate in English. However, most children indicate that they understand what is said to them. From this starting point, most children make good progress and are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in some, but not all, of the areas of learning by the time they reach statutory school age. In their personal and social development, language and literacy, physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, most children attain the expected standards by the age of five. Standards in creative development are particularly good. In mathematics, children achieve at appropriate levels, in part. Although their practical knowledge and understanding of mathematics are appropriate, in some of the core skills of numeracy, they are not on course to meet the standard that would be expected of them by the age of five.

77. The Nursery caters for children aged three and four years and 35 children are currently on the register. Sixteen of the 35 children in the Nursery attend full-time and the remaining 19 attend either the morning or afternoon sessions, part-time. The children are admitted to Reception at the start of the autumn and spring term during the year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, many of the children in the Reception classes were under five. The caring nature of the provision ensures that all children settle happily into the Nursery and move confidently into Reception.

#### **Personal and social development**

78. Most children are on course to meet the expectations of the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five years old. Personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning and the planning is comprehensive. The well-established routines and caring nature of the provision allow all children to feel secure and to grow in confidence. Children quickly become independent and, within a few weeks, all put on their own coats for outside play and hang them up again afterwards. The provision for free play in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and enhances the children's co-operative interaction with others. They start to make independent choices of which activity to engage in and, although some children are quiet in their play because they do not yet speak English, all adults participate in the activities and engage the children in conversation. By the time the children are five, most are able to work and play as part of a group and behave in appropriate ways. They take turns and adhere to the class rules, such as the number of children allowed to play in the home corner. The majority of children develop happy and constructive relationships with each other and the adults they work with, and have a positive attitude to school. However, a minority of children in Reception, who have not had the benefit of pre-school provision, lack the social skills to co-operate with other children. Most children are eager to explore new learning, enjoy their work and, by the age of five, show personal responsibility by clearing up and putting resources back where they belong.

79. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in this area. Opportunities are exploited to the full to promote the children's personal and social development and most children respond positively. In the Nursery, both the teacher and nursery nurse make very good use of snack time to develop the children's social skills. The children are expected to hand out and collect the milk

cartons and in return are encouraged to say thank you. At this time, the adults talk with the children and teach them to put up their hands when they want to speak. In 'circle' time in Reception, the children are encouraged to be kind and helpful towards others and to begin to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The diversity of languages and cultures of the children is valued and both the Nursery and Reception classes celebrate them. Visits from people such as the police and the fire brigade help children to understand how others can help them in society.

### **Language and literacy**

80. Many children enter the Nursery communicating in a language other than English and coming from a wide range of cultures and ethnic groups. From this starting point, most children make good progress in the development of language and early literacy skills and, by the age of five, attainment is broadly average. This is confirmed by the Reception baseline assessment. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are provided with a wide range of practical activities and purposeful free play to support the development of language and literacy. Teachers provide useful opportunities for children to talk with an adult while they undertake their activities and actively seek to extend their vocabulary. Many children understand and learn to use essential vocabulary, such as their names and the names of objects, and, by the age of five, most use sentences with correct word order. Children enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and have positive attitudes to 'reading'. By the age of five, many children know how books are organised and that words and pictures carry meaning. They begin to associate sounds with letters and some recognise familiar words in simple text. Higher attainers talk about the features of non-fiction books and make reference to the contents page. In writing, children know that marks on paper carry meaning. In the Nursery, for instance, they make attempts at writing notes and letters while at play in the home corner and writing area. In Reception, children copy the script of adults when writing about a picture and make their own passports that contain personal information about themselves. In general, their pencil control is satisfactory and most children can write their own name, with the appropriate use of upper and lower case letters by the time they are five.

81. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in language and literacy. All teachers understand the importance of language development and use a wide range of strategies to extend the children's vocabulary. The teaching of reading is well structured, from sharing books in the Nursery to the more formal introduction to reading and regular phonic practice in Reception. The home reading scheme in the Nursery is well organised and the children enjoy having their own folder and choosing a book with a member of their family or carer to take home. Reception teachers have devised an appropriate range of activities for the daily literacy lesson to increase children's interest, knowledge and understanding in both reading and writing. These have a beneficial effect on the quality of learning and the children's progress in developing literacy skills.

### **Mathematics**

79. By the age of five, only a few children reach the expected standards for their age in mathematics. A good variety and wide range of practical activities are provided for the children to explore and develop their mathematical language. They can match colours and shape and are beginning to recognise simple two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, triangles and circles. When making rockets from junk materials, some recognise and name the three-dimensional shapes as cones and cylinders. They copy and continue a simple repeating pattern using two colours. However, because their pre-school experiences are varied, their knowledge of numbers is generally below average by the time they are five. Some children use a number line to count and write numbers from 20 to 0, some from 10 to 0 and some can join dots 1 to 11 in the correct order. In general, however, they are unsure of numbers and have insufficient knowledge of number operations leading to simple addition and subtraction. Children in the Nursery talk about the models they make and identify the tallest tower and the shortest tower. Supported by adults, they count the number of milk cartons as they are given out.

80. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good, overall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of these young children ensure that there is a good variety of practical activities before working on a more formal curriculum. The work is planned in detail so that teachers

know what skills or knowledge they want the children to learn from each activity. Resources are carefully prepared and all staff use questions effectively to promote the children's use of mathematical language while at play. In the Nursery and Reception classes, sand and water play allows children to explore concepts such as full and empty. In the Reception classes, the teachers adapt the methods in the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately to meet the needs of the children and to build on their previous experiences.

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

81. The children's developing knowledge and understanding of the world around them is in line with expectations for children of this age. They make good progress, and the many children who are learning English as an additional language respond well to the wide range of experiences provided, both in the Nursery and Reception classes. Discussion forms an important part of the work in both the Nursery and Reception classes, and children are encouraged to explore and make observations. For example, in the Nursery, while children experiment with the torch in a shadow box, they are asked questions such as '*Can you make the shadow bigger?*' and they learn that by moving the torch closer to an object the shadow gets bigger. In Reception, they are given magnets to explore and asked '*Can you find something that does not stick to the magnet?*' and make observations about what happens. Very good use is made of the neighbouring locality with walks and visits to places of interest and the local shops. This helps to develop pupils' observational skills and their knowledge of the local area. During the week of the inspection, children in the Nursery were taken to a nearby building site, where they were all issued with hard hats and escorted around the site by the contractor. They looked at bricks, blocks and diggers and found out about cable pipes, drains and manholes. Reception children play out their experiences and talk about going to India and Africa on an aeroplane. Through the current topic of 'Houses, Homes and Holes', they observe the different buildings in the neighbourhood and make model box houses of their own homes with a simple plan of the rooms inside the house. Children in the Nursery use a variety of construction and modelling materials in play situations and learn how to make bread. Their models of animals made from wood show remarkable skill with tools such as saws, hammers and nails. In Reception, the children make very good models of bunk beds and animals from a selection of reclaimed materials. They enjoy using the computer and use the mouse carefully to operate a number program. Unfortunately, during the week of the inspection, the computer in the Nursery was not operational. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good both in the Nursery and Reception, as seen in the range of very well planned practical experiences that are relevant to the children in the world around them.

### **Physical development**

82. Most children control their larger scale movements well and are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. Nursery children have a good range of large and small equipment, wheeled toys and balancing and climbing apparatus, which they use with increasing skill. Although the four year old children in Reception do not have their own designated play area, they do have access to the playground at times other than break times and have the opportunity to share the Nursery and playgroup's resources. They kick footballs, hit a ball with a bat and, in their physical education lessons, show an awareness of space while they run round the hall. Manual dexterity is well promoted both within the Nursery and Reception. Children develop increasing hand control through cutting and making activities and through fixing jigsaws and manipulating construction toys. Progress is good and many children confidently use pencils for drawing and writing, brushes for painting and tools for woodwork by the age of five. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in this area and best use is made of all the available resources. All staff work well together to promote effective learning. Ongoing observations of children's response to the activities and the progress they make enable teachers to plan carefully for future experiences.



## **Creative development**

83. The children achieve well in all aspects of their creative development. They make good progress and, by the age of five, most children meet, and possibly exceed, the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Purposeful play is a strong feature in the Nursery and Reception, and the many imaginative activities provided stimulate the children's learning. For instance, the large variety of play toys, such as farms, animals, building bricks and small world figures facilitate exploratory play. The role-play areas are very popular and give the children good opportunities for imaginative play, such as acting out the story of the Three Pigs or writing invitations for a party. Nursery children are given the opportunity to extend their role-play outdoors, where they may 'read' stories to children in bed or use rollers to 'paint' the wall. Children are encouraged to explore with paint freely, mix colours, make 'bubble' pictures and mould with dough and clay. They learn the techniques of sewing and, in Reception, make and dress peg-dolls. In music, many children demonstrate a good level of natural rhythm and have the ability to keep a steady beat on a drum. They quickly learn the words of new songs and sing very well, with confidence. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are very good and all staff plan for and provide a wide range of valuable experiences for the children.

## **ENGLISH**

84. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for Ambler School in 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, standards were well below average and that, compared with similar schools, standards were below average in English. The percentage of pupils attaining both Level 4 and above and Level 5 and above in English was well below the national average in both the tests and the assessments made by teachers. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those of the previous three years, they show an improving trend in standards which is broadly in line with the national trend. However, within this overall trend, there have been significant fluctuations from year to year, as outlined in earlier sections in this report. The combined data for 1997, 1998 and 1999 show that the attainment of boys in English was below the national average whilst that of girls was well below average. The school has set formal targets for 63 per cent of its pupils to reach or exceed the expected level in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests and assessments in English in the Year 2000. This target represents a good degree of challenge.

85. The findings of this inspection are that the oldest pupils in the school are on course to achieve standards by the end of Key Stage 2 that are below the level of the national expectation. This is an improvement on the 1999 national tests which reflects the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. No significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls. This judgement represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection in September - October 1997 when standards at Key Stage 2 were reported to be in line with expectations. However, the school's end of Key Stage 2 national test results for 1998 showed standards to be well below the national average. Standards in English in national tests are adversely affected by the large numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language and the high turnover of pupils, including pupils who have no knowledge of English and, sometimes, no previous schooling. The pupils' achievement in English is good overall, in relation to their earlier attainment, especially when taking all contributory factors into account.

86. By the age of 11, pupils attain below average standards in speaking and listening. Many pupils readily engage in discussions, talk confidently and offer ideas and relevant information. However, they use a limited range of vocabulary and need support to develop their ideas at length. Others are diffident when declaring their views publicly, talking about their feelings or finding precise words when analysing a piece of text. The school has adopted the successful strategy of 'talk partners' in which more confident, articulate pupils are carefully paired with those who, for different reasons, are more hesitant about expressing themselves. This was observed in a Year 6 literacy lesson about science fiction, when the teacher instructed pupils to talk to their partners to overcome their natural reticence. As a result, pupils discussed their ideas thoughtfully, listened courteously and showed a good level of maturity.

87. Overall, standards in reading at Key Stage 2 are below average. Higher attaining pupils read with accuracy, fluency and relevant expression. They are undeterred by difficult words and text and draw on a range of techniques to decipher them and clarify meaning. However, they do not read a sufficiently challenging range of books and have difficulty when asked to express personal preferences about authors and reading experiences. Most pupils accurately read an appropriate range of texts, have a broad understanding of the main points and can discuss some aspects of characters and plot. Lower attaining pupils use their knowledge of sounds when reading unfamiliar words but cannot always build up words successfully. They express some preferences in their personal reading and briefly discuss key events. Across the key stage, research skills are insufficiently developed.

88. At Key Stage 2, standards in writing are below average. Pupils write for a satisfactory variety of purposes and readers, for example, diaries, poems, note-taking, myths, play scripts, recipes, postcards and story settings. Most pupils write in an organised way, sequence ideas and choose appropriate vocabulary. Their writing is often thoughtful and imaginative but the output is frequently small and ideas are not sustained consistently enough. The work of higher attaining pupils shows a lively sense of style and an increasingly innovative and adventurous choice of words, but some pupils use a narrow vocabulary, write few complex sentences and find it difficult to develop ideas in writing. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in spelling, punctuation and grammar, but some make numerous spelling errors and use punctuation inconsistently. Throughout the school, planning of written work takes place and there is appropriate emphasis on drafting, editing and refining. Handwriting is generally well-formed but, in some cases, presentation is unsatisfactory.

89. When the averages of the school's test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards are well below average in reading and writing. However, in comparison with similar schools, standards are average in reading and below average in writing. Analysis of the school's national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 shows that, in reading and writing, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was well below the national average, and the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 and above was below average. The findings of the inspection show below average rather than well below average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. This is because of improved teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The assessments made by teachers were very similar to the school's test results at Level 2 and above but were above average at Level 3 and above. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results for the school in reading and writing for 1999 are compared over the past three years, they show a varying trend in standards. However, the general trend shows declining standards. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.

90. The findings of the inspection show that at Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are below average. The high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language means that some pupils have limited or no understanding of English. To compensate for this low starting point, teachers act as good speech models and there is a strong focus on oral and listening skills. Pupils listen attentively to stories, rhymes and explanations and make simple and appropriate responses in class. Some pupils have a limited range of words and indistinct pronunciation, but higher attaining pupils express their thoughts confidently and use a growing vocabulary. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce and extend pupils' language and to develop their confidence as speakers. This was seen in a Key Stage 1 assembly on the theme 'I am special' - because "*I am six*", "*My mummy says so*", "*I have been in an aeroplane*". Pupils spoke happily and distinctly, with little support from an adult. This experience built up their self-esteem and confidence very effectively as their efforts were praised and recognised by everyone present.

91. Standards in reading at Key Stage 1 are below average, although there is evidence of higher attainment. Pupils generally read simple texts with accuracy and enjoy reading sessions with their teachers. Through their work in the literacy hour, they have a good understanding of how books are organised. Higher attaining pupils confidently tackle relatively difficult words, using their phonic knowledge, and use appropriate expression. Lower attaining pupils draw on their knowledge of sounds to read simple, regular words but often need support. They have a satisfactory understanding of texts that match their attainment. Only higher attaining pupils know how to locate information from non-fiction books.

92. Pupils' writing at Key Stage 1 is below the level of the national expectation. Some higher attaining pupils write simple sentences with accurate spelling of simple words and correct use of capital letters and full stops. Some of these pupils have a lively sense of language and their longer pieces show a sound awareness of the structure of a story. The writing of most pupils shows a knowledge of sentence structure but spelling and punctuation are variable. The work of lower attaining pupils conveys meaning and simple words are spelt correctly. Handwriting is usually carried out carefully but size and shape are not always consistent.

93. All teachers are committed to developing fully the language skills of pupils whose first language is not English. These pupils are well-integrated in mainstream classes where they generally receive good support from specialist teachers. They make good progress in their acquisition of English as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards, relative to their previous attainment, when they receive well-focused support in class.

94. At both key stages, standards in literacy reflect those found in English. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Opportunities are appropriately taken to broaden the range of pupils' writing experiences such as job descriptions, technical reports and evaluations. At Key Stage 1, the story sequence of the sleeping princess and the gallant prince showed good links with art, dance and information and communications technology.

95. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning in English are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The previous inspection reported teaching to be 'generally sound'. The real strength of the teaching of English in the school is the staff's awareness of their shared responsibility to create an environment that is rich in language for pupils who have such a wide range of competence in oral and written English. Across the curriculum, there is constant use and reinforcement of specific vocabulary and the school gives effective continuing support to older pupils to ensure that they achieve the full range of academic language. Displays appropriately celebrate the languages of the school's ethnically diverse community, and role-play and drama are used well to develop language skills and confidence in speaking.

96. Strengths of the teaching of English and its impact on learning were well illustrated in a Year 2 lesson, in which pupils were looking at stories from different countries. The teacher quickly engaged the pupils' interest and attention by her lively and expressive reading of a story from Africa 'The Tortoise's Dream'. She had a strong rapport with the English as an additional language teacher and their dramatic and imaginative presentation of the story held the pupils spellbound and was a joy to watch. A sense of fun and enjoyment was introduced which promoted pupils' learning well. The teacher provided a warm supportive atmosphere in which pupils felt secure and confident to explore their ideas although she had given them clear guidelines for work and behaviour. Resources were used carefully to draw out pupils' responses to adjectives - *strong* elephant, *stately* giraffe, *sly and cunning* hyena, and activities were sharply focused to meet the lesson's objectives. The teacher's confident presentation, clear explanations and infectious enthusiasm maintained a lively pace and inspired and motivated her pupils to learn. At the end of the lesson, the pupils had made very good gains in their understanding of the setting, themes and characters in the story and how adjectives could be used to enliven their work. This was the result of careful planning, good interaction with pupils and dynamic partnership teaching in which the teacher challenged her pupils but also made learning an enjoyable experience.

97. Less effective partnership teaching was seen in a Key Stage 2 lesson in which pupils were composing a class poem based on emotions. By perceptive questioning, the teacher was skilfully drawing out imaginative and original responses from his pupils, when untimely interventions from the support teacher overshadowed his efforts, interrupted the flow of the lesson and hindered good learning. Other weaknesses in teaching included low expectations, when Year 6 pupils were instructed to produce 'at least two sentences' in half an hour, weak control of pupils, where they were allowed to dictate their own pace in learning, and stories read by the teacher in a flat, expressionless tone which provided a poor model for pupils.

98. The curriculum in English is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The format of the literacy hour has been established satisfactorily and teachers show confidence in managing its different components. The framework of the National Literacy Strategy

provides the scheme of work and ensures progression in the teaching of skills and knowledge. Assessment procedures in English are satisfactory, except for reading, and planning is usually adequately detailed and matched to the wide-ranging needs of pupils. Homework is used effectively across the school to reinforce and extend class work. However, the quality of marking is variable: it ranges from *unclear work, try again, follow the example in the book* to good evaluative comments and the next goals for learning. Some teachers have set pupils effective personal targets to motivate them and provide a sense of achievement.

99. Currently, assessment and the monitoring of planning are carried out by the key stage co-ordinators. During the inspection, the Key Stage 2 literacy co-ordinator was on sick leave. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator is committed and conscientious and has a clear idea of issues for the subject and how to address them. However, her monitoring role in classroom observation, planning and sampling pupils' work is insufficiently developed to enable her to have a good overview of the subject and give professional guidance to other teachers. Targets for the development of literacy are appropriate and include reviewing reading records and rewriting the literacy policy. Resources in English are satisfactory and each year group is adequately equipped with a range of books to support the literacy hour. The junior library is spacious, but there are gaps in provision and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to learn specific library skills and to develop independent study. Information and communications technology is not always fully exploited. The subject is enhanced by the additional literacy programme, regular visits to the theatre, storytellers and theatre groups. The school also gives some pupils the opportunity to extend the learning of their home language as it actively recognises the important role that pupils' first language can play in their development of English. The headteacher, staff and governing body are committed to providing pupils with a secure and caring environment. This is important in the context of the backgrounds of many of the pupils and for those who join the school part of the way through the key stage. Through its work and ethos, the school promotes a strong commitment to developing pupils' language skills fully so that they may have better access to the National Curriculum and the confidence to achieve their academic potential.

## **MATHEMATICS**

100. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests was well below average compared nationally and below average compared with similar schools. Standards have fallen consistently since 1997. Current inspection findings indicate that attainment, by the end of Key Stage 2, is average. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. It is an improvement on last year's results in the national tests, as a result of teaching which is generally of good quality and to the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The pupils' achievement is very good in relation to their earlier attainment, especially taking into account the high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and the high turnover of pupils. Year 6 pupils are familiar with the mathematical language of angles and they can draw, estimate and measure angles accurately. They are able to find the areas of regular and irregular shapes and they understand the concept of mode and median. Standards in numeracy are average. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the multiplication tables. They understand the equivalence of fractions and can convert simple fractions into decimals. They can apply their numeracy skills to solve problems involving addition and subtraction of money. There is little evidence of the pupils using their information and communications technology skills in their mathematics work. However, Year 5 pupils have used computers to generate accurate pie charts of their favourite television programmes.

101. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests was well below average compared nationally and with similar schools. However, these results were better than those of 1998 and the percentage of pupils attaining the higher National Curriculum Level 3 was, in fact, close to the national average. Current inspection findings indicate that attainment, by the end of Key Stage 1, is average. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. It is an improvement on last year's results in the national tests, as a result of teaching which is consistently good and sometimes very good. Standards in numeracy are average. Year 2 pupils are able to make quick mental recall of number bonds. They can order numbers to 100 and most of them have a sound understanding of the concept of odd and even numbers. The pupils recognise common two and three-dimensional shapes and they are able to describe some of their properties. They apply their numeracy skills in practical, problem solving

situations. They use mirrors to investigate reflective symmetry and to find the lines of symmetry in shapes and letters of the alphabet. In investigating the relative weights of classroom objects and the heights of pupils in the class, they are making good progress in developing appropriate mathematical language, such as 'more than', 'less than' and 'equals'. Through role play in the classroom shop, the pupils can work out the required change to give customers. They use their numeracy skills soundly to support work in other subjects. In geography, Year 1 pupils have produced accurate block graphs to record the findings of local traffic surveys. They have used their information and communications technology skills soundly to produce some of these graphs with the aid of computers. In science work on forces, these pupils make accurate measurements in centimetres of the distances travelled by various objects.

102. The quality of teaching is generally good in both key stages and this is having a positive impact on learning. The teachers plan their daily mathematics lessons well. There are clear learning objectives for both the initial mental and oral session and for the main part of the lesson. Plenary sessions at the end of each lesson effectively recap and reinforce learning. The teachers move the mental mathematics sessions along at a brisk pace, pitching questions at the right level for different pupils. The use of a metre ruler to help pupils count in twos, fives and tens, and the use of '*I'm thinking of a number*' games, helped Year 2 pupils to consolidate their quick mental recall of number bonds. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher reinforced number concepts successfully in a physical way, by having the pupils jump up as numbers were called out. The teachers try to relate mathematics as much as possible to everyday life, in order to make it more relevant to the pupils. A Year 6 teacher compared rotational turns in angles to the opening of a door or a tap and this improved learning. The teachers use questioning well to make the pupils think and to develop their mathematical understanding. A Year 5 teacher asked '*What do you look for in estimating an acute angle?*' and '*What is the first thing to look for in using a protractor?*' The teachers emphasise the importance of using correct mathematical language and correct units of measurement. They make careful assessments of the pupils' progress during lessons. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are making good progress and are frequently placed in higher attaining groups. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress where they have additional classroom support. Without it, their progress is more limited.

103. The two co-ordinators have made a very positive start in their roles and they offer effective leadership for the subject. They have produced a clear policy and a good action plan and are committed to seeing a rise in standards in both key stages. They are anxious that pupils should benefit from regular mathematics homework. They have worked hard to ensure that every class has a good range of learning resources. The co-ordinators have not yet monitored the teaching of mathematics throughout the school, but they have led training for their colleagues on the National Numeracy Strategy, which is resulting in much greater confidence in the teaching of the three-part lesson. There are good procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The co-ordinators analyse the results of national tests and other assessment data carefully, in order to see which areas of mathematics are proving difficult for the pupils. They have organised a mathematics evening next month, which will provide parents with useful information about the teaching of mathematics. Through encouraging collaborative work when necessary, the subject is making a sound contribution to the pupils' social development. The subject fully meets statutory requirements.

## SCIENCE

104. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for the school in 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, standards were well below average in science. Compared with similar schools, standards are average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in science was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was below the level of the national average. The assessments made by teachers were very similar to the test results. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by the school in 1997 and 1998, they show a decline in standards. However, results from year to year are affected by the high turnover of pupils and the very high proportion of pupils who do not speak English fluently.

105. The findings of the inspection are that standards attained by the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 are below the expected level, which is a decline from the average standards found in the school's previous inspection. Again, there is high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language in the present Year 6 cohort and a high level of pupils with special educational needs. Many of the pupils who do not have English as their first language have difficulty in understanding the scientific vocabulary, and the pupils with special educational needs do not have the necessary skills to devise their own investigations. The pupils in Year 6 describe the functions of the eye and use drawings to show how mirrors can change the direction of a light beam. They classify materials as solids, liquids and gases and know that some solids dissolve in water and others do not. Pupils make models and draw diagrams to illustrate the forces acting on an object, although not all have a clear understanding of the relationship between forces and motion.

106. In the 1999 assessments by teachers at the end of Key Stage 1, standards were well below average at Level 2 and above and below average at Level 3 and above. The school identified the need to provide extra support in science lessons to the large proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language. This is effectively raising the overall standards. The inspection's findings are that the present cohort of pupils is on course to attain average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. This finding is broadly in line with that of the school's previous inspection.

107. By the age of seven, pupils understand that plants and animals are living and identify the differences between local habitats. They make predictions about the animals and plants found in different habitats and investigate them. The pupils explore how to make a bulb light and explain what happens using drawings and writing to present their findings. They know that pushes and pulls can make things start or stop moving and, after rolling toy cars down ramps, measure the distance travelled by each car. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are able to carry out simple experiments and record their findings through labelled drawings, writing short sentences and, where applicable, in measurement. They make predictions and draw conclusions from the results of their work.

108. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning, including that for pupils with English as an additional language, are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their learning and make satisfactory progress. Pupils who do not have English as a first language make good progress. This was well illustrated in a Key Stage 1 lesson on the environment, when the partnership between the class teacher and the specialist teacher effectively raised the pupils' understanding. The lively, animated approach and talk between the two teachers caught and retained the pupils' interest, while at the same time developing all pupils' scientific vocabulary. Lessons are well planned and the questions used, such as *'What did we find in the grass, under the soil and by the tree?'* make pupils consider their replies before answering. Overall, the management of pupils is good and promotes a good working atmosphere in classrooms. There is a good balance of whole class teaching and practical group work that engages most pupils throughout the lessons. In Key Stage 1, particularly good use is made of scientific games to promote the pupils' understanding and make the subject fun. At the lower end of Key Stage 2, pupils know the function of different teeth and explain why it is important to look after their teeth. With support, they carry out an investigation, using egg-shells, on how some liquids may cause damage to their teeth. Clear explanations are given on why eggshells are being used, and the test itself focuses on developing the pupils' investigative skills. Good links are made with design and technology, as the pupils make models of sets of teeth that show the distinct difference between the molars and incisors. In Year 4, pupils know that a feeding relationship exists between plants and animals. Attention is given to providing picture cards as a visual support and when questions such as *'Which is the producer, which is the consumer?'* are asked, the pupils begin to learn about the structure of a food chain in a specific environment. Some staff at the upper end of Key Stage 2, lack confidence when teaching science and this results in pupils undertaking work that is not always suitable for their needs. In lessons of this nature, explanations are at times unclear, and the group activities do not stimulate the pupils. Although the planning of lessons at Key Stage 2 is designed to build on pupils' previous knowledge, it lacks the detail of the Key Stage 1 planning. At both key stages, teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communications technology in science.

109. The school has adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work, which gives the basis for appropriate progression in the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding.

Assessment procedures are sound, with set key questions based on the practical tasks in lessons and end of topic tests. A record is kept of the scientific skills and concepts that pupils acquire over time. Overall, the subject is appropriately managed by the knowledgeable co-ordinator who is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of science in the school. However, her role lacks clear links to a system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the school and does not promote sufficient improvement in the quality of teaching and standards achieved, particularly in Key Stage 2. Learning resources for science are adequate. Good use is made of the attractive wildlife area within the school grounds and visits to places such as Clissold Park, Queen's Wood and the Science Museum effectively enhance the pupils' learning. The subject fully meets statutory requirements.

## ART

110. Standards in art are above average for the age of the pupils at both key stages. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were average. This judgement takes into account the four lessons observed during the inspection, an examination of the pupils' work on display around the school, and analysis of the teachers' planning. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop increasing confidence and skill in using different media and techniques. They develop good skills in observational drawing, and produce sketches with good attention to line, tone and perspective. They explore various ways to apply paint, using other artists as a source of inspiration. Pupils in Year 6 create three-dimensional representations of their names, using tone, shade and perspective. After observing and drawing a pencil sketch of a plant, pupils take a section of the drawing and make a collage of it using a variety of materials in different shades and tones. They interpret a winter landscape by Eric Ravilious as a collage and explain their ideas – *"I used the furry material to create what I thought clouds felt like"*. Pupils in Year 5 study examples of batik from Africa and Asia and design their own images on the theme of living things. They transfer the images onto material and apply wax resist and dyeing techniques to create the desired effect. Pupils in Year 4 use the techniques of colour mixing to good effect in order to match shade and tone when painting carnations in the style of Van Gogh. They also make good attempts to recreate Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' and 'Starry Night' using a graphics program on the computer. In Year 3, pupils make good sketches of Egyptian artefacts as part of their history topic.

111. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop good skills using a range of media and techniques in two and three dimensions. They observe carefully and record their ideas imaginatively and effectively. Pupils in Year 2 make eye-catching collages in the style of Henri Matisse and explore different ways of printing repeated images after looking at the work of Andy Warhol. They carve into or add to clay tiles to make interesting designs, which are then dried and painted. Pupils use a graphics program to produce Matisse inspired pictures on the computer. After finding out how Picasso modelled sculptures of animals from junk, pupils design and make their own large sculptures from a variety of reclaimed materials. They collaborate very well with others as they work in small groups and they achieve very good results. Pupils in Year 1 carve designs into polystyrene tiles and make prints of the images they create.

112. Pupils achieve good standards in art because the quality of the teaching is good. At both key stages, pupils are given a broad range of experiences, which enable them to make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of a variety of artists and their styles. Of the four lessons observed during the inspection, one was very good, two were good and one was satisfactory. Common to all of the lessons seen is the effect of good planning, which guides teachers well and provides them with a clear structure for the lessons. The very good scheme of work covers all aspects of the art curriculum and ensures progression in the teaching of knowledge, skills and understanding. Most teachers have good levels of expertise in the subject and inspire pupils with their own enthusiasm for the subject. Another good feature is the teaching of key skills and techniques. Teachers use the work of other artists effectively to introduce pupils to different techniques and media, and they encourage pupils to explore and investigate these techniques rather than just copying the artists' work. For example, pupils in Year 4 used glue sticks, paper tissues, card and plastic knives and forks to apply paint instead of paintbrushes in order to explore texture. Teachers at both key stages provide pupils with opportunities to use information technology as another form of media to express their ideas and experiment with techniques. As a result of effective teaching, pupils apply themselves well to their

work and strive to achieve high standards. They work at a productive pace and apply considerable creative effort in all activities. They make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and applying the skills they have learned in a variety of situations.

113. A Year 4 lesson exemplified many of the strengths in teaching at both key stages. This was the last lesson in a series and it began with an effective consolidation of what pupils had learned during the previous weeks about mixing colours to create different tones, and about the work and techniques of Van Gogh and Monet. Skilful questioning allowed the teacher to assess what pupils could remember and to lead them to apply their knowledge of Monet's techniques to their own work. The teacher made very good use of a visit to a local park as a stimulus and built effectively on the observational drawings that pupils had completed there by showing them how to recreate these using acrylic paint. There was well informed discussion about how Monet used '*dots and dashes*' rather than flowing brush strokes to create his particular style of painting. As a result of the effective teaching of skills and techniques, most pupils were able to recreate their sketches successfully using Monet's technique.

114. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, as in one lesson at Key Stage 2, the teacher stifles pupils' creativity by telling them exactly what they have to do and providing them with a limited range of materials to use. When some pupils suggest their own good ideas for a collage, these are rejected and they lose enthusiasm for the task temporarily. To their credit, they apply themselves well to the set task and make a satisfactory effort, but some are clearly itching to reach beyond the imposed limitations of the lesson.

115. The co-ordinator for the subject has high levels of expertise in, and enthusiasm for, the subject. She has worked hard to produce a very good scheme of work, which ensures that pupils experience a broad range of art and craft activities. The subject makes a good contribution to developing pupils' cultural awareness as they learn about Aboriginal art, Aztec designs and African and Asian batik. It also helps to develop pupils' social skills well, as teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work together sometimes to create a joint project. There are effective links with other subjects, such as history, geography and information technology. The subject has a high profile within the school and colourful and attractive displays, which are also of high quality, greatly enhance the learning environment in classrooms and communal areas.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

116. During the inspection, there were only limited opportunities to observe the teaching of design and technology. Evidence gained from discussions with pupils and teachers, the scrutiny of work on display and photographs of previously completed work has been used as a basis for forming judgements. The findings are that standards are average for the ages of pupils at both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be well below what is expected.

117. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have sufficient understanding to generate their own ideas and to consider the users of the products and the purposes for which they are designing them. They compare the processes involved in bread making and design and make a bread product for a specific reason, such as a healthy sandwich. They make posters to sell their product, identify problems with their design and suggest ways in which they could be improved. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make vehicles such as balloon buggies that show they have sufficient skill to join and combine materials to make a structure. They use freehand drawings to communicate their design ideas and draw on their ideas to make their models.

118. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, it is evident that good teaching and learning occur when pupils are given imaginative projects to tackle and that the expectations are such that the work provided is challenging. For instance, pupils in Year 1 draw designs and, with support, bring a range of skills together to make a gingerbread house, a tepee and a castle. They speak knowledgeably and with great enthusiasm about how they made the wooden frame for the base of the tepee, stapled material to the frame and after painting the material, added feathers to complete the model. In the same year group, pupils were set the problem that the pupils in Year 5 were not eating enough fruit and they had to find a way of making



fruit more appealing to them. In response to this, they devised recipes, made shopping lists, went shopping at the local green grocers and made a fruit salad and milkshakes. After tasting the final product, Year 5 pupils declared it a success. In Year 3, pupils are provided with diverse opportunities to experience both the design and making element of the subject, such as designing and making belt bags that have secret pockets and zip fastenings. They make and evaluate sandwich fillings and are asked questions such as *'Would you change your original design?'* and *'Was your sandwich well balanced?'* This encourages pupils to consider their work and allows the teacher to assess the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where progress is slower at the upper end of Key Stage 2, there is insufficient challenge in the task and, consequently, it does not fully engage the pupils' interest. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in their learning. The evidence from the limited number of lessons observed indicates that most pupils have good attitudes and respond well. This judgement is supported by the examples of work, which are carefully finished. This is particularly evident in Key Stage 1 and at the lower end of Key Stage 2.

119. The design and technology curriculum is mainly broad and balanced, but there is limited practical and written evidence of this subject in some classes. The profile of the subject has clearly been raised since the last inspection, when it was considered to be a weakness. The school has recently adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work, which gives the basis for appropriate progression in the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding. At present, there are good links with science, but opportunities are missed to enable pupils to apply their developing skills in mathematics to their work in design and technology. The school identifies the need to link the subject with information technology through control technology. The co-ordinator has very recently been given the responsibility for this subject and has carried out a simple yet realistic review. He identifies the need to monitor the subject now it is in fully in place and to provide workshops for the teachers. Teachers, as part of their individual evidence files, collect photographic evidence of the pupils' work for design and technology. Resources are good, which is an improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be inadequate.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

120. Standards in both key stages are average for the pupils' ages, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Key Stage 2 pupils understand the differences between urban and rural areas by comparing Islington with western Cornwall. They use maps and tourist literature to find out about some of the features characteristic of either area. The pupils are aware of some aspects of local geography. In work linked to food technology, they observe bread making and packaging at a local supermarket. The pupils use their literacy skills soundly to produce clear reports on local industries and facilities. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can locate the four home countries and their capitals on a map of the United Kingdom. They understand the concept of a map as an aerial view and the function and importance of a map key.

121. Overall, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. The teachers make effective use of local fieldwork to enhance learning. Younger pupils, for example, have conducted traffic surveys to compare Blackstock Road with Somerfield Road, and they have investigated the impact of a large supermarket on local streets. During the inspection, they donned safety helmets to visit an adjacent building site. The teachers encourage the pupils to use correct geographical terms and they balance the giving of information with opportunities for the pupils to find things out for themselves. A Year 5 teacher encouraged the pupils to predict what they might find on different maps and this had a good impact on the pupils' understanding of what maps can show. In another Year 5 lesson, the teacher used questioning well to help develop the pupils' understanding of Cornwall as a holiday destination: *'Do all coastal areas have beaches?'* The teachers make good links with literacy. Year 4 pupils have written to borough officers on ways in which the local environment might be improved. These pupils have used their information technology skills soundly to produce attractive posters advertising the attractions of Islington. The teachers make useful links with history whenever possible. Year 3 pupils, for example, investigate at first hand old and new buildings in Finsbury Park and ways in which the area has changed over time. The teachers prepare resources well for lessons and use them effectively to enhance learning. Year 1 teachers used large plans and photographs of road signs well to increase the

pupils' understanding of the need for safety on busy local roads. Challenging questions, such as *'What are these signs for?'* made the pupils look and think carefully. In both key stages, pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language are learning well.

122. The co-ordinator has assumed responsibility for the subject only since September and has not yet had the opportunity to develop a monitoring role. Nevertheless, he has developed a clear policy and has purchased additional resources, such as new atlases, to support learning. The teachers make good use of the schools' library service and there is also a good range of geography reference books in the school library. Satisfactory procedures are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The co-ordinator is aware of the fact that there is some imbalance in the spread of geography teaching over the year for pupils in Year 6. In encouraging collaborative research in lessons and in enabling the pupils to think about environmental issues, such as pollution, conservation and recycling, the subject is making a good contribution to the pupils' moral and social development.

## HISTORY

123. At both key stages, standards in history are average for the age of the pupils. This is in line with the judgement of the previous inspection. Throughout the school, pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards, relative to their previous attainment. In this inspection, classroom observations were supplemented by an analysis of pupils' work, displays, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils.

124. By the time they leave the school, pupils have an increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Tudor times and Britain in the 1930s. They have gained sound insight into the way that people lived at different periods and the important events that shaped their lives. In their study of Tudor times, pupils know about Henry VIII as a young man and a king and can effectively contrast the lives of the rich and the poor. Younger pupils know that the Ancient Egyptians were dependent on the riches of the Nile valley for survival and how the Gods influenced the lives of the Ancient Greeks. They show an appropriate understanding of chronology and can construct simple time-lines from their knowledge. Pupils develop a suitable range of specialist vocabulary - *hieroglyphics, pharaoh, pyramid* - and write with increasing detail and accuracy. However, there is little evidence of pupils being given scope for independent study. Opportunities are also missed for higher attaining pupils to write their own version of events and to give reasons why the past is represented and interpreted in different ways.

125. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show early research skills and have a suitably developed sense of chronology for their age. They learn to use vocabulary indicating an awareness of the passing of time and discuss some of the ways in which objects, such as toy cars, can be 'old' and 'new'. Year 2 pupils recognise differences in the past, such as the Great Fire of London, and understand why the life of Rosa Parks, the civil rights heroine, was significant. However, there is insufficient challenge in recording methods for higher attaining pupils.

126. The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning in history is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. At both key stages, teachers show confidence in teaching the subject, use appropriate vocabulary, focus well on historical skills and tell stories that bring history to life for their pupils. They enable pupils with English as an additional language to overcome cultural barriers quickly, and these pupils soon show the enthusiasm that other pupils have for the subject and enjoy being young historians. Strengths in the teaching of history and its effect on learning were evident in a Year 2 lesson about Rosa Parks, whose fight against segregation had such an impact on civil rights. The teacher skilfully introduced the idea of empathy - *'What is the difference between a thought and a feeling?'* - and unobtrusively guided the role-play of Rosa's court appearance to draw out personal and expressive responses from her pupils. She had effective strategies for involving all pupils and, within a secure and supportive environment, pupils were able to discuss their ideas thoughtfully. By the end of the lesson, pupils could empathise appropriately with Rosa and her husband - *'I am scared that I will be on my own without Rosa'* - and the others in court, and some pupils talked about the inequalities of segregation with a maturity well beyond their years. This was the result of the teacher's imaginative and lively approach, sensitive interaction with pupils and high expectations of response and behaviour. Weaknesses in teaching in

other lessons included a slow pace so that pupils became restless and inattentive, insufficient reference to stimulating displays which were an appropriate focus for discussion and an over reliance on undemanding work sheets.

127. A sound policy supports the teaching of the subject and the school makes good use of the units of work in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. The co-ordinator, a subject specialist has a clear vision for the future development of history in the school. His targets are to develop information and communications technology resources and to use visitors as an effective source of local and historical knowledge. However, the subject co-ordinator's role is currently under developed and he has no opportunity to monitor classroom teaching, pupils' work and planning and to share his expertise with colleagues. Planning at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory and assessment procedures are insufficiently developed. History gives good support to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, for example, time-lines, job descriptions for a king and letters and diaries by historical characters. There are also good links with the Green Candle Dance Company when pupils take part in Tudor dances, jazz and rock and roll. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning and are well supplemented by the Barnsbury loans library. Curricular provision is enriched by visits including the British Museum, the Wallace Collection, Geffrye Museum and the Petrie Museum that specialises in Ancient Egypt. Colourful displays enliven classrooms and communal areas. An original and stimulating focal point on the staircase is the celebration of the school's centenary tracing its development from 1898 and ending 100 years later with pictures of the Nursery children – the new generation of Ambler pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

128. Only two information and communications technology lessons could be observed during the inspection, one at each key stage. Individual pupils were seen using computers in other lessons, which is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Judgements take all of this evidence into account, as well as pupils' work on display around the school and in teachers' evidence files, teachers' planning documents and discussions with pupils. All of the available evidence indicates that standards are below average at both key stages. The main reason for this is that the school does not have enough resources to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum and its chosen scheme of work effectively. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use information and communications technology and, as a result, do not make satisfactory progress in their learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. This situation is broadly the same as at the time of the previous inspection, although computers are now being used much more to support pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum.

129. By the age of 11, pupils use the keyboard and mouse competently for word processing when producing a newspaper article. They create posters to advertise Islington's attractions and use a CD-ROM to search for information about history topics. Pupils search a database to locate information about birds. Some individual examples of pupils' work are at the expected level, but there is no evidence of work in control technology, modelling or monitoring, as these aspects are not adequately covered. By the age of seven, pupils achieve average standards in communicating and handling information. They use a CD-ROM dictionary to find words, and draw pictures in the style of Matisse using a graphics program. Pupils use the mouse and keyboard competently to select icons and type sentences. Some pupils who have computers at home worked with their parents to find information about Rosa Parks from the Internet. There is no evidence of control technology or modelling.

130. The quality of teaching and the quality of pupils' learning are unsatisfactory overall because pupils do not have sufficient access to computers, especially at Key Stage 2, and they are not taught all aspects of the National Curriculum and the school's scheme of work. There are insufficient computers and other resources to allow all pupils to experience all aspects of the subject and to have enough time using computers to make satisfactory progress in their learning. However, when specific teaching of skills was observed, the lessons were at least satisfactory, and one was good. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher not only developed pupils' keyboard skills effectively but also their understanding of how to use punctuation in sentences. She made good use of paper replicas of a keyboard to help pupils learn what the different keys are for. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher gave clear explanations to pupils about how

to use a database about birds. It took some time to seat all the pupils so that they could see the computer, and, even then, some did not have a clear view of the screen as it was on a low table. Nevertheless, the teacher's skilful questioning developed pupils' understanding of how to search a database. She made the task increasingly complex by incorporating more variables: "*How many birds eat insects and live in woodland?*" and presented pupils with an appropriate task to develop their skills during the week ahead.

131. On two occasions, pupils were observed using computers in lessons to complete a task that was completely unrelated to what the rest of the class were doing. In a Year 6 religious education lesson, for example, four pupils missed the lesson because they were engaged in other tasks on the computer. Two were using a program that was too simple for them, and two were having difficulty using a complex program that they didn't really understand. None of the pupils received any help from the teacher and were simply left to their own devices. Gains in knowledge and understanding were minimal and time was not used productively to further pupils' learning.

132. As at the time of the previous inspection, the subject does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. There have, however, been some improvements since that time. The school has recently introduced the scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and teachers are still familiarising themselves with it. The scheme of work has been adapted well at Key Stage 1, where teachers' half-termly planning shows clearly how it will be taught and how the pupils will progress in their learning from week to week. This is not the case at Key Stage 2, where teachers' planning is sketchy. As a result, temporary teachers do not know what part of the scheme of the work they are meant to be teaching and pupils do not receive a well-structured curriculum. Although the school has acquired many new computers since the last inspection, these replaced outdated models, and there is still only one computer per class. There are insufficient resources to teach control technology, modelling and monitoring, and teachers' knowledge and understanding of these areas are limited. Assessment procedures are not being used consistently throughout the school. Teachers have received appropriate training in some aspects of the subject, but, as the main focus has been on literacy and numeracy for the past two years, progress has been limited. The co-ordinator has put together a sound action plan, which includes connection to the Internet, and is enthusiastic about developing the subject in the future. However, the success of these developments is dependent on the school having sufficient financial resources to support them. Teachers are now using information and communications technology more successfully to support pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils were observed using computers to record their own music, to reinforce their understanding in mathematics and to find information in history and design and technology lessons.

## MUSIC

133. By the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards that are above average for their ages. In some classes, pupils' attainment is well above average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when only one key stage was above average. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language also attain above average standards, and they are able to join in all the work. This often allows pupils to increase their self-esteem very well and makes a very good contribution towards their personal development. They achieve success in music where some might find work more difficult in other subjects.

134. In Year 6, pupils showed a variety of skills such as singing, playing tuned and untuned percussion instruments, listening, and following the conductor. They performed what was a difficult piece of work by Stravinsky, with style and accomplishment, changing instruments amongst the class, singing and giving of their best. They can follow the teacher's 'score' and respond well to the changes in volume or pace. They understand and use terms such as *staccato* and *ostinato*. Pupils in Year 5 were heard singing in three parts, composing and playing. Most of the class were able to write a simple score and understand and use the signs for loud and soft.

135. Year 2 pupils were captivated by their lesson on the "Emperor and the Nightingale". They sang and played excellently and were entirely engrossed in their work, acquiring knowledge and understanding to an excellent standard. They kept time, and interpreted the story with great interest and

feeling, tracing the story through to the end and reflecting the various moods involved. They played and sang with delight as the teacher kept them enthralled with the story. They followed his 'score' written for them on the board, and used a wide variety of percussion instruments to very good effect. For example, the Chinese gong set the oriental atmosphere and the guiros represented the clockwork mechanism of the nightingale. The rest of the class sang the story very well.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The specialist teacher brings a very high level of expertise and an ability to relate equally well with Nursery children and with those in Year 6. He sets an excellent challenge and pace to all the lessons, and his own ability to sing and play gives an excellent lead to the pupils. Therefore, they learn very quickly, and even pupils who had not heard a song beforehand were able to pick up the words sufficiently to sing it within one lesson. The methods used enable all pupils to engage in making music, giving them a rich diversity of experience in listening, writing, evaluating and performing. No time is wasted, and the instruments are used to the full. One class in Year 3 used mini-keyboards to play their notes and to vary the accompaniment they had made up, and all were given full opportunities to perform. Management of the pupils is very good and the teacher has their full attention and interest. Assessment is usually carried out by the class teacher, who stays for the lesson and records such aspects as effort and involvement, as well as learning and achievement. Assessment is, therefore, good, and leaves the specialist teacher free to organise the lessons. Planning is adequate but not detailed, and provides an overview of what the teacher wishes each year to study. The resources are good and provide pupils with many opportunities to experience the various instruments provided. All pupils have a lesson each week, and many engage in instrumental music or choir activities out of school time. The development planning for last year made provision for more instruments and tuition to be provided for those pupils who wished to learn. All the plans have been implemented and the school offers very good extracurricular opportunities which, in turn, benefit the overall provision for music across the school. There is steel pan instruction, which a good cross section of the pupils receives, and there is also violin, cello and recorder tuition as well as a choir. The leadership and organisation of the subject are excellent and make a very worthwhile contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Above all, the pupils enjoy making music and every one joins in enthusiastically. Behaviour is, therefore, never a problem and all classes in the school's community benefit from this subject which is a strength of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

137. Standards in both key stages are average for the pupils' ages and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Year 6 pupils have satisfactory ball control skills. They participate in a game of bench ball, which involves different ways of travelling around the hall and kicking and throwing a ball. It was not possible to observe any gymnastics lessons. A Year 5 swimming session at the Cally Pool was observed. This indicates that standards in swimming are satisfactory. Half the year group can swim at least 25 metres unaided, using good front crawl and backstroke techniques, and about ten pupils have swum at least 50 metres. Pupils achieve good standards in dance as a result of tuition by a visiting dance company. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can throw and catch large balls with reasonable accuracy and they can throw bean bags into hoops from varying distances. They are able to take part in team games, involving catching and throwing, although, at times, they become over excited and ignore the rules which have been established.

138. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. As a result, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are learning well. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are making equally good progress. Teachers in Key Stage 1 plan their lessons well, with clear learning objectives. Planning in Key Stage 2 is much less detailed. All the teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They manage changing sessions well and they pay due attention to safety in the halls. They emphasise the importance of warming up at the start of physical exercise. Class control is satisfactory. Whilst most pupils clearly enjoy their physical education lessons and respond positively, a minority of them are less attentive and are prone to silliness. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher demonstrated the correct ways of passing a large ball and gave pupils the opportunity to observe good work by others and this resulted in improved performance. In another Year 2 lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to devise their own ideas for improving the ball game. In a Year 1 dance

lesson, the teacher very effectively emphasised slowness and expression in interpreting the story of the Sleeping Beauty: *'raise your knee, point and walk'*. This led to good learning in interpreting the characters and objects in the story. This teacher also made good links with literacy, displaying appropriate words such as *twist, stretch and spin* on a board. The specialist knowledge and expertise of the visiting Green Candle Dance Company are having a positive impact on the dance skills of pupils in Key Stage 2. Very careful analysis of performance in a Year 4 lesson had a good impact on the pupils' sense of keeping to the beat. As a result, these pupils built up a sequence of effective movements to perform a Tudor dance, in work linked to history. Through movement, the pupils interpreted the differences between rich and poor people in Tudor times.

139. The co-ordinator has assumed responsibility for the subject only this term and, as a result, has had no opportunity to develop her role. A clear policy is in place, but the school is awaiting national guidelines for a scheme of work. The three halls provide good accommodation for physical education, though much space in the lower hall is taken up by the Key Stage 1 library and dining tables. There is a good range of fixed and moveable apparatus and other equipment. External accommodation is very limited. Nevertheless, learning opportunities are enhanced by good use of visiting sports coaches. In encouraging the pupils to think about rules and fair play, the subject is making a good contribution to the pupils' moral and social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

140. Pupils' attainment meets the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 1, and is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils who have special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language, achieve satisfactory standards according to their own targets. This represents an improvement since the last report, when standards overall were in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus in both key stages. Allocation of time for religious education meets statutory requirements, and all pupils have one lesson each week. Both attainment targets in the Agreed Syllabus are addressed satisfactorily, so that pupils learn both from and about religion. There is appropriate study of major world religions.

141. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above average. For example, Year 5 pupils demonstrate detailed knowledge and good understanding of many of the practices and beliefs of Islam, such as food rules, dress code, Ramadan and Eid. They can talk about pilgrimage with confidence and understand the origins of hajj. In discussion with Year 6 pupils, they demonstrated above average knowledge of Judaism, Sikhism and Islam. They know about the Torah, and how it was written and how it is read. They understand the 'Five K's' of Sikhism and can talk confidently about Guru Nanak and the holy book of the Sikhs. They discussed the division of Catholics and Protestants in Christianity and know some of the Old Testament stories such as that of Samson. Their ability to retain and to talk about the topics they have studied is above average.

142. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have appropriate knowledge about the 'specialness' of each person, and some of them make their own 'passports' to demonstrate their own personal attributes. They know some of the stories from the life of Jesus, such as the Good Samaritan, and link this with the story of St. Francis. They also know stories from other religions and how they link to special festivals. For example, they know the story of Rama and Sita and its connection with Divali. Pupils in Year 1 were seen in a lesson where they helped in a Hindu naming ceremony, making sweets, bracelets, and paper flowers. They extended their knowledge and understanding very well, and the lesson was a very good experience for them.

143. The quality of teaching and learning overall, in both key stages is good, but there is a range from very good to very poor. In the previous inspection, teaching was reported as being generally satisfactory, and, therefore, there has been overall improvement. In lessons where teaching is very poor, pupils learn very little because their noise and behaviour are not properly controlled. However, in the better lessons, teachers set good pace and challenge and pupils learn quickly or consolidate previous knowledge well. In both key stages, some teachers successfully use the rich diversity of faiths represented by the pupils, and several pupils very confidently demonstrated aspects of their own faith. For example, a Muslim pupil in Year 1 was proud to show the class how he had been taught to pray. This involvement of pupils' first-hand knowledge and experience shared with the other pupils is a

strength of the subject, and enables them to learn well from each other. They can also take some measure of responsibility and are usually pleased to do so.

144. Teachers' planning is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 in that it is sometimes very brief and, in some cases, there was none to be seen. Opportunities for assessment are not specifically planned, although there is assessment at the end of each topic. Most teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject and have set up good relationships with their pupils. The method most used is to have the pupils all sitting in the carpet area for a discussion or some questions and answers. This is successful, especially so when it is backed up by some written work, or activity. There is, however, very little written work to be found in pupils' topic books, and this was so at the time of the last inspection. Where pupils were engaged in activities, such as the Year 1 class making and colouring for the naming ceremony, they learned more quickly because they were fully involved in the lesson. In Year 4, pupils were given a demonstration of wudu, the washing before prayer, by some Muslim pupils, and in Year 5, there was the lesson of questions and answers about Islam. Both of these set a good pace with plenty of challenge, and pupils delighted in displaying their depth of knowledge.

145. The policy for religious education is very brief ; it does not set out how the subject will be taught, monitored or assessed, and is, therefore, unsatisfactory. There are two sets of schemes of work, both photocopied from local syllabuses. One has some good points of development and activities, whilst the other has had no interpretation or work done to make it belong to the school, and no assessment opportunities given. Resources have been improved and there is a box of useful artefacts for each world religion, but there is no opportunity for pupils to use information technology, such as some research in an encyclopaedia on a CD-ROM. Themes in collective worship are not directly linked to religious education but festivals in several religions are marked and there is a cross reference with the subject when these occur. The contribution of religious education to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is generally good. Pupils have opportunities for reflection, and for consideration of rules for life as interpreted by several world religions. There is a strong emphasis on the showing of respect for other people's faith and practice. For example in Year 4, the teacher was very careful to remind pupils to show proper respect for the holy Qur'an, teaching pupils to wash their hands before handling the book. This care is often repeated in many lessons, and does much to encourage harmony and tolerance between all pupils.