

INSPECTION REPORT

SUMMERFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103196

Headteacher: Mr T Singh

Reporting inspector: Mr David Carrington
15414

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd June 2000

Inspection number: 198879

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cuthbert Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Gaussen

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr Brian Silvester	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mrs Trudy Cotton	Team inspector	English Religious education English as an additional language Equal opportunities	
Mrs Jo Greer	Team inspector	Geography History Special educational needs	Teaching and learning
Mrs Sally Kaminski-Gaze	Team inspector	Art Design and technology	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mrs Carolyn Powell	Team inspector	Science Music Areas of learning for the under-fives	
Mr Peter Sandall	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Summerfield Primary School is located just off the Dudley Road, two miles to the west of Birmingham city centre. This is a community primary school for pupils aged three to eleven years. There are 139 boys and 124 girls at the school, with another 36 children who attend the nursery part-time. Nearly 90% of the pupils come from ethnic minority families and 75% speak English as an additional language. Well over 50% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. A large number of pupils join the school later in their primary years or leave before the end of Year 6. About a third of the pupils have special educational needs (SEN), including four with statements of SEN. This proportion is above average. When children start in the nursery, they have well below average levels of skill and knowledge.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The headteacher, deputy head and key staff have been successful in raising standards and in enabling all pupils to make satisfactory gains in knowledge and skills. Whilst standards are below average, they are better now than in the 1999 national tests. Managers have analysed very carefully pupils' individual potential and are beginning to check that they achieve the standards that are right for them. Key managers have worked hard and with considerable success to improve the quality of teaching and staff morale. There are weaknesses in management, though, because staff and governors are not sufficiently involved in checking that strengths are spread across the whole school and weaknesses are addressed. At present the number one target of best standards is not pushed hard enough, and the focus on things that matter is watered down. The school is given a lot of money to educate the pupils but is not giving value for money because results are not yet good enough.

What the school does well

- The under-fives make good progress and pupils make good gains in science in both key stages.
- Behaviour is good, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and relationships are good.
- The personal development of pupils is good.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is having a good impact on raising standards in mathematics.
- The staff know the pupils well. They give them good educational and personal guidance and look after their welfare properly.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are not high enough.
- A number of key weaknesses in management reduce the overall success of the school.
- Planning, assessment and target setting are not consistent across the school.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers, and so they do not reach the standards expected in information technology.
- The spiritual development of pupils is weak.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. The key issues were: to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, and especially to extend the pupils' vocabulary; to improve the language skills of pupils with English as an additional language; to boost standards in music, geography and physical education; to improve teaching; and to give senior managers and subject co-ordinators greater responsibility. The school was judged to have serious weaknesses at the time of the 1997 inspection. Since that time the school has made satisfactory progress overall, with improvements to these and the other issues from its first inspection. Standards have risen in the last four years and teaching is improving. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also stronger. However, planning, assessment and the management of subjects still have shortcomings. The inspection team judges that the school no longer has serious weaknesses.

STANDARDS

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	E	E	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E	E	E*	E

Key

Well above average A

Above average B

Average C

Below average D

Well below average E

Lowest 5% nationally E*

Similar schools are those schools with over 50 % of the pupils entitled to free school meals.

Standards achieved by eleven-year olds in the 1999 national tests were well below the average of all schools in English and mathematics; performance in science was amongst the lowest 5% of schools nationally. In comparison with pupils in similar schools, standards were rather better. They were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. Standards were also well below the average found in all schools in reading and writing at the age of seven, but were average in mathematics. Over the years from 1997 to 1999, standards showed the same changes at Summerfield School as they did in all other primary schools. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards this year are moving closer to the expected level, though they are still below average. This is largely due to the good impact of the numeracy hour and improved ways of tracking pupils' progress as they move from class to class. Preliminary results from national tests in summer 2000 show standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 to have improved greatly and to be much closer to the expected level overall. Attainment in information technology is below average because computers are not used enough. Pupils have well below average skills and knowledge when they start in the nursery. They make a strong start at school and then go on to make steady progress until the age of eleven. In general, pupils reach the standards that are right for them. There are large numbers of pupils with English as an additional language and they improve their knowledge and skills at the expected rate. The school has set appropriate targets for attainment to the year 2002 and is on course to achieve these.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils take great interest in their work and they try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is generally calm and orderly, though there are some pupils who do not show the same good behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils learn to work independently and to take responsibility for their own tasks. They get on well with the staff and with other pupils.
Attendance	Poor. The rate of attendance is well below the level found in most other primary schools. Some pupils take long holidays in term time. This means they miss much work and find it hard to catch up again.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Inspectors saw 84 lessons or part lessons and judge that teaching is satisfactory overall. Of these, 44% were of good or better quality, including 6% that were very good; 10% of teaching was unsatisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory and basic skills are taught effectively. In all, teachers have the required subject knowledge and use an appropriate range of teaching methods. The control and discipline of pupils is satisfactory and the support staff do a good job in helping pupils to make appropriate progress. Homework is used soundly to practise and develop the things taught in lessons and resources are put to proper use. This means that pupils develop understanding and build up their skills at a satisfactory rate.

There are three main weaknesses in teaching. Expectations of what the pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Planning has improved since the last inspection, but the identification of what is to be learned in lessons is often vague. This affects the use of assessment, as what is to be assessed is not always clear. The setting and sharing of learning targets with pupils is at a very early stage of development, and targets are only rarely reviewed at the end of lessons. Teaching is now better than it was in 1997, but there is further to go to make sure it is of even quality across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Pupils have an appropriate programme of work that generally builds skills and knowledge systematically as they move through the school. The curriculum for information technology does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and creative arts subjects are not covered in enough depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. These pupils are given effective support in class and make sound progress. The quality of individual education plans could be much sharper.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. There is a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and they make the expected gains in their work and grow in confidence as speakers of English. The support provided in lessons is not always targeted precisely enough.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Spiritual development is a weakness, though moral and social development are satisfactory and cultural development is good. The pupils gain good understanding of the richness of the many different cultures in this area of Birmingham.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Pupils are well looked after and their safety is well taken care of. The school tracks their behaviour and personal development effectively and gives good guidance to help them make the best of their education. Assessment is not of consistent quality and the use of the information it produces is a weakness.
Partnership with parents	Satisfactory. Whilst parents care about their children's education, many do not have the confidence to help in school. The school makes appropriate moves to involve parents and provides enough information to help them understand the progress that their children make.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and key managers have had success in making improvements. Staff morale has been boosted from a very low level, there is less turnover of staff and teachers are now more confident in what they do. The deputy headteacher has had a successful first year and a half in post. However, much remains to be completed and the headteacher must lead from the front more to ensure that everyone focuses on the main aim of boosting standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are working hard to improve their effectiveness and have met with some success. They are supportive of the school and are well involved in matters of financial control and management. However, they have yet to ensure that the school uses the principles of 'best value' to guide and evaluate its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Managers have made a good start to the collection and interpretation of data to show how classes and individuals are progressing. Because this is a relatively new thing, this information is not yet used widely enough to track learning. Staff involvement in checking the strengths and weaknesses of the school is a weakness.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. There are enough teachers, support staff and resources to provide the required learning experiences. The accommodation is maintained to a high standard, but space is cramped in some places.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • They find it easy to approach staff when they have concerns or suggestions. • Teaching is good. • Pupils make good progress at school and they receive helpful information about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amounts of homework • The range of activities outside lessons

Inspectors agree that children enjoy coming to school and that the staff are approachable and friendly. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and pupils make more steady progress than they did. The team judges that homework levels are satisfactory. Whilst the information provided about pupils' progress is satisfactory, the school agrees it must explore ways of improving this.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When the school was last inspected, standards were identified as being unsatisfactory in the three core subjects but generally satisfactory in the others. Standards were well below average in English at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and science at the end of Key Stage 1. Attainment in science was below average at the end of Key Stage 2. In English and music pupils' progress was unsatisfactory throughout the school. Progress was also unsatisfactory in mathematics and science in Key Stage 1 and physical education in Key Stage 2. The progress made by pupils who spoke English as an additional language was unsatisfactory. The weaknesses in standards were the prime reason why the school was identified as having serious weaknesses.

2. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English and mathematics were well below the level found nationally and achievement in science was very low, placing the school amongst the lowest five per cent of primary schools nationally. The school has a very large proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, and when the 1999 results are related to schools with a similar proportion (over 50%), standards were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science.

3. The Key Stage 1 results in the same year show that attainment was well below the average of all schools in the reading and writing tests and in teacher assessments in science. Standards were similar to the national average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, attainment was well below average in reading and writing, average in science and well above average in mathematics.

4. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving above the expected level was similar to that found nationally in reading, writing, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 was below average in the English tests and well below average in mathematics and science.

5. There were some significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in these tests. Boys did not do as well as girls in the Key Stage 1 writing test and girls achieved at lower levels than the boys in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Inspectors observed that boys tend to dominate in Key Stage 2 lessons, as in the computer suite where the keyboards are operated more by boys than girls. In such lessons, the boys make more consistent progress than the girls.

6. The trend in improvement in standards in the national tests has been at the same rate in school as that found nationally during the period 1997 to 1999 and preliminary information about this year's tests suggests that the relative improvement in standards at both key stages has been maintained. The school has set challenging targets for mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. These anticipate that standards will converge on the national averages over the next few years. At present standards are moving upward, as shown in the preliminary results of the 2000 national tests in Key Stage 2. These show a rise in standards in English, mathematics and science to bring the school much closer to the expected level overall. However, the school will need to track the progress made very carefully in order to maintain the improvement.

7. During the inspection, inspectors judged that standards in English are below

average in both key stages. This is mainly because a large proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Indeed, there are a considerable number of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English. These pupils are given effective support and they make steady progress through the school, so that by the age of eleven many speak English with increased fluency and confidence. However, the ability to express ideas and understanding in words is still restricted and writing skills lag behind even this level.

8. Standards are judged to be average in mathematics. The school has made good strides to improve standards in this subject and the impact of the numeracy hour has been positive. Attainment in science improves as pupils move through the school. Standards here are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. Other than English, the weakest standards are in information technology as the school has not really kept pace with the advances in technology and pupils have inconsistent experience of using computers. Standards are generally at the expected level in all other subjects, including religious education, but are not as good in art and music. It is clear that standards in such subjects have fallen back because of the strong emphasis on English and mathematics in the overall timetable of the school.

9. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make sound progress in relation to their identified learning targets. Some pupils make spurts of good progress following periods of consolidation. These pupils are given effective support and show interest and determination in their work.

10. When pupils start in the nursery, their attainment level is well below average. This is across all aspects of learning and many pupils do not speak English at all. By the age of five, their attainment level has improved because the children make good progress. They attain levels that are below the expected level for their age in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and physical development and well below expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. This all marks considerable improvement in standards during children's early years.

11. Pupils make steady and satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and 2. Many pupils join the school at a later stage in their primary education and still others leave part way through the school. School managers are tracking this turnover well and identify trends that show how the newcomers progress through time. In many cases, their attainment is low on entry, and although they make strides in their learning, they have much to catch up and do not meet the standards gained by those who have been in school since day one. Overall standards are below average by the age of eleven. Pupils improve their attainment levels during their time in school, but there is much to be done to boost standards further. Standards are still a key issue for the school and the clear statement that they are the number one aim of the school is part of this. Staff work hard and are committed to better standards. There are improved procedures to set targets and track the progress made by pupils. These are having good impact, although they are still at an early stage of implementation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The last inspection report stated that there was unsatisfactory behaviour in some classes, attitudes and personal development were satisfactory, attendance was well below average and there were infrequent opportunities to show responsibility and take initiative. The evidence of this inspection is that behaviour, attitudes and personal development have improved and are now good. Pupils have more opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative.

13. Pupils are keen to attend the school and play a full part in its life, including the sound range of extra-curricular activities. They have a good attitude to their work. Pupils listen carefully to their teacher and are eager to learn. They concentrate on the task given and are keen to improve. Pupils participate enthusiastically and are quick to answer and raise questions. They take a great interest in their work and try hard. Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning.

14. Where the attitudes of some pupils in a few classes are unsatisfactory, it is usually linked to the standard of teaching. In these classes some individuals disrupt the flow of the lesson, shout out and achieve little. The behaviour of the pupils in class and around the school is generally good, and this makes a positive contribution to the pupils' learning. Parents are happy with the standard of behaviour achieved in the school. Pupils are very friendly, courteous and helpful. Pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes deteriorates in the Key Stage 2 playground because some of the pupils do not have the same respect for the midday supervisors as they have for their teachers.

15. In the last school year, before the inspection, there was one fixed-term exclusion, which is very low. At this level the rate of exclusions is falling year on year.

16. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. Pupils work and play together productively and are generally willing to share and take turns. Their respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is very good. The different ethnic groups in the school mix well together and incidents of racial name-calling are rare and dealt with speedily and effectively.

17. The personal development of the pupils is good. They have opportunities to take on responsibilities. Older pupils help the new arrivals and act as mediators when other pupils are in dispute. They raise money for charities such as the Lord Mayor's Appeal, and collect vouchers and tokens to obtain resources for the school. Some pupils act as library monitors during the lunch break. Pupils show initiative by, for example, helping to choose playground equipment and ensuring quiet seating areas are provided in the playground. In one Year 3 class a pupil volunteered to hold up a picture book, whilst the teacher told the story. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative have improved since the last inspection.

18. Attendance in 1998/99 was 89.9%, which is poor and very low in comparison with other schools. Attendance has not improved since the last inspection in 1997. The level of unauthorised attendance in 1998/99 was 0.9%, which is above the national average and unsatisfactory. The level of unauthorised absence has improved since the last inspection. The main reasons for non-attendance are illness, extended holidays, a transient school population and a few families with a poor attendance record. Most pupils are punctual but a substantial minority, around 8%, do arrive late and some pupils are persistently late. The poor level of attendance and punctuality has a detrimental impact on the attainment and learning of the pupils concerned.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. At the last inspection teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in 20% of lessons observed. Key issues for improvement included clearer planning of what pupils need to learn, linking targets to the requirements and levels identified in the National Curriculum programmes of study, and consistently checking pupils' progress to ensure that they are appropriately challenged. There have been some improvements in teaching so that during

this inspection fewer lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching is now judged to be satisfactory overall in each key stage and the early years. Within this there are specific strengths and weaknesses. Pupils of all ages learn at an appropriate rate.

20. During the inspection, inspectors observed 84 lessons or part lessons. Of these, 10% were of unsatisfactory teaching quality. This is an improved proportion. 38% of lessons seen were of good teaching quality and 6% were very good.

21. Teachers have sound background knowledge and understanding in most areas of the curriculum. A minority of teachers lack confidence in some of the non-core subjects, particularly the arts. Teachers have implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy so that they teach the basic skills competently. Children in the early years learn these skills well, whilst older pupils learn at a satisfactory rate.

22. Pupils with special educational needs learn at an appropriate pace taking account of their particular individual needs and prior knowledge and understanding. The teachers who support these pupils provide good programmes of work for them when they are withdrawn for individual or small group work. Good use is made of information technology to help pupils practise phonic skills. These teachers support class teachers well so that pupils with special educational needs can learn alongside their peers in normal class lessons, sometimes undertaking individual tasks related to the work of the rest of the class. At other times class teachers provide work at the correct level or give extra help to these pupils with the tasks set for the whole class. Most teachers take care to ensure that general introductory sessions are understood by all pupils.

23. Lesson planning is variable. In the few good examples, teachers identify very clear learning objectives which provide specific criteria against which they can evaluate the success of the lesson and assess how well pupils learn. A few teachers use the plenary session well to revisit the learning objectives and discuss with pupils the extent to which they have been achieved. This practice helps pupils know how well they are acquiring new knowledge, understanding and skills. It also gives teachers an opportunity to evaluate their own teaching, pupils' learning and know what to plan for the next lesson. Most teachers share their objectives with pupils at the beginning of the lesson, but as many of these objectives are more descriptive of the activities to be undertaken than what is to be learned, pupils are not always clear about what they are learning. Whilst lesson plans generally show which elements of National Curriculum programmes of study are to be covered, they do not indicate the level at which the lesson is to be pitched. If this were done, teachers would be more aware of how well pupils are achieving compared with the national expectations, and what more needs to be done to raise standards further.

24. In good lessons teachers challenge pupils well and demand high standards so that pupils work hard to produce a good amount of work. Where teachers ask good quality open-ended questions, they challenge pupils to think hard, to use their previous knowledge and understanding to extend their ideas and make good deductions. In lessons where this is typical, pupils are eager to learn and enthusiastic to share their ideas with the teacher and in small group brainstorming sessions. These question and answer sessions are well directed so that pupils of all abilities contribute and acquire new knowledge and understanding. The pace of these lessons is good, with teachers setting clear time limits for the tasks set, so that pupils concentrate well and produce a good amount of work.

25. In a significant number of lessons teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently. Some teachers spend too long on one element of the lessons, sometimes talking too much and not giving pupils enough opportunities to contribute their own ideas. Pupils become

bored and lose interest. In some literacy lessons, the text chosen is inappropriate because it is too difficult either in the reading level or the language level for most pupils in the class. In a few lessons the resources are inappropriate or the tasks not well matched to the level of ability of the pupils. In all these lessons pupils do not make progress, become inattentive and lose motivation.

26. In good lessons, the teachers' own interests and enthusiasm are infectious. They provide very good resources to interest pupils. These teachers use their imagination to encourage pupils to empathise and understand situations which are beyond their own experience, for instance in learning about the Second World War and the feelings of children who were evacuated during the blitz. In one lesson a teacher used an imaginative approach to encourage pupils to find a way of separating an 'accidental' mixture in a science lesson. In these lessons pupils' interest and motivation is high. In some classes pupils independently contribute books or material from the Internet accessed at home, and talk to relatives to learn more about their topic.

27. Most teachers manage pupils well so that behaviour in lessons is good. In a few cases teachers lack the strategies to manage well the very challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils. In these cases it is the disruptive pupils' learning which is inhibited rather than that of the whole class.

28. Teachers generally circulate well during tasks, assessing and helping pupils where necessary. Good teachers use the answers pupils give to assess their knowledge and understanding. In the non-core subjects there are no whole school procedures for assessing the development of subject specific skills so that ongoing assessment is not used well to plan subsequent lessons and topics. Setting arrangements and sharing targets in lessons also provide teachers with information to plan future lessons.

29. Formal homework tasks make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. In some subjects, pupils are asked to complete work at home. Pupils are sometimes asked to contribute items from home or try to gather information to contribute to the topic being studied, such as the pupils learning about how shopping and goods today compare with those in 1950.

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

30. There were many weaknesses in the curriculum the last time the school was inspected. There were no schemes of work, the curriculum lacked breadth and balance, planning was unsatisfactory and several subjects had gaps. These included science, mathematics, art, design and technology, information technology, history and geography. Another weakness was in the allocation of teaching time. Not enough was available to teach science, history and geography. Provision for the under-fives in the nursery was poor.

31. In the four years since the last inspection there have been improvements. These cover teachers' planning, the introduction and use of recent schemes of work, and agreed time allocations for subjects. The nursery is now a strength of the school. There are still some gaps in many subjects and the curricular requirements for information technology are not met. Another weakness remains because parts of religious education are taught in assembly time, which is unsatisfactory. Not enough progress has been made in tackling these issues. Detailed plans are now in place to improve things so that the school can take on board the new curriculum which starts in September 2000.

32. National literacy and numeracy initiatives are having a strong impact on work in the school and standards are beginning to move upwards. The skills the pupils need are taught in a well-planned, structured way. Skills are reinforced and consolidated across lessons for all the pupils, especially for pupils with special educational needs and those who do not speak English at home. High priority is given to teaching literacy, since weaknesses in the pupils' language skills are considered to be holding back their learning. Numeracy work is strengthening the pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics, and there is a marked increase in their performance, as shown by the preliminary results of the 2000 national tests.

33. The curriculum now in place in the nursery is good, and good progress has been made since the last inspection. Work is suitably planned for all the children and their personal development is a high priority, as is their language development. The children make good progress all round. The under-fives in the reception classes have a satisfactory curriculum, which meets their needs and helps them progress well.

34. The overall curriculum for Key Stage 1 and 2 lacks cohesion. New schemes of work have provided a framework for the curriculum, and consistent ways of planning work on a weekly and half-termly basis help to guide teachers. Links between the different phases are not always clear, and the lack of monitoring means there are repetitions at times. This lessens the progress that pupils can make, as well as affecting their attainment. Not all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, as there are still gaps in some classes.

35. The teachers who support pupils with special educational needs provide class teachers with good guidance so that these pupils have work appropriate to their capability related to the work of the rest of their class. Care is taken to make sure that whole class discussions can be understood by all pupils. When pupils are withdrawn for individual or small group teaching, good programmes of work are provided to match their individual needs. Good use is made of information technology in withdrawal sessions and during normal lessons. Pupils enjoy using the technology and make good efforts to succeed in the tasks set.

36. Parents feel that there are not enough activities outside school, and they are right. Pupils do make educational visits to places of interest, such as the Millennium Dome, but there are no residential experiences for older pupils. This limits opportunities for further social development.

37. Participation in the *Heart Start* programme gives the pupils a sound understanding of first aid and other health issues. It encourages their social awareness and helps them to understand the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle. Governors have decided that the school will not have a sex education policy, but that teachers will respond to the pupils' queries as they arise.

38. There are close links with the local secondary school. These are mainly pastoral, with a few curriculum links in place. The transfer of pupils with special educational needs takes place smoothly. Links with the local community, such as the pastor of a local church who comes into school regularly and takes assembly, are widening pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness effectively.

39. Since the last inspection, satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development has been sustained. However, provision for pupils' spiritual development is still unsatisfactory. There is no framework of planned

opportunities for the promotion of pupils' spiritual development to provide support and guidance to teachers in their planning, nor is there a named person with the responsibility for co-ordinating and giving direction to this provision across the school. Training undertaken in this area by two members of staff has not yet begun to exercise a positive general influence. Whilst there are examples of curriculum subjects giving good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness and find out about themselves, these are incidental and inconsistent across the school. Pupils in Year 1 were successfully encouraged to identify changes in their lives during a religious education lesson. A Year 5 class demonstrated a well-developed maturity of thought when reflecting upon the Eightfold Pathway of Buddhism and their own lives. Pupils in a Year 3 class showed empathy in their written responses to badgers after reading *Badger's Parting Gift*.

40. The school provides satisfactorily for moral development. Clear rules guide pupils in their choice of behaviour, which support the school's mission statement in the promotion of 'openness, fairness and honesty'. Pupils discuss and express their opinions about issues surrounding causes of pollution, demonstrating an awareness of the moral issues in a science lesson. A collective worship theme 'Keeping Safe' effectively promotes the importance of personal responsibility towards others. Adults in school show their responsibility effectively when appropriate guidance is given to individual pupils, helping them to choose the right way to behave such as offered to a Year 3 pupil following a swimming lesson.

41. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. Adults provide effective role models for pupils, showing courtesy and respect towards each other and pupils. During lessons, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and work together. In a Year 2 class, for example, groups of pupils successfully plan a design together and nursery children take responsibility for tidying equipment away. 'Circle time' sessions provide opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of their own responsibility as members of a community.

42. The provision for pupil's cultural development is good. The cultural diversity of the school's community is recognised and celebrated in work around school. Nursery children and pupils in Year 1 display child-sized figures in traditional dress representing several ethnic groups. Religious education work contributes significantly to pupils' awareness and appreciation of other cultures. Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Sikh artefacts are displayed and provide areas of interest in Key Stage 2 classrooms. Religious leaders from the community are invited into assemblies to share their experiences. A workshop about the rainforest gives pupils a good additional insight into another culture. During history lessons in Years 3 and 4, pupils learn about local culture in their work about the nearby prison and studies of housing in the surrounding area. Pupils are invited to bring tapes of traditional music from home to use in the extra-curricular dance club.

Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language

43. The previous inspection report judged that provision for pupils who spoke English as an additional language was unsatisfactory and it formed part of two of the key issues of that inspection. Since that time, the school has made much improvement and provision is satisfactory overall now.

44. Early assessment shows the attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language when they start school is well below average. The majority of pupils communicate in the language used at home, but most are still learning to speak in English. The pupils settle in well and make good progress with their learning. Bilingual classroom support and adult helpers provide effective bilingual support. However, standards in English

are below the national average by the end of both key stages. Some good progress with reading and writing skills are developed over a period of time. Most pupils are reading accurately and with meaning by the end of Key Stage 2. This is an improvement since the last report.

45. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. This is because support is more consistent, and clearly targeted to literacy and numeracy work within the classroom. Support in guided group work is particularly effective. The co-ordinator for English as an additional language has considerable expertise in the subject, plans work matched to needs, and provides the structured language skills and vocabulary needed to develop greater competency with English. However, the management of English as an additional language support in literacy and numeracy sessions does not always make the best use of the expertise of the co-ordinator.

46. Pupils are also making better progress than recorded at the previous inspection. The school tracks progress over time, and the co-ordinator uses assessment of pupils' learning to guide the next step in planning for 'guided group work'. This is helping to improve pupils' skills in English. Teachers manage their lessons well and plan for different levels of work. However, lesson plans are not clear enough in identifying the specific, structured language skills needed to develop greater competency in English.

47. The number of pupils learning English as an additional language within the school is high. There are 142 pupils who are still developing their skills with spoken and written English. The majority of pupils are beginning to communicate confidently and competently in English. However, there are still 28 pupils, mainly in Key Stage 1, who are still at the early stages of learning English. In each year-group, skills and learning are built upon effectively and so progress is steady or better and similar to that made by the rest of the class.

48. Pupils are keen to learn and behave well in class. They are encouraged to join in with class discussions and become more confident to take the initiative as they progress through the school. Girls tend to be shyer than boys, but are given the same opportunities to contribute in lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The last inspection report stated that pupils felt secure in the school and enjoyed attending, any bullying was dealt with swiftly and appropriately, the under-fives settled quickly and there was good support and guidance for the pupils with special educational needs. The evidence of this inspection shows this is still true. The last inspection report also stated that there was no health and safety policy, that child protection procedures were inadequate and there was a lack of rigour in measures to follow up absences. The school now has an adequate draft health and safety policy and sound child protection procedures are in place. The monitoring of attendance is now satisfactory.

50. The steps taken to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and give them good support and guidance. The school has a sound health and safety policy. A health and safety committee is being formed and there is a health and safety governor. Regular inspections are made of the buildings and grounds and action is taken over any concerns. Fire drills are held half-termly and all the moveable equipment is checked annually. The school liaises closely with the school doctor, nurse, educational psychologist, speech therapist, physiotherapist and

outreach services.

51. The school has an appropriate child protection policy. The deputy headteacher is responsible for its implementation and has received appropriate training. All full-time members of staff have a copy of the policy and are aware of the procedures to adopt. Training needs to be arranged for part-time staff, such as the midday supervisors.

52. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory and those for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There is a satisfactory behaviour policy which contains a sound range of rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. However, some of the sanctions used by teachers are not identified in the policy and a few teachers do not use the sanctions effectively to curb unsatisfactory behaviour. The school emphasises self-control and personal accountability. Parents are made aware of the behaviour policy when their child first enters the school. Incidents of bullying are infrequent but when they do occur they are taken seriously, the pupils concerned are spoken to and parents are involved if necessary. The school maintains comprehensive records of the behaviour of the pupils.

53. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' academic progress are satisfactory but the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory. Academic progress is monitored by class teachers. A range of standardised and other tests and assessments is completed as well as baseline tests when pupils enter the reception class. The results of these are used to set termly targets for improvement in the core subjects, which are shared with parents. Overall, however, the use of assessment information to plan the future learning needs of individual pupils is unsatisfactory.

54. Arrangements for assessing and identifying pupils with special educational needs meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. Pupils with statements of SEN have their entitlement for support met by the local education authority (LEA). Good use is made of all relevant outside agencies, including the Inclusion Advisory Service. All pupils at stage 2 and above on the school's register of pupils with SEN have individual education plans, which are reviewed regularly and pupils' progress monitored. However, the targets set in these plans are too vague and general so that it is not possible to say accurately what pupils have learned and what they need to learn next. The judgements on success in meeting targets discussed at review meetings are not valid, as they are not based on specific measurable criteria.

55. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. The personal development of the pupils is monitored by their class teachers, and a record is kept of their achievements, behaviour and social development. Reference is made to the pupils' personal development in annual reports to parents.

56. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Attendance is monitored by the headteacher, the educational welfare officer (EWO) and the class teachers. An attendance monitoring book is maintained and, if there are any concerns, they are pursued by letters, telephone calls or home visits. The EWO writes to all the parents of pupils with less than 90% attendance. Good attendance is encouraged by the awarding of stickers and certificates at attendance assemblies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. In the last inspection report it was stated that the information provided by the school

was good, parents were supportive, relationships with parents were good, few parents worked in the school, special educational needs information was good and parental involvement in their child's learning was satisfactory. The evidence of this inspection confirms these judgements except that now the information supplied and relationships with parents are judged to be satisfactory.

58. Parents are supportive of the school and the links between the school and parents have a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

59. The quality of information provided to parents is satisfactory. Regular information letters are sent out and some communications are translated for parents who do not have English as a first language. The school has an 'open door' policy for parents and the teachers are all very approachable. The pupils' annual reports tell parents what their child knows, understands and can do and sets targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. There are termly parent/teacher consultations, which are well attended, and parents are provided with termly targets for improvement in the core subjects for their child. An induction day is held for parents new to the school and home visits are made in some cases. Parents are generally happy with the information provided and good use is made of the school notice boards. Not all the required information is supplied in the school prospectus.

60. The school's links with its parents are effective and their involvement has a sound impact on the work of the school. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at school and at home, is satisfactory. There is a home/school agreement but only a small minority of parents have signed it. Parental support for their child's work at home is mixed. Parents are invited to curriculum events where, for example, they can go into classes to see the National Numeracy Strategy delivered.

61. School staff, parent governors and midday supervisors organise fund-raising events, such as summer fayres and international evenings, and these are well supported by parents. Parents are encouraged to help in school but only a few take the opportunity. They help in the nursery, in the library and on trips. Parents are invited to special events such as class assemblies.

62. The return of the parental questionnaires, for the inspection, was very low, only 6%. Of the returns 35% were not happy with the amount of homework provided. However, the school does, in the view of the inspection team, have a satisfactory homework policy. All pupils are provided with a bag to take books home and the headteacher monitors the provision of homework. An effective home-school agreement is in place.

63. Parents are always invited to review meetings to discuss the progress of children with special educational needs. On a significant number of occasions parents do not attend these meetings. The school should make more effort to encourage parents to attend these meetings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The last inspection report judged that leadership and management of the school had serious weaknesses and that this had a profound impact on standards and the quality of teaching. In part this was because co-ordinators had little involvement in managing their subjects and checking that things were being done properly. Inspectors identified a fairly lengthy list of aspects of management that required improvement including the school development plan, a high level of staff absence and unsatisfactory management of the education of pupils who spoke English as an additional language. Since 1997, the school has made effective moves to improve most of the things on the list, though there are one or two key aspects of management that need a further boost.

65. The headteacher provides successful management for the school and has worked hard to ensure that other key members of staff have a more central role in making the necessary improvements. Since the last inspection the school has had a chequered history in terms of staff turnover, and the headteacher has done well to rebuild morale and determination. This has been done in a low key, though effective way. It is now time, however for the head teacher to take a more definitive role in leading the school. People are committed to improvement. The headteacher must now stand at the front of developments rather than lending quiet background support.

66. The deputy head has not been long in school but has already formed a good partnership with the headteacher. Between them they have the skills, knowledge, integrity and insights to make good advances in management, and hence, standards. The deputy head has built up an excellent set of data that analyses how pupils are progressing and which sets challenging, yet achievable targets for the future. It is still too early to judge the impact of this work on tracking progress, but it is evident that staff are more alert to the need to keep a watchful eye on progress at all stages and to take immediate action where the evidence suggests things are slowing.

67. Subject co-ordinators have more responsibilities than at the time of the last inspection and their role is much more clearly defined. However, they are not yet involved in monitoring standards, progress, teaching and the curriculum as much as colleagues are in other schools. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs is conscientious in undertaking her duties. She maintains the register well and reports annually on the movement pupils make through the different stages so that evaluation of the provision is possible. All co-ordinators are ready for this extended role and they are very keen to make greater contributions to the overall effectiveness of the school.

68. The governors have also taken on a greater involvement in the work and life of the school since the previous inspection. They make sure that, for the most part, all statutory requirements are met. Because many governors are new, and also because the governing body is not yet complete, they have yet to build a total picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. At present governors do not entirely uphold the principles of 'best value' as they do not have all the information necessary to make comparisons, for instance, with other schools to check that standards and rates of progress at Summerfield Primary School match those found elsewhere. Governors work hard in the interests of the school and several are in regular day-to-day contact with the school. They now need to use standards as the yardstick to measure the cost-effectiveness of their decisions.

69. There is common agreement that standards must be improved even more. In general, the school's aims and values are promoted properly, though the number one priority of best standards does not leap out from documents, especially the school aims,

and there are few references to this on display around the school. Beyond this, the monitoring of standards and progress is not yet developed enough. There is now more knowledge of how well pupils are faring but there are still gaps in this knowledge that more involvement of all staff will plug. The combined effect of this is to produce more inconsistency in procedures and practices than is usually found.

70. The school has appropriate priorities for improvement that centre on standards in English, mathematics and science. These are set down well in the school development plan, which is an effective document to guide strategic planning, especially of finance. To some degree provision in the creative and performing arts has slipped because of this focus on key core subjects, though it is understandable that, given the background of the pupils, English in particular should stand to the fore. The school has yet to explore ways in which arts subjects can make an effective contribution to the lifting of standards in English. This will be necessary if the school is to meet all the requirements of *Curriculum 2000* which is due for introduction later this year.

71. Financial planning and management are good. The budget and the school development plan are linked well and the governors have good quality financial information to work from. Finances are all targeted properly. For example, the school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs because the budget allocated for this is used to provide extra teacher support and good provision of appropriate resources. Specific grants for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are used correctly. The secretary gives good administrative support: she knows the pupils and their families very well and has established good working procedures for the day-by-day financial management of the school.

72. There are no shortages of staff, accommodation or learning resources overall. The support staff give a good level of support on the whole, though there are times when they are not given appropriate tasks and the level of classroom support in Key Stage 2 is low in comparison to other local schools. This has an impact on the provision for pupils in lessons and, ultimately, on the progress and effort shown.

73. Key managers acknowledge that there are still things to be done to improve systems and procedures to ensure all things are done well in school. They are determined to move the school forward. Their starting point is to make sure that best standards and sharp progress are promoted evenly throughout the school and that staff, governors, pupils, parents and visitors alike, know that Summerfield Primary School is all about high standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. There are several issues that relate to management. Whilst there has been an improvement in standards, rates of progress and the quality of teaching, there is also a greater degree of inconsistency in school than is found elsewhere. This can be traced back to imperfections in the systems to check that the school is doing as good a job as it can.

75. With this in mind, the governors, headteacher, key managers and staff should:

(1) Continue to raise standards, especially in English, mathematics, science and information technology

by:

- Ensuring that the headteacher takes a more up-front role in promoting high standards and that he draws staff and governors into the process more.
- Devising rigorous systems of monitoring which are set against clearly stated and understood criteria, involve everyone, and have an impact on standards and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Sharing the good practice in school and eliminating the remaining weaknesses in teaching.
- Setting specific and achievable targets for learning in lessons that are shared with the pupils at the beginning and reviewed with them at the end.
- Refining systems of assessment to ensure that they are targeted squarely on the objectives for learning.
- Equipping all classes with an adequate number of computers to ensure that all pupils have enough opportunities to build skills and knowledge in information technology and to use them in other subjects.
- Drawing all staff and governors into the process of ensuring that the school provides 'best value'.

(See paragraphs 11, 23-28, 34, 53, 65-69, 80-81, 119, 129, 133, 147, 152, 157, 164, 167-169, 172, 182 and 189)

(2) Improve the spiritual development of pupils

by:

- Identifying and planning opportunities across the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness of what is special, amazing or powerful in what they are learning.
- Using assemblies, religious education lessons and other times to allow pupils to stop and reflect on what makes life special for them.

(See paragraphs 39, 147 and 189)

In addition to the major issues listed above, there are a number of lesser concerns that the

governors should include in their action plan. These are:

- Improve the provision for the creative and performing arts subjects.
(See *Paragraphs 8, 21, 70, 144-7 and 173-7*)
- Accelerate preparations for *Curriculum 2000*.
(See *paragraphs 31, 147, 152, 157 and 164*)
- Continue to promote better rates of attendance and reduce the number of pupils arriving late for school.
(See *paragraphs 18 and 56*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	84
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	38	46	10	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	263
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		150

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4	79
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	197

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	54

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	26
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	49
Pakistani	126
Bangladeshi	20
Chinese	2
White	27
Any other minority ethnic group	48

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2
Average class size	21.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	61

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.0

Total number of education support staff	1.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	13

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-9
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	£
Total income	677295
Total expenditure	668220
Expenditure per pupil	2379
Balance brought forward from previous year	6000
Balance carried forward to next year	15075

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	29	21	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	13	27
	Girls	18	15	19
	Total	37	28	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (67)	56 (57)	92 (76)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	27	21
	Girls	16	18	16
	Total	30	45	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60 (59)	90 (66)	74 (64)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	23	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	10	9
	Girls	9	7	6
	Total	20	17	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	44	38	33
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	9
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	16	16	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	36	36	33
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	299
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My Child likes school	69	23	6	3	0
My child is making good progress in school	57	34	0	9	0
Behaviour in the school is good	40	46	9	6	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	35	35	13	13	3
The teaching is good	63	26	9	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	51	34	9	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	69	20	9	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	44	41	12	3	0
The school works closely with parents	41	44	9	6	0
The school is well led and managed	43	31	3	11	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	51	34	6	9	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	50	24	18	3	6

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

76. Children are admitted to the nursery in the year in which they are three and attend either a morning or afternoon session. Some children transfer from a pre-school playgroup which takes place four mornings each week in school. At the time of the inspection there were 35 part-time children in the nursery and children in the two reception classes. Most children transfer to the reception classes and attend school on a full-time basis. As with the previous inspection early assessment of their competencies indicates that, overall, attainment is well below that expected of children of this age. As they enter the nursery many children have little or no understanding of English.

77. There is a good induction programme for new children to the school which consists of visits for parents and children, together with a meeting and home visits for those who would like them. Parents receive an informative nursery booklet prior to their child's entry to the nursery. Parents share activities with them when they arrive at the nursery but are not involved in the lessons at an early stage, when the need for language support is at its greatest. As in the previous inspection, there is a games library for parents and children.

78. By the age of five, although making good progress, children have reached levels that are still below national expectations for their age in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and physical development and well below expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. This represents a similar picture to the previous inspection, although physical and creative development are now below expectations.

79. In the nursery and reception classes children follow a curriculum which is based on the six areas of learning, but reception children follow the National Curriculum from Easter. This curriculum change is not based on a formal assessment of children and therefore for many who are still below expectations it is inappropriate. There is no early years curriculum for the children under five although discussions are taking place concerning the Foundation Stage which is to be implemented in September of this year. Reception children receive a subject-based curriculum for the under-fives which for many limits learning opportunities, particularly within their creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and speaking and listening in role-play.

80. Assessment of children begins in the nursery; this covers all areas of learning and includes an informal 'baseline' assessment. This is continued in the reception classes with the addition of further assessments, such as reading and mathematics. Regular observations are recorded in the nursery, but day-to-day assessment to assist planning is not undertaken for all children under five on a regular basis. Assessment is insufficiently used to meet the individual needs of children.

81. In both the nursery and reception classes children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive good help and support from staff. In the nursery, language support relies on the expertise of a student who is leaving. The insufficiency of support for children for whom English is a second language was also referred to in the previous report.

Personal and social development

82. Children are happy within a secure and caring environment. They behave well and show respect for other cultures and beliefs. Nursery and reception classes are mostly calm and children are generally well behaved. Established routines in the nursery ensure that

children are taught the difference between right and wrong. There are planned opportunities for children to work with their friends, for example when selecting partners to make an indoor garden. Independence is promoted by the organisation of activities and in the expectation that children will be responsible, for example, by clearing away at the end of a session. Planned opportunities to promote independence in the reception classes are very limited. The children develop good relationships and work happily with others. However, subject-based lessons in the reception classes do not promote independent learning and opportunities to initiate ideas and solve practical problems are very limited and, in one class, over-directed. This is a similar picture to the previous report.

83. Children's personal and social development is of a lower standard than is usually seen for children by five years of age although they make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, starting from a low base.

84. The teaching of personal and social skills is satisfactory overall, but is insufficiently planned for in the reception classes. Mid-morning lunchtime makes good provision for social development, but is more effective in the nursery.

Language and literacy

85. A significant number of children in the nursery have limited listening and very limited speaking skills. For example, many are unable to name various model zoo animals. Most children have very little spoken English, which for them is an additional language. Bilingual support in the nursery, although effective, is insufficient in that the student support is short-term and is coming to an end. The reception classes, on the other hand, benefit from permanent shared support for the development of language. For much of the time the nursery children are quiet in their play. Imaginative play makes a good contribution to the children's speaking and listening skills in the nursery, where role-play areas are set out as a 'café' and 'baby clinic'. There are helpful resources and children make good use of them to promote their language skills. However, only one reception class has a puppet theatre and there are no opportunities for all reception children to take part in role-play activities. This is the same unsatisfactory position reported at the time of the last inspection.

86. In the nursery, children enjoy books and share them with staff but seldom choose to go into the library area independently. Reception children share stories and look at books during literacy sessions but have little opportunity to browse in the book areas or share books informally with their friends. Older children know that pictures will give them information about their book's content. Children are able to recognise their own name and some individual letters and words.

87. Some nursery and reception children can use pictures and marks and words to record their ideas and make good attempts at writing their own names. The writing area in the nursery is used well to promote the independent development of these early skills. However, most reception children have not reached the expected levels in language and literacy by their third term and therefore the literacy hour for most reception children under five is inappropriate. The requirements of the literacy hour are not sufficiently adapted to suit the needs of all reception children. Frequently it restricts the learning necessary to develop early skills.

88. By the age of five children attain standards in language and literacy that are below those found nationally. However, they make good progress in this area of learning, starting from a low base.

89. Overall, the teaching of language and literacy is satisfactory. In the nursery opportunities for language development are planned for and teachers and support staff talk

to children at every opportunity, joining in the role-play activities and using their expertise well. The reception class teachers plan for the literacy hour but further opportunities for children to develop independently are inhibited by the constraints of the timetable. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, there are insufficient opportunities to take part in role-play or independent activities and many activities provide little challenge or imagination in order to move the children forward.

Mathematical development

90. In the nursery children are developing mathematical understanding through sorting, counting and playing with jigsaws and games. Children experience the early levels of data handling and matching when making sandwiches to each child's choice. They sing counting games such as *Five Little Speckled Frogs*. Sand and water are on-going activities for nursery children, but not for the children in the reception classes. The sand and water activities are not sufficiently structured to build on children's experiences or to make a significant contribution to all children's mathematical understanding. Older children can count to ten, record numbers and some children show an awareness of number operations such as addition and subtraction. The use of mathematical language is satisfactory in the understanding of shape but due to the limited opportunities for children to explore everyday materials in self-chosen activities and insufficient bilingual support in numeracy lessons, not all children reach their full potential by the age of five.

91. By the age of five the children, although making good progress, reach standards which are below those found nationally.

92. The quality of teaching in mathematics is generally satisfactory. In the better lessons children have additional support in their activities from classroom assistants. In the nursery, children's experiences are extended by appropriate questioning and small group times which contribute to number recognition in a fun way. Reception teachers meet the requirements of the numeracy hour although between classes there is some inconsistency in planning, organisation and teaching methods. The teachers provide appropriate resources for the teaching of basic mathematical skills within numeracy sessions, but the planning does not show how the needs of all children are to be met. The previous report highlighted the lack of planned experiences using sand and water and this is still the same picture. The provision in the courtyard area is insufficient.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

93. Children in the nursery and reception classes are currently enjoying learning about animals in their topic of 'Out and about' in preparation for a zoo visit. Younger children make good attempts to name the plastic animals, relating them to pictures in their books. Older children recognise similarities between various animals. Some children can classify living things into sets such as those with and without legs, but they sometimes have difficulty in selecting the correct words. Other reception children are provided with less challenging activities and for them progress slows. Children with English as an additional language practise names and sounds using a sound lotto with support staff.

94. Children make gingerbread men and decorate them in various ways. All children walk to the park, shops and around school with some understanding the passing of time with yesterday, today and tomorrow, but the understanding of old and new and past and present are less well developed. Many children lack the general knowledge and vocabulary that support this area of learning.

95. There are no computers in the classrooms for children under five. This is

unsatisfactory, as nursery and reception children are denied opportunities to develop their computer skills in the early years. Reception children do, however, have experience with a programmable toy. There is very limited progress in this aspect of knowledge and understanding of the world.

96. Children's attainment in this area of learning is poor when they enter the nursery and, although they make satisfactory progress in some aspects, by the time they are five attainment remains well below that expected nationally.

97. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but for some reception children under five the activities provided lack appropriate challenge and opportunities to explore their environment are over directed. This was the same comment found in the report of the previous inspection.

Creative development

98. In the nursery children are satisfactorily developing their musical skills and are able to sing songs and rhymes tunefully together with translations by the Asian student. Children can identify and use musical instruments both in a planned and unplanned way. In the reception classes children do not have these opportunities regularly enough and do not experience music independently.

99. Children in the nursery use a variety of ways to express themselves creatively. They use crayon, paints and a range of materials to make collages and pictures. These are both planned to a topic and accessed independently. They have opportunities for independent and imaginative play, as in the 'café' or the 'baby clinic'. In the reception classes these opportunities are unsatisfactory. There are no opportunities for role-play and for some reception children creative opportunities are extremely limited, being provided within a very narrow and over directed, range of experiences.

100. Creative development is well below the expected standard by the time children are five although the progress they make is satisfactory, starting from a low base.

101. The quality of teaching for creative development is satisfactory overall. However, as in the previous inspection, not all the teachers of children under five fully understand children's needs within an early years curriculum. Nursery children are encouraged to explore their environment creatively, but this is restricted as children move to the reception classes, in the range and appropriateness of challenging activities. For example, some reception displays consist of painting within an outline drawn by an adult and on one occasion, a cutting activity was taken from a child to be completed by the teacher and returned with the instruction 'to colour it'.

Physical development

102. In the nursery children are developing co-ordination both in their physical education lessons in the hall and in the outside play area, but they are less confident in climbing and balancing activities. In the reception classes children build on these skills and increase their confidence. They learn to throw and catch a ball and use space well in their activities.

103. Nursery children have a safe and secure outdoor play area but this is not available to reception children. Each fortnight one class of reception children have 'big toys' in the hall where wheeled toys and climbing apparatus are available, but this is insufficient to meet these children's physical needs, particularly as they start from a low base with a

limited range of physical experiences.

104. Children's control of small equipment such as glue spreaders and scissors is below average for their age. Nursery children use knives to spread sandwiches and practise with scissors to cut fabric and paper. This is not maintained for all reception children. Some children use play-dough to make animals but find this a difficult task. Cutting activities are provided in the daily planning but for some children this is over-directed. Opportunities for all children to develop their physical skills in managing a range of small equipment is not sufficiently built into the daily programme for all reception children.

105. By the age of five children's attainment overall is below the level found nationally, but they make satisfactory progress. This is a deterioration in standards from the previous inspection when attainment was found to be in line with the expected levels.

106. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but the development of skills begun in the nursery is not built on in a progressive way for all children, through the reception year. There is no specific outside play area for reception children under five to access safe, adventurous play

107. As the nursery and reception classes are all part of the same educational stage, weekly joint planning and an informed curriculum leader are essential to ensure a wide range of consistent experiences which allow children to make as much progress as they can. At the present time there is insufficient day-to-day recording of what children know and can do in order to plan lessons and build on what they have learnt.

108. Accommodation for children under five is satisfactory. The teaching areas are of a good size. However the 'science room' is not used to its full advantage and is mainly used for storage. The outside area for nursery children is safe and secure but requires balancing and climbing equipment to replace an old climbing frame which has been removed. The outdoor play opportunities for reception children are unsatisfactory. The courtyard is insufficient in size and does not provide for the necessary experiences required by children under five.

ENGLISH

109. Despite standards in English remaining below average at the end of both key stages, there has been some improvement in pupils' reading, writing and the presentation of work since the last inspection. This is because basic skills, which enable pupils to spell, read and write correctly, are planned for in each year group and steadily build upon previous learning. The school also provides a more consistent approach to meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Along with targeting support for pupils with special needs, this is helping to improve provision and progress in English.

110. Learning has also improved: pupils make steady progress as they gain new skills and understanding in English. For instance, by the end of Key Stage 2, reading and writing now shows greater independence and pupils are communicating in English in a more confident way.

111. Over the past three years results in the national tests for seven and eleven-year old pupils have been well below the national average. Results in the 1999 national tests reflect this. However, when compared with schools with a similar intake, attainment is above average at Key Stage 1 and broadly in line at Key Stage 2. The preliminary results for English at Key Stage 2 in 2000 show a much improved picture and standards have moved

much closer to the expected level.

112. Today's inspection findings show that attainment in reading, writing and speaking is below the national average at both key stages. Listening skills are average. A significant majority of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are still developing competence with the spoken and written word. Whilst the vast majority make good headway with their learning, their proficiency in English can at times hold back their overall academic achievement.

113. The National Literacy Strategy is established in each year group and the plenary sessions (feedback time) are well used to share and consolidate learning. Specialist English support is targeted successfully in 'guided group-work', and this is helping to raise standards in speaking and writing. In 'whole class' time, when help is less focused, opportunities are missed to develop the pupils' speaking skills. There are some good examples of how English can be developed through other subjects: for instance, in Years 5 and 6 pupils speak confidently as they discuss Buddhism, and put forward their own point of view about reincarnation. Meanwhile in history the study of evacuees motivates pupils to write well-constructed letters about their plight.

114. Standards in speaking are below average at both key stages. However, pupils' good listening skills help them to listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. This is important, as many pupils are still learning English as an additional language, and so benefit from listening to models of good English. Over 28 pupils are still at the early stages of learning English as an additional language in Key Stage 1, so many younger pupils are still learning to respond clearly, in correctly structured sentences. By seven, the majority can ask simple questions and join in with discussions. Progress is steady at Key Stage 2, and by eleven pupils begin to describe and explain their ideas with greater clarity. An example is in Year 6, when higher attaining pupils, discuss similes and explain the meaning of behaving like a 'cat on a hot tin roof'. In general, however, the range and knowledge of vocabulary is limited. For instance, only one eleven-year old in a Year 6 class could explain the meaning of 'curious'.

115. Attainment in reading is below average. Early assessment shows that at the start of school, few young children have skills with reading and knowledge about books is poor. However, progress is good and by Year 1 pupils enjoy sharing stories, use illustrations for clues to the story line and start to recognise words and letter sounds. By seven more capable readers are reading with accuracy and meaning. Pupils reading at other levels are still developing their fluency as speakers and readers, and find exploring and sharing books in English more difficult to do. In Key Stage 2, skills with reading build up steadily. Pupils learn how to skim and scan for information in non-fiction books and study characters and plot in greater depth. By eleven most pupils are reading independently. Some more capable readers use the local mobile library and make considered choices of the books they read. Authors such as Jacqueline Wilson, and J K Rowling are proving popular. Fewer pupils than expected are using their reading skills to retrieve and research information from the computer.

116. Standards in writing are below average at the end of both key stages. The school has worked hard to widen the range of writing, with poetry well developed in older year-groups. Younger pupils gain control over the size and shape of their handwriting and improve their spelling by linking letters and sounds. By Year 2, most pupils can write simple sentences and produce class stories and poems which show a growing awareness of story-structure. For example, Year 2 write a class poem about 'The Naughty Monkeys' and produce verses that follow on. In Key Stage 2 steady progress is made with the consistent use of punctuation and spelling, and by eleven most pupils begin to use basic spelling rules in their writing. The quality of handwriting and presentation has improved since the last inspection; there is evidence of drafting ideas for writing and care is taken over final drafts. The computer is less well used for this process.

117. During lessons behaviour is good and pupils concentrate well and are keen to learn. There are not many opportunities for pupils to work in small collaborative groups and to practise and refine their speaking and social skills. For instance, in most year-groups, more confident speakers, often boys, can dominate whole class discussion at times.

118. Teaching is sound or better in most lessons. Teachers manage their classes effectively and have good relationships with their pupils, whom they know well. This is providing many of the less confident speakers and learners with the confidence to contribute in lessons. Teachers are also working confidently within literacy guidelines and so basic skills with reading and writing are built upon in each year-group. When teaching is good, expertise and knowledge of how pupils learn an additional language is evident. For instance, the most effective teachers provide structured models of good English for less fluent pupils to practise, whilst some staff use bilingual skills to help clarify difficulties in learning. Lessons are planned with reference to the literacy guidelines and work is set to meet the different levels of ability within the class. However, planning does not make the most of useful assessments made by the co-ordinator for English as an additional language. These assessments are not used to help set specific learning targets for pupils with English as an additional language in lessons.

119. The subject is managed well, and good liaison with the English as an additional language co-ordinator ensures that the needs of the high number of pupils learning an additional language are kept in mind. The co-ordinator tracks the progress of different groups within the school and has identified that boys are generally attaining at higher levels than girls (excluding African-Caribbean girls). There is equality of opportunity in lessons and girls are encouraged to participate fully. The school is trying to raise standards in speaking and the co-ordinator has identified the need to develop speaking skills more effectively in collaborative group work. There is also a need to evaluate how appropriately reading schemes are challenging and developing the skills of more able readers in Year 6.

120. Resources in English are appropriately supporting learning. The library is welcoming and reflects the cultural diversity found within the school, but for some subjects, such as music, there are too few books.

MATHEMATICS

121. The results of national tests in 1999 show standards at Key Stage 1 which are broadly in line with the national average, including the number of pupils attaining the higher level (level 3). When compared with similar schools standards are well above average. There has been a steady and significant improvement since 1997 and standards are now higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. Predicted scores for this year's tests indicate that this improvement should be maintained, and evidence from the

inspection confirms this.

122. Standards at Key Stage 2 in the 1999 national tests were well below the national average for pupils attaining both level 4 and the higher level 5. Results improve when compared with similar schools, but are still below expectations. This is a poorer picture than that indicated by the previous inspection, when standards of attainment were judged to be broadly in line with national averages at Key Stage 2. However predicted results for the year 2000 tests indicate a considerable improvement on those for 1999, bringing standards close to those found nationally and above those for similar schools when compared with the 1999 national picture. Inspection evidence also supports this, and as a result standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 are judged to be broadly in line with national expectations, although still low for those attaining the higher level 5.

123. The school closely analyses pupils' test results and at Key Stage 2 uses this information to teach pupils in ability groups which are spread across two years. Of the present Year 6 pupils, only 57% have gone through the school from the beginning, and the results of these pupils compare favourably with last year's national average. Parents are positive about the school's achievements in mathematics, especially since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. In particular they are impressed by the improvement in pupils' ability to calculate mentally. Boys outperform girls in mathematics at both key stages, although the difference is more marked at Key Stage 2, where it is considerably greater than that found nationally. At present the school has no specific strategy for dealing with this issue.

124. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the way in which this has been incorporated into the teaching of mathematics, has much to do with the improvement in standards. All aspects of the subject are covered, with a strong focus on the use of correct mathematical vocabulary, and in discussion this helps pupils to make their understanding clear. Mental calculations are part of every lesson, and the majority of pupils are able to handle numbers in their heads with growing confidence. This is particularly shown by the different ways in which pupils partition numbers mentally to arrive at a correct solution, showing a real and growing understanding. Work is usually carefully targeted to give pupils of differing ability suitably challenging tasks, and this is equally true where pupils are set in ability groups. There is very little evidence of information technology being used to broaden pupils' mathematical understanding, other than the use of a programmable robot in Key Stage 1.

125. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 count confidently to ten and the majority can use this to build number bonds by counting on. They recognise patterns in number, although for some their level of spoken English makes it hard for them to explain. Lessons seen and the work in pupils' books indicate that at this stage attainment is below expectations. By the end of the key stage pupils are able to arrange cubes in arrays and record the two resulting multiplication sums. In conversation they know that '4x3' is the same as '3x4', and can explain why. Discussion on a range of mathematical topics shows their attainment is now in line with expectations, and they discuss different areas showing understanding as well as knowledge.

126. In Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3 and 4 are set into three ability groups, with the same organisation for Years 5 and 6. This helps to ensure that the demands made on them are suitable in relation to their ability and understanding. The composition of the groups is reviewed regularly, with pupils moving between them where this is appropriate. Average pupils in Years 3 and 4 solve simple money problems, using different strategies which they understand and can explain. Higher attaining pupils approximate confidently, using large

numbers.

127. Lower attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 recognise right angles (although some think there are 'left angles' as well!) and understand the terms 'acute' and 'obtuse'. However few know what a protractor is for, or how to use one. Average pupils solve problems involving time, showing an impressive range of mental methods to arrive at correct answers. Higher attaining pupils studying plane shapes and angles show a limited knowledge for their age and ability, not understanding the meaning of 'opposite sides' and being unsure of the number of degrees in the angles of a quadrilateral. As a result when presented with inaccurate information they fail to challenge this. However mental processes when calculating number remain sharp.

128. The majority of pupils make good progress through the school, starting as the majority do from a relatively low base. Pupils with special educational needs generally make sound progress, due to relatively small classes and careful grouping by ability. None of the individual education plans seen referred to targets for improvement in mathematics. Where support is available, it is not always clear whether it is being targeted at pupils with special needs or those with English as an additional language. The progress of the latter is as good as that of their peers in terms of number and understanding, but the language issue complicates problem-solving. This also means that some pupils, while able to explain their reasoning individually, are reluctant to contribute to class discussion.

129. The great majority of pupils have a positive attitude to their work, enjoying sharing their knowledge and explaining what they are doing. Where it was less than satisfactory, which was on only one occasion, pupils failed to settle to their group work and showed little interest. Pupils work together co-operatively in pairs: where collaborating in a larger group failed it was because the task given by the teacher was poorly structured. Response in class discussion varies, with some pupils reluctant to contribute, often due to their command of English. When given a task most pupils settle to it quickly and show a good level of concentration.

130. Teaching is sound overall, with three-quarters of lessons judged to be sound or good. Three lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory, in one case because the teacher taught inaccurate information. In both other instances the teachers concerned lacked appropriate behaviour management strategies, whether to discourage poor behaviour or in the positive encouragement of good behaviour. The lessons lacked pace, expectations were too low, and as a result the pupils made little progress. In the better lessons expectations are high from the start and pupils are aware of this. A good pace is maintained and the use of open-ended questions encourages pupils to think for themselves. Teachers have positive attitudes and maintain friendly relationships with their pupils.

131. While teachers' planning is sound, and lesson objectives are often shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and sometimes re-visited at the end, these are not always sharp enough. Rather than describing exactly what the teacher intends the pupils to know, understand or be able to do at the end of the lesson, they too often focus on the content of the lesson or the activities the pupils will undertake. As a result it is more difficult for teachers to judge at the end of the lesson how much progress different pupils make, and what is the next step to take them further.

132. The subject co-ordinator is focused and effective and has put in a lot of work, particularly to the National Numeracy Strategy, and the concentration on mathematical language and mental work has paid clear dividends. Planning is consistent and suitably monitored, but there is no structured observation of teaching and therefore no opportunity to raise standards and expectations across the school. There are examples of mathematics being used in other curriculum areas, such as graphs in geography and science, but this is incidental rather than planned for. There are therefore missed opportunities for pupils to practise their knowledge and skills in realistic and meaningful situations.

SCIENCE

133. The previous inspection reported that attainment was below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well below at the end of Key Stage 2. The findings of the present inspection present an improved picture at the end of both key stages.

134. In the most recent teacher assessments and national tests for which confirmed results are available (1999), the percentage of pupils reaching national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 was well below the national average, and at the end of Key Stage 2 very low. While these results are consistent with findings of the previous inspection, evidence from classroom observations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of completed work indicates that pupils are working above these levels, with attainment now being below the national average at Key Stage 1 and in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Early results from recent national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 (summer 2000) show science standards to have risen well. They are clearly converging on the expected level. Pupils' lack of literacy skills presents difficulties in responding to test questions quickly enough in order to read and record the information required in national tests. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in science.

135. By the end of Key Stage 1 the development of pupils' investigative and experimental knowledge is sound. Pupils understand how to find things out and record their conclusions in science. They are encouraged to be 'scientists' in their lessons, for example in Year 2 when they plan an investigation to find out what part of a plant grows first. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 discuss their experiments, clearly giving reasons for their investigation. They record their results by drawing tables, diagrams, graphs and written observations. They give clear explanations of a fair test and understand that only one variable can be changed.

136. Pupils in Key Stage 1 identify parts of a plant and understand the conditions plants require to grow. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils explain in detail things that are common to all plants. They know the meaning of the term 'habitat' and discuss the effects of any environmental changes such as pollution and temperature. Pupils know that micro-organisms cause bacteria to grow and understand the conditions necessary for this to take place.

137. Younger pupils talk about different materials and their properties. They know that chocolate and water can be changed by heating and in Year 1 pupils change paper by twisting and curling and folding. Pupils in Year 3 separate materials and in Year 6 they extend their knowledge of materials and understand that it is a chemical change that causes the molecular structure to alter and that these changes are irreversible, as when water is added to plaster of Paris.

138. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can name some sources of light and know what is needed to make a bulb light up. Pupils cannot, however, explain the difference between

loudness or pitch or what causes objects to move or slow down. In Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3 and 4 know that light travels in a straight line and are developing an understanding of the transmission of light and light pathways.

139. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress and in Key Stage 2 good progress. There has been a marked improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' progress was uneven. The revised scheme of work and the close monitoring by the co-ordinator has improved progress in science throughout the school. Pupils build on previous knowledge well and have a good level of knowledge and understanding by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and English as a second language make satisfactory progress. Scientific recording is contributing to the development of writing skills, and pupils become familiar with the use of graphs and tables to set out the results of investigations. Information technology is not integrated into the science curriculum.

140. Pupils' response to the subject is good. They are keen and interested in the practical experiments. Pupils behave well, even in lessons that provide insufficiently challenging tasks. Pupils work with 'working partners' of differing abilities, and in small groups, sharing ideas and suggestions behaving extremely sensibly and working without any fuss.

141. The quality of teaching is good overall. Where teaching is good or very good, lessons are planned well with clear objectives to focus the pupils' learning. In these lessons teachers have good expectations of what pupils can achieve, as in an imaginative lesson involving sand and a goldfish bowl to test materials for their filtering properties. In lessons that are less successful teachers are not sufficiently prepared and tasks are not sufficiently challenging to extend all pupils' learning. Since the previous inspection there has been improved teacher confidence, resulting from good support and co-ordination. Teachers use scientific vocabulary well throughout both key stages. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, resources are not sufficiently prepared and lesson objectives not specific enough to focus the pupils' learning. Teachers mostly manage pupils well, but in lessons where expectations are not sufficiently high, pupils lose concentration. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection and teachers assess units of work together with an overview of each pupils' progress.

142. Since the previous inspection the co-ordinator has produced a scheme of work which has provided a sound structure to the overall curriculum. This scheme of work is closely monitored within each unit and strengths and weaknesses are identified. Resources are now appropriate for the units of science and are more accessible.

ART

143. Limited evidence was available during the inspection, and it was only possible to observe one art lesson in Key Stage 2. From the work available, standards are lower than would be expected for the age-group. This represents a drop since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations.

144. Generally the use of sketchbooks as a means to support pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Whilst evidence indicates that sketchbooks are used at Key Stage 2, the standard of work is generally poor including presentation. Work is rarely dated or titled to indicate the learning objective. Little attempt has been made to produce work of quality indicating low expectations and unsatisfactory teaching. For instance, there are few attempts to improve and progress sketching techniques. Whilst most work displayed around school is generally of a low standard, there are occasionally pockets of good

attainment. Good quality is achieved in a Year 6 class when they carefully observe facial features to produce realistic, well-proportioned pastel portraits, reflecting depth of character. A Year 3 class use lines successfully to create movement in drawings of a dancer in the style of Degas. Painting skills are generally under-developed across the school. A Year 5 and 6 class attempt to recreate Impressionist paintings but brush techniques and use of colour are undeveloped. Examples of pupils' textile work are very limited, although Year 1 use 'Dip 'n' Dye' technique on textiles effectively.

145. Opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design and the progressive development of design, investigating and making skills are limited. The range of experience and variety of media offered to pupils is narrow. This was also highlighted at the time of the last inspection. This has a detrimental effect and prevents the pupils from making adequate progress. Only one example of three-dimensional work was seen during the inspection, when a Year 6 class, following an observational painting of a feather, satisfactorily progressed their skills to produce a three-dimensional clay model of a feather.

146. Co-ordination of art is not powerful enough to raise standards. There is an adequate policy to guide teachers' work and a scheme of work which identifies a progression of skills. Arrangements to monitor their implementation by the co-ordinator are ineffective. Preparation for *Curriculum 2000* and planning for cross-curricular links are embryonic. The contribution of art to pupils' spiritual, cultural and social development is unexplored. The range and variety of resources are unsatisfactory to support all strands of the curriculum. Very few art books are available to pupils in the library, either to borrow or for reference purposes. Resources in the environment, including the city art galleries and museums, are used but the impact on pupils' learning has yet to be seen. There is no evidence in the work available that information technology is used to promote learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

147. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are those that would be expected for seven and eleven-year olds. Although design and technology remains satisfactory overall, there has been some limited improvement, namely in the development of design skills in Key Stage 1.

148. Pupils in a Year 2 class draw on their own experience of a recent visit to a local market generating innovative market stall awning designs verbally and in their free hand drawings. They measure, mark out and cut wood, manipulating simple tools safely and with confidence, and use simple joining techniques to assemble the stall framework.

149. Year 6 pupils successfully test pizza against criteria evaluating the qualities, thoroughly disassembling by eating! They recognise that individuals have different preferences, which they take into account during the evaluating process.

150. Teaching is satisfactory overall, though it ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Pupils' learning is successful in lessons where the teaching is good because high expectations of behaviour and work are clearly communicated to the class. In Year 3, pupils are regularly reminded when making levers about producing good quality work, which they can be proud of. Learning is effective where there is a sharp focus on the lesson objective at the conclusion of the lesson. In a Year 6 class the teacher teases out why high marks are awarded when evaluating pizzas, keeping the focus on the criteria identified in the lesson objective well. The least successful teaching occurs where planned tasks are not challenging. Pupils in a Year 2 class spend all the lesson painting salt-dough fruit and

vegetables with ready-mixed paint and are unable to progress their learning by developing new skills, such as accurate colour-mixing, as part of the planning process. Another group who make paper fish are unable to achieve the lesson objective because they are not provided with resources which support and help their learning. Although good use is made of planning books in a Year 3 class who design and evaluate a cold frame well, worthwhile use of these books as an aid to learning elsewhere across the school is limited.

151. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory although there are weaker areas. The co-ordinator, new to post, provides renewed enthusiasm and a keenness to improve. The policy provides good guidance and the scheme of work including long and medium-term plans builds progressively upon skills. However, monitoring of these to ensure their implementation is producing consistently successful teaching and learning, is ineffective. Preparation for *Curriculum 2000* and identification of planned cross-curricular links to enhance learning remain unexplored. There is no evidence to show that information technology is supporting learning as it might at the design stage.

GEOGRAPHY

152. At the last inspection teaching and learning in geography were judged to be good. Only one lesson could be observed during the present inspection. Judgements are made after scrutinising work in pupils' books, work displayed around the school, discussions with teachers and the subject co-ordinator and observing a group of Year 6 pupils discussing an activity provided by the inspector. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Improvements have been made to the curriculum provision in Key Stage 1.

153. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use the local area to begin simple map work. They follow a diagrammatic plan of the local market when making a visit. They use directional vocabulary when discussing the stalls in subsequent lessons. There is some evidence of a lack of challenge in some lessons, whereas good learning takes place in other classes.

154. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their mapping skills, using a range of maps with different scales of the local area and Birmingham. However, Year 6 pupils were unable to interpret the landscape features on an Ordnance Survey map provided by the inspector. When the features and landscape were described to the pupils they could discuss sensibly the options for building a dam to create a new reservoir, making a decision based on reasoned arguments. The pupils also recognised the arguments put by various fictional members of public for and against the structure.

155. In discussing a world map, pupils had only a very basic knowledge of the main features, naming the continents and oceans, but they were unable to name the Mediterranean Sea, Italy or Scandinavian countries. They have a very limited knowledge of the main climatic regions and the landscape and lifestyles associated with them. They lack much subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the tropical rainforest from an in-depth study led by a visitor to the school. They also describe in reasonable detail everyday life, the climate and main industries in France. Pupils enjoyed the activities and find their studies interesting.

156. The recently appointed co-ordinator has improved the curriculum and resource provision in Key Stage 1. However she does not yet have a clear knowledge of how well the older pupils are learning. Not enough work has been done to prepare for the introduction of *Curriculum 2000* in September. There is no whole school procedure for assessing and recording pupils' progress in geographic skills.

157. Resources are generally adequate, but there are not enough globes. Little use is made of information technology for research purposes. Younger pupils have some experience of developing directional understanding through the computer language Logo, and using a programmable floor turtle.

HISTORY

158. At the last inspection teaching and learning of history was judged to be satisfactory overall. This standard has been maintained.

159. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1. That was judged to be good. The teacher made good use of resources which pupils found interesting so that they learned to compare labels, prices and goods from the past with those of today. All the pupils discussed the differences between modern supermarkets and grocers shops in the 1950s. In other lessons pupils have learned about famous people from the past such as Queen Elizabeth I, Louis Braille and Florence Nightingale. Pupils make sound progress in understanding changes over time.

160. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding. They use first-hand experiences and primary sources to learn about the past. Pupils in lower junior classes visit the local area before learning about why Winson Green prison was built. They learn about the regime in the nineteenth century from reports at the time and compare them with changes made since then. Older junior pupils study Britain since 1930. They have a good understanding of the causes of World War II. These pupils produce good written work showing that they appreciate the feelings of families of children who were evacuated and the feelings of the evacuated children through writing imaginary letters to their families at home.

161. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is very variable. Some good and very good teaching was observed where teachers used a range of strategies to inspire pupils. One teacher had recorded the experiences of a lady who had herself been evacuated during the war. A suitcase packed for a child was used to good effect to encourage pupils to understand what evacuation meant. In these lessons pupils were very interested, contributed enthusiastically to the discussion and used their prior knowledge to make sensible deductions. However in a few lessons covering the same topics, lessons were bland, the pace slow and the resources used poorly, consequently the pupils lacked motivation and their learning was less successful.

162. All teachers have at least satisfactory background knowledge and understanding of the work taught. Lessons plans are variable with only the very best identifying clear learning objectives rather than teaching objectives and activities. Reference is made to the National Curriculum programmes of study but the levels and skills being developed are not always clear. Challenge in the best lessons is very good. The good practice should be shared with all teachers.

163. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about history. She has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to move the subject forward. More urgency is needed for preparation for implementing *Curriculum 2000* in September. A systematic whole school procedure for assessing and recording pupils' progress in developing the specific skills of historical research and analysis is needed.

164. Resources are satisfactory, but they need to be stored more efficiently for easier access by teachers. Little use is made of information technology to support research and

understanding.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

165. In 1997, the previous inspection team identified that standards in information technology were average and that pupils made satisfactory progress in the subject. In addition, teaching was sound and the management of the subject had strengths. Since the time of that report, the school has not kept abreast of the rapidly changing state of the technology and its use in education. Some improvements have been made to teaching, the curriculum and resources, but there are still things to be done in order to bring standards back to the position four years ago.

166. Today, standards in information technology are below average at the end of both key stages. This is largely accounted for by the comparatively low level of experience that pupils have in using computers in most classes. Because of this, pupils do not have the necessary opportunity to build the required level of skills, knowledge and understanding. It is evident in the limited range of work available that pupils are capable of mastering these skills and knowledge. In the lessons observed, pupils made satisfactory progress and had ample chances to practise and extend what they know and can do. Whilst the information technology room is time-tabled for all classes to use, not many took up this allotted time during the inspection and there was not much evidence in the scrutiny of work to show that things are different in the weeks outside the inspection period.

167. Similarly, the classroom-based computers are under-used. Some work was observed in which small groups of pupils used computers to help their studies in other subjects. When it takes place, this work is usually well dovetailed into the main subject, and gives pupils appropriate opportunities to research, practise or apply their learning. However, computers are often turned off or dormant and pupils miss out.

168. The school has the necessary resources to provide the range of learning experiences demanded by the National Curriculum. This includes strands such as computer control, data processing and communications technology. The curriculum is designed to meet the requirements of the programmes of study and fulfils this soundly. However, in delivery, the curriculum is not as cohesive and pupils do not have consistent and systematic coverage of all aspects of information technology. The best coverage is in word processing, data handling and work with graphics.

169. Much of the under-use of computers is due to weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and lack of confidence in using the technology. Teaching of information technology is unsatisfactory because it does not promote the regular and systematic building of skills and knowledge. In the lessons observed, teachers maintained good discipline, they used a sound range of methods and they kept the learning moving at a brisk pace on the whole. However, it is clear from the scrutiny of work that this is not always the case. Since comparatively little information technology is taught, it is difficult to promote learning at the expected rate.

170. In the lessons observed, pupils responded well to the subject. Pupils are well behaved, concentrate properly and get on well with the staff and with other pupils. Where the activities involve small group or paired work, pupils show good levels of responsibility and independence and their personal development is built well.

171. Management of information technology is in a state of change. The new co-ordinator has not long had charge of the subject, but it is evident that he already has firm

ideas for the improvement of the subject. Management has been unsatisfactory overall because not enough progress has been made since the last inspection. There is little monitoring of the subject to agreed criteria, and so senior managers do not know enough about the subject. The school's priorities have been directed at English and mathematics in particular, over the last few years. Information technology is now at the head of the subjects requiring overhaul and improvement.

MUSIC

172. At the time of the last inspection attainment was below national expectations and did not fully comply with National Curriculum requirements. Progress was judged to be slow. Although books and tapes have been purchased, provision for music is still unsatisfactory throughout the school, representing little improvement from the previous inspection. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, and hence there is no judgement on teaching. Inspection evidence is based on two lesson observations, talking to pupils at the end of both key stages and listening to pupils sing in assembly.

173. The scheme of work for music has been in place for less than a year and has yet to have a full impact on standards and progress in music. Progress in music throughout Key Stage 1 is not yet consistent for all pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. Pupils sing enthusiastically and tunefully in assembly and join with other schools to sing together. Pupils do not use musical instruments on a regular basis or play together using a variety of tuned and untuned percussion. Pupils have not recorded music or responded to music, while painting or writing for example. Pupils are not familiar with musical terms such as pitch, duration or dynamics.

174. Progress is also inconsistent in Key Stage 2. Although the structured music scheme has introduced elements of listening and performing, pupils have gained insufficient experience in music through the school to enable them to draw on previous knowledge at an appropriate level. By the end of the key stage pupils sing in a round tunefully, learning songs from memory. They have listened to music from other cultures and can name some classical composers such as Beethoven and Mozart. Pupils have visited Symphony Hall in Birmingham with other schools, to listen to a concert concerning the history of music. In both key stages there is little opportunity for pupils to be creative and use their imagination in music lessons. Pupils do not use information technology to enhance their learning.

175. At the time of the previous inspection some pupils had opportunities to play the recorder, keyboard and violin, but there are no opportunities for pupils to play an instrument at the present time. The school acknowledges that work on composition has yet to be developed.

176. The resources for music are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient tuned and untuned instruments to enable a whole class to participate. Music is played in assembly but, as in the previous inspection, music takes a low profile and makes little impact on the life of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

177. In Key Stage 1 the youngest pupils are beginning to develop the basics of control when throwing and catching or bouncing a ball. In Year 1 they put together a sequence of rolls in gymnastics, and make good progress in a games lesson, both in throwing and catching and then putting their skills into practice in a simple game. By Year 2 the games become more sophisticated with an emphasis on teamwork and co-operation, as well as marking an opponent. There is less obvious progress in gymnastics, where pupils' ability to link movements into a sequence shows little advance on Year 1, and although it is part of the lesson pupils show little awareness of ways of improving their own or others' performance.

178. Due to the structure of both the school and inspection timetables it was possible to see only one lesson at Key Stage 2, a games lesson with Year 4. Pupils show a range of skills in batting at cricket and make sound if not good progress, with a sizeable group of boys demonstrating impressive ability. Pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, make sound progress. All aspects of the physical education programme are planned for over time. Swimming takes place throughout Key Stage 2 and approximately 80% of pupils reach the national standard of swimming 25 metres.

179. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are always sound and sometimes good. Most change sensibly, paying good attention to safety issues such as earrings and necklaces. They move quietly through the school on their way to and from the hall. Equipment is handled sensibly by the majority, even from an early age. A few pupils find it difficult to respond to the teacher's instructions, but most work hard and enjoy the subject. Pupil co-operation and collaboration is generally weak: pupils do not argue, but seem to find it difficult to help and advise each other, tending rather to work as individuals.

180. Teaching of physical education is always sound and occasionally good. Teachers manage their pupils effectively and maintain a good pace, with plenty of activities. There is a satisfactory focus on the teaching of skills, although little use is made of pupils to provide examples of good practice. All teachers start lessons with warm-ups, although on one occasion this consisted of sprinting and changing direction, rather than stretching exercises. Some of the games lessons, all of which took place in the hall, would have been more effective taken outside.

181. The co-ordinator manages the subject efficiently, having both enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. He has supplemented the scheme of work to make it more accessible to colleagues who are not specialists, and sees teachers' planning, but has as yet no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching. Resources are adequate and there is good accommodation for an inner-city school, with two halls, a large playground and a small field. The curriculum is supported by a number of extra-curricular sporting clubs, open to all Key Stage 2 pupils regardless of ability, to which several staff give valuable time.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

182. At the time of the last inspection standards were reported to meet national expectations. The school continues to follow and meet the requirements set down in the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Today's findings are very similar to those of the previous inspection.

183. Standards of attainment are average at the end of both key stages. Younger pupils reflect on their own life experiences at home and in school. They consider how well they work and learn together and suggest that certain rules, such as 'taking care of each other' are important to follow. This learning is linked successfully to the teachings and guidance of different faiths, such as Islam, Christianity and Sikhism. An example is when pupils in Year 2 act out the Bible story of the Good Samaritan, extend their thoughts to the wider world and ask 'who is their neighbour?' The school is successful in valuing and sharing the diversity of beliefs found within its community. Although broadly of a Christian nature, pupils learn that Allah is at the centre of Islam and that Guru Nanak is important to Sikhism. On occasions, assemblies and acts of collective worship can make a contribution to the development of awareness. For instance, the assembly theme of 'feeling safe', provides the opportunity for discussion about the strength faith and belief in God can provide.

184. In Year 5 and 6 pupils study Buddhism and gain greater understanding of its religious concepts and symbolism. Pupils learn a great deal from this experience as they begin to understand the importance of Samsara, Karma and Nirvana to Buddhists. For instance, a group of pupils discuss reincarnation, and compare this belief with their own religious views. There is a good focus on religious language in this lesson, with a good number of pupils able to explain words such as 'enlightenment' and 'Nirvana' clearly to others. Although many pupils form thoughtful views from this study, a significant number of pupils for whom English is an additional language still need support when communicating their ideas in English.

185. Pupils in all year groups also learn about different values and beliefs from first-hand experiences, such as visits to the mosque, temple and church. They compare similarities and differences and begin to identify 'why' and 'how' people from other faiths pray. Religious celebrations and traditions, such as Eid, Diwali and Christmas also are valued and shared.

186. Pupils are interested in religious education lessons and so their attitudes and behaviour are good. There is respect for the beliefs of others and enjoyment in celebrating the diversity found within the school.

187. Teaching is sound overall. Teachers plan with the locally Agreed Syllabus in mind and themes for assemblies are clearly followed. Teachers have good insight and understanding of the wide range of values and beliefs held within the school. The study of different religions with older pupils is of a high standard, but planning would benefit further from a sharper focus on identifying the language skills pupils with English as an additional language may need to communicate more effectively in lessons.

188. The school guidelines and policy follow the locally Agreed Syllabus and the subject is managed well. As yet, links with other subjects, which provide the opportunities to develop religious knowledge and spirituality in other lessons are not monitored clearly enough. Resources and visits to sites of interest promote learning successfully.