

INSPECTION REPORT

Owler Brook Nursery Infant School

Wensley Street, Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107007

Headteacher: S E Graville

Reporting inspector: S Kilby
21973

Dates of inspection: 11-14 June 2001

Inspection number: 209836

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 Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wensley Street Sheffield
Postcode:	S4 8HQ
Telephone number:	0114 2438611
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms L Overall
Date of previous inspection:	7-10 December 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
S Kilby	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology History Under fives	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
M O'Malley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
A J Puckey	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
W V Ellis	Team inspector	English Physical education Art Equal opportunities Special educational needs	
P Eardley	Team inspector	Maths Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils?
W Miller	Team inspector	English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Owler Brook is a large infant and nursery school with 252, full-time equivalent boys and girls aged between three and seven years old. 36% of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is above the national average of 19.7%. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 21% and is broadly in line with the national average. Currently 67% of the pupils have English as additional language (EAL) and 57% are at an early stage of English language acquisition which is well above average. Attainment on entry to the school is below average in terms of language, literacy, mathematics, personal and social development. In addition to these factors the school has a transient pupil population with 20% of the pupil population either starting after the usual time of first admission or leaving before the usual time of transfer. The school is now admitting a substantial number of children from refugee families, mainly Somali, and is in an area of high unemployment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Owler Brook nursery and infant school is a good school. It provides a good education for its pupils. The leadership provided by the head teacher and key staff is very good, and they are well supported by an active governing body. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They enjoy going to school and are enthusiastic learners. Pupils are encouraged to respect feelings, take responsibility and understand the impact of their actions. Relationships in the school are very good. The support of EAL pupils is very good. Bilingual classroom assistants are used effectively throughout the school to work alongside EAL pupils encouraging them to communicate, use English as and when appropriate, to ask questions and work cooperatively. As a result the attainment of these pupils is in line with that of other pupils in the school. The provision that the school makes for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has given high priority to improving standards in English and mathematics. The combination of individual targets, very good systems for tracking progress and setting in Years 1 and 2 for literacy and numeracy has done much to support the drive for improved standards. On the evidence of lesson observations and the National Curriculum test results for 2001, attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly in line with national averages and is better than schools in similar contexts. Progress and achievement from a low base line in nursery to the end of Year 2 are very good. The head teacher creates a very good climate of care. As a result pupils, staff and parents feel valued. The strong emphasis on promoting self-esteem is helping pupils to become successful learners. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership of the school is very good.
- Teaching is at least satisfactory with 73% being good or better.
- Pupils' learning is good and they make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good.
- Relationships within school and with parents are very good.
- Teachers' planning is very good and curriculum provision is good.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.
- Care for pupils is very good.
- The provision for SEN pupils is good and for EAL pupils it is very good.

What could be improved

- Provide more opportunities for speaking so that pupils can clarify their thoughts before they start writing, make sense of what they have read to improve comprehension and explain calculations and justify methods.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations so that they consistently develop the key investigational skills in science and apply their knowledge and understanding of number purposefully in mathematics.
- Attendance.
- Reduce the number of targets pupils are expected to achieve at any one time.
- The balance and the use of time in the morning sessions.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The school is well placed to sustain improvement in future. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are now broadly in line with national expectations and are better than in schools in similar contexts. Target grouping based on prior attainment in Years 1 and 2 for literacy and numeracy combined with individual pupils' targets and effective tracking of progress has done much to help improvements. Since the school adopted a cursive handwriting policy the standard of handwriting has greatly improved. Standards are improving in science and inspection evidence combined with the 2001 National Curriculum teacher assessment results show that they are now close to the national average. However more opportunities need to be provided to enable pupils to develop investigational skills and apply them. The curriculum in the foundation stage now coherently develops skills, knowledge and understanding from the nursery through the Reception year. Coordinators have worked hard to produce effective policies, schemes of work and planning formats. This has resulted in a useful structure for the curriculum to guide planning and teaching. Improvements in planning mean that teachers are operating on consistent formats throughout the school and are matching work to the needs of pupils. Very effective assessment procedures enable teachers to track progress, provide pupils with accurate information and critical feedback and to use the assessments to guide the next stage of planning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good. The Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for these pupils contain targets for improvement based on small step gains. These targets are reviewed every five weeks. The quality of teaching is much better than it was during the last inspection with all teaching now at least satisfactory and 73% good or better. Governors are much more closely involved in the management of the school. They have a committee structure and clearly defined roles. They work closely with the head teacher and staff to produce the school improvement plan.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	D	E	E	C
writing	D	D	D	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

mathematics	B	D	C	A	well below average E
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Standards in lessons in English, maths and science are higher than the test results for 2000 indicate and the school is well placed to continue to improve them. The results for 2001 were made available during the inspection and the results confirm this judgement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils are enthusiastic about school, work hard and show good levels of interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils behave well in lessons and this enables them to learn effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically. They relate well to each other and to adults and are sensitive to the needs of others.
Attendance	Poor: strategies to improve attendance are good and are beginning to show results, but attendance still remains well below the national average. Pupils are generally punctual and lessons start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching overall is good and often very good. Over 70% of the teaching is good or better with a significant proportion of very good lessons. During the inspection no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teaching is very good in English and ICT, good in mathematics, science and D&T and history and at least satisfactory in music, PE and RE. No overall judgement of teaching is possible in geography and art owing to insufficient classroom observation. Overall, this represents a huge improvement since the last inspection when about 20% was good but another 20% was unsatisfactory.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and sometimes very good. Standards are satisfactory and improving. This is because teaching is sharply focused on clear learning objectives and most pupils show interest, increase their understanding of literacy and numeracy, work hard and at a good pace, think and learn for themselves, and know what they have to do to improve.

The use of support staff for EAL and SEN is a strength of the school. They are fully involved in planning, know the pupils well and have a good understanding of how they learn. They work in close partnership with teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the school gives high priority to raising standards in English and mathematics. There is an appropriate balance across other subjects. Planning for the foundation stage is now good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: the school's provision is effective. Teachers plan carefully for pupils and they are well supported by the school's classroom support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good: the school's provision is effective. Bilingual classroom support assistants provide very good support for pupils in lessons ensuring effective learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: provision for personal, social and health education and for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: the school has maintained high standards and procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' performance are now very good.

The school makes good use of visitors and visits to enrich the curriculum. Pupils are regularly involved in discussions on ways to improve some aspects of school life.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the head teacher provides very good, purposeful leadership and has established an excellent shared commitment to improvement. Coordinators now play a full role in monitoring and evaluating their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: governors are active and provide strong support. They are well informed about the school's progress and work closely with head teacher to effect improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: the school has very good procedures for assessment, tracking pupil performance and analysing test data. Coordinators regularly monitor teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good: financial planning and administration are good. The head teacher and governing body budget systematically for the school's needs. The effective use of teaching assistants helps to support pupils' good progress.

The school has sufficient qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is excellent and used very well as is the very good range of learning resources. The school provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils like school, they behave well and make good progress.• The school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about how pupils are getting on.• The quality of teaching is good. The school expects pupils to work hard and do their best.• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school.• The school is well led and managed and is helping pupils to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An increase in the amount of homework set by the school• The range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors agree with the positive points made by the parents. The amount of homework currently set by the school is appropriate both to the age and needs of the pupils and effectively supports their learning. The school is developing a range of extra-curricular activities including lunchtime computer clubs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Assessments undertaken on children after entry to the nursery are done in the child's first language. These assessments show the children to be below the expected levels in speaking and listening, number and personal and social skills. If the school administered the assessments in English then these children would be well below the expected level. By doing these assessments in the first language the school is able to ascertain the true potential of the children and not cloud special educational needs issues with English as an additional language (EAL) issues. By the end of their time in Reception the majority of children have achieved the early learning goals and some are on the way to achieving Level 1 of the National Curriculum. However there is a growing difference in the attainment where listening and writing are beginning to outpace that in speaking. This represents very good progress and is an improvement since the last inspection. The progress of children for whom English is an additional language is also very good. These children are well supported by bilingual teachers and support assistants enabling them to interact, discuss, understand and ask questions.

2 By the time pupils are seven, attainment in English based on the results from the 2000 National Curriculum tests, is slightly below the national average in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is below the national average in both reading and writing. When compared to similar schools, reading is in line and attainment is better in writing. During the inspection the results of the national tests for the year 2001 became available. They show an improvement in the standards of both reading and writing. This is confirmed by the inspection evidence which indicates standards close to the national average. The results of the national tests over the last four years show a trend of rising standards though the rate of improvement has been below the national average. The present standards are significantly better than those reported during the last inspection. Literacy skills are well taught and teachers encourage their use across the curriculum. However, skills in listening, reading and writing are, in many cases, at a higher level than those in speaking.

3 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests indicate that attainment in mathematics is in line with the national average and is much better than in similar schools. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection and has improved the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Since 1998 the school has matched the national rate of improvement. The inspection evidence indicates that current standards match the expected levels with some higher attainment in number. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy combined with improvements made to planning, teaching and assessment place the school well to continue to raise standards.

4 Pupils make good progress in reading. They are taught how to use the context of the sentence to help them read unfamiliar words and how to split up longer words to recognise familiar patterns to help them read the whole word. Successful reading is also supported by the systematic acquisition of sight vocabulary. Pupils make good progress in writing and standards are now significantly better than those reported in the last inspection. Pupils write in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes including stories, explanations, poems, letters and the labelling of diagrams and drawings. They can write in sentences often using appropriate punctuation. Spelling of simple words is usually accurate and most pupils can make a sensible attempt at longer regular words. The school

has a systematic approach to teaching handwriting in which pupils are shown how to join letters as soon as they can form them correctly. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection. The vast majority of pupils have good listening skills. Most pupils are able to talk about things that interest them but are less good at using spoken language to clarify thoughts before writing and make sense of what they have read to improve comprehension.

5 Most pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress. This is because of the carefully integrated support provided. Individual targets set for pupils, careful assessment, detailed tracking of progress, the match of work to ability, target grouping, a greater teacher confidence in the National Numeracy Strategy, effective questioning and the use of a good range of strategies contribute effectively to the good progress that pupils make. Although pupils are encouraged to develop and use mathematical vocabulary insufficient opportunities are provided for them to fully explain their calculations and methods.

6 In 2000, teachers assessment in science showed attainment to be well below the national average for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 but close to other schools nationally for the higher Level 3. In comparison with similar schools attainment is average at Level 2 and above average at Level 3. Analysis of results indicates that standards are well below average nationally in life and living processes, materials and their properties and investigative science and below average in physical processes. The results for 2001 show a significant improvement especially in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 3. Inspection evidence confirms these results. Standards in most attainment targets are now in line with national expectations. However, insufficient opportunities are provided to systematically develop investigational skills and to apply them in practical situations. Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection. Progress made by pupils in science is good.

7 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are at least in line with national expectations. The standards achieved by some higher-attaining pupils is on occasions better than this. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be broadly in line. Throughout the school pupils use computers and other ICT equipment, for example tape recorders, cameras and overhead projectors with growing confidence and skill. The new ICT suite does much to promote good teaching and the learning of discrete skills and has effectively contributed to the standards achieved and the progress that pupils make. Most pupils are now able to save and retrieve information, present information in graphical form, draw and colour pictures, use word-processing packages and CD-ROMs to support other class work. In recent months all classes have been linked to the Internet and the school has established a web-site.

8 In art and design, standards are at least in line with national expectations. Younger pupils have many opportunities to draw and paint from observation and their own experience. Older pupils explore a wide range of materials and use shape, colour, tone and pattern to produce work, some of which is better than the national level. Standards in design and technology (D&T) are broadly in line with national expectations with pupils being given opportunities to design, make and evaluate using a wide range of materials. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Standards in geography, history, music and physical education (PE) are broadly in line with national expectations. In religious education (RE) attainment matches the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

9 No evidence from lesson observations, work scrutiny or the interviews held, during the inspection, indicated any significant differences in attainment as a result of ethnic background, EAL issues or gender. Progress made by pupils from nursery through to Year 2 is good. SEN pupils make good progress and EAL pupils very good progress because of the very high quality of the provision and support provided. The ethos of the school is totally supportive of these and other children making Owler Brook a very inclusive school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 Pupils enjoy learning and have good attitudes to school. They behave well in lessons and around the school and their personal development is very good. Relationships between pupils and staff are also very good. The standards of pupils attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships noted at the last inspection have been maintained and this helps pupils learn well.

11 Pupils enjoy school. They are willing to learn and respond well to the good teaching. Pupils are interested and fully involved in their lessons. For example during the inspection Reception pupils were drawing pictures by using the *'Paintbrush'* programme on the computers. They were astonished and excited by their ability to create so many different colours and shapes. Pupils work hard and are keen to improve. They listen attentively and get on with the tasks set. Some pupils are keen to ask and answer questions but many find it difficult to speak in long sentences.

12 Pupils behave well in lessons and this results in a calm learning atmosphere. They behave well in the dining room and playground. Pupils know what standards of behaviour are expected and respond well. The few incidents of bullying or racism are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils are friendly and polite. They take good care of equipment, such as in mathematics and science, and using the computers. They tidy away neatly and quickly at the end of lessons.

13 Relationships are very good and this is a major factor in pupils' learning progress. They respect one another's opinions, cooperate and share ideas. For example even the youngest pupils work well together, listening to each other's views as they discuss what they have done that day, or taking turns as they play on the tricycles. Pupils respect the teachers and are keen to please.

14 Pupils' personal development is very good. They grow in confidence in response to the praise and encouragement they receive. They settle to group work quickly and many work well with little direct supervision. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others. For example in PE they made sure that everyone had enough space as they ran around the hall.

15 Pupils are learning to respect different values and beliefs. They celebrate festivals from Christian and other religions such as Harvest, Diwali and Chinese New Year. Year 1 pupils have visited both the local church and the mosque to compare the similarities and differences.

16 Pupils take responsibility for their own learning through group work and research. They evaluate their own progress against half-termly targets in mathematics, English and science. They think through problems for themselves as part of their investigations in science, mathematics, and ICT.

17 Pupils help responsibly with the daily routines such as collecting registers and clearing away lunch boxes. They take turn as class monitors. The 'Owler Brook Buddies' help the welfare supervisors in the dining hall and make sure all the children have someone to play with during their break. The pupils in the nursery are helped to develop independence for example, by clearing away after activities and putting on their own coats.

18 Attendance has improved since the last inspection but when compared with other schools it is poor. At 88.1% this year it is still well below the national average of 94.4%. 33 pupils took extended holidays this year to visit relatives abroad and many pupils miss school on special religious days. Unauthorised absence this year is 4.0% which is well above the national average of 0.5%. The school continues to work hard at improving attendance and with extra initiatives starting last March further improvement is beginning to show. Punctuality has improved but some pupils still arrive late to school. Lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19 The overall quality of teaching is good in both the foundation stage and in Key Stage 1. This is a major strength of the school because it promotes pupils' learning and progress throughout the school and enables them to achieve satisfactory standards by the age of seven, especially in English, mathematics and science. By the time they transfer to the next school most pupils are attaining the best standards of which they are capable. The good quality of teaching is also a major factor in making it an effective school now, in stark contrast to the last inspection when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses.

20 The quality of teaching in 73% of the lessons seen was good or very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when in Key Stage 1 only 23% was judged to be good and teaching was unsatisfactory in 21% of lessons. Since the last inspection in 1998 the National Curriculum has moved on considerably and the school has kept up with all developments. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced successfully and have provided good structures for teaching and learning. Teachers have attended a wide range of training courses and have brought new knowledge and skills back into the school for the benefit of both pupils and other staff. This has had a positive impact on classroom practice. All of the shortcomings in the last inspection report have now been remedied.

The major strengths in teaching are:

- the confidence and good knowledge which teachers have in most subjects which enables them to give good explanations and ask searching questions to extend pupils' thinking;
- very good lesson planning which has clear learning objectives and meets the learning needs of all levels of attainment and groups of pupils;
- good teaching of basic skills and good classroom management, organisation and routines which create a workshop ethos emphasising effort and good quality;
- the use of a wide range of appropriate teaching methods, with a high proportion of direct teaching, although this sometimes limits opportunities for experimental and investigative work in mathematics and science;

- appropriate expectations of pupils' academic performance so that they are know what they should do and try hard;
- assessment used effectively, first in lessons to raise standards and then to set targets for pupils so they know what they have to do to improve;
- the use of assessment information to inform lesson planning, this is a major improvement as it was a key issue for development from the last inspection;
- very good behaviour management and relationships;
- very good use of learning support staff and parent helpers to enable pupils with EAL or SEN to make good progress and be included in all class activities;
- good team spirit and corporate working which includes all staff and helps to ensure consistency of practice for staff and continuity and progression of learning for pupils.

Pupils' learning is good and as a result they:

- make good progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding starting from low levels on entry to the school;
- have individual targets in English, mathematics and science and understand what they have to do to improve in these subjects;
- personally review their targets every term and set new priorities;
- apply sustained and concentrated intellectual and often creative effort;
- work hard and at a good and productive pace; and
- the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly those with EAL or SEN are well met.

21 The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully introduced. Teaching in English is very good which is a big improvement on the last inspection when it was generally unsatisfactory. The criticisms listed in the last report do not now apply. Teachers use technical vocabulary when appropriate so that pupils gradually acquire it for themselves and, for example, talk freely about phonemes and digraphs. Tasks are carefully planned to meet all ability levels in the class, although in some lessons tasks could be made more open ended in order to encourage pupils to practise and extend their speaking skills and thus achieve more highly.

22 The National Numeracy Strategy has also been introduced successfully. Teaching is good which is an improvement on the last inspection when 20% was unsatisfactory. Most teachers have good knowledge of both numeracy and the pupils they teach. Levels of work are planned to meet the needs of different pupils which helps their ability to learn effectively, but tasks for more able pupils in particular could be more open-ended to improve their skill in the investigation and application of mathematics. Attainment would also be improved if pupils had more opportunities to explain their reasoning and record their work in a number of different ways.

23 At the time of the last inspection teaching in science was severely criticised, judged to be unsatisfactory overall and was a key issue for improvement. This is no longer the case and the success of the school in tackling this issue is seen in the fact that teaching in science is now of good quality.

24 The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good because the highly inclusive ethos and relationships of the school means that teachers know their pupils very well and are familiar with the targets on the IEPs. These targets are used well, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to ensure that pupils are given work which enables them to make good progress. Pupils with EAL are also very strongly aided by bilingual supporters who are well deployed, keep records of their work, evaluate it and seek to improve it. In lessons, support staff and parent helpers make a significant contribution to pupils' progress because they interact closely with them and make sure that whatever their needs pupils play a full and active part in all class activities.

25 Teaching is very good in the foundation stage. In Key Stage 1 teaching is very good in English and ICT, good in mathematics, science, D&T and history and at least satisfactory in geography and art and design.

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

26 The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. It meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and RE. The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) are fully implemented and contribute well to the current rise in achievement in the school. However the current time allocation, of 75 minutes, for literacy is too long. A strong focus on curriculum development and its coordination ensures that the school has made good progress in curriculum issues since the last inspection. Developments in ICT, D&T and science have resulted in good continuity and progression across most attainment targets. However, speaking in English and the development of investigational skills in science need further development. Children who are under five years old in Reception classes now have access to a curriculum that builds effectively on prior learning in the nursery.

27 Leadership and management of the curriculum are very good. Subject coordinators are effective in the provision of support to class teachers, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the development of their subject, especially in the core areas. This is a strength of the school, and is an important factor in improving the quality of pupils' learning.

28 In the nursery, the curriculum covers all the early learning goals and areas of experience. Systematically re-worked policies and schemes for all subjects comply with the requirements of the new National Curriculum and guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). These apply to the main curriculum as well as for EAL.

29 Equality of access and opportunity for pupils is very good. The school is very aware of the needs of EAL pupils, those with special educational needs and those of middle and higher attainment. Provision to meet the needs of SEN and EAL pupils is good. Issues to do with the provision for higher attainers as raised in the last inspection are being tackled. The school has a large number of classroom support assistants providing effective classroom support. The time and funding allocated for the support of pupils in the core curriculum, provide enhanced opportunities for success within their abilities. Planning for the range of abilities through appropriate grouping, ensure that the needs of all pupils are largely met. The very good progress that pupils make justifies this investment. These are strengths of the school.

30 For a nursery and infant school the range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits is appropriate. Teachers use the local environment effectively for educational visits to museums to study artefacts, and the immediate area around the school to learn about different kinds of houses. Links with Education Action Zone (EAZ), and Excellence in Cities schemes are in place and provide essential support for pupils. As a new school in a predominantly Muslim environment, links with the immediate community are strong. Clubs within the school get good support. The lunchtime ICT club provides an extra opportunity for pupils to develop their ICT skills. Visitors and resources from the local community further help to enrich the quality of curriculum provision.

31 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies provide opportunities to consider issues such as honesty, as in the story told in one assembly of *'The Lost Five Pound Note'*. Religious education enables pupils to reflect and learn about faiths and beliefs other than their own. A number of artefacts around the school reflect these differences.

32 Provision for social and moral development is very good. Pupils are aware of the high standards that staff and their parents require of them. Issues of right and wrong are a feature of discussion, for example in 'circle time' and in assemblies. Vision and strong leadership from the head teacher and shared staff commitment make pupils' development a strength of the school. Faith is central to the schools' ethos as a school with a predominantly Islamic intake. Values and morals are seen as an important part of each pupil's development, and there is a Health and Sex Education Policy in place along with an ambitious plan for a health and fitness programme.

33 Teachers regularly use praise and reward to motivate pupils. Clear guidelines establish precedents for behaviour, which staff apply consistently. The result is a high standard of behaviour with little or no sanctions, no recent exclusions and very little bullying in the school. Relationships between pupils are very good.

34 Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Effective use is made of resources, visits outside the locality and visitors to the school to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of a multicultural society. Art, geography and history give pupils opportunities to look at, discuss and attempt to replicate their findings in drawing, stories and mini-plays. A good range of dual-language books and story tapes helps pupils to make contact with and understand other life styles. Stories told to the pupils by bilingual staff in English and their first language enhance feelings of esteem and provide further knowledge and understanding.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35 The school provides good care for its pupils, and provision for support and guidance is very good. Staff know the pupils very well, and provide a caring atmosphere that contributes greatly towards pupils' learning. Additional support from outside agencies is good. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This is very good improvement since the last inspection and is a significant factor in raising pupils' standards of attainment.

36 The arrangements for health, safety, and child protection are good. First aid provision is satisfactory and staff ensure that pupils learn safely. Regular health and safety checks are done and improvements are made where necessary. However, now that the

school has shared responsibilities for audit and inspection, these procedures need to be reviewed.

37 The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The learning mentor, who is bilingual, works very effectively with parents, teachers and pupils. Parents are reminded about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Attendance rates and lateness are closely monitored. The education welfare officer visits weekly. Unexplained absence and unsatisfactory attendance are rigorously followed up. Attendance rates are displayed and pupils with good attendance receive certificates. Each week the best attending class is rewarded. These arrangements have only been fully implemented since March 2001 and therefore their impact on achieving a higher rate of attendance has been limited. The school is introducing a computer system to further improve attendance monitoring.

38 The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. Staff expect high standards and reinforce and encourage good behaviour. They are firm but fair with pupils who misbehave. The welfare supervisors have been trained in positive behaviour management and carry out their duties well. School rules are discussed in circle time and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Parents are well informed and support the behaviour policy. The school has effective systems for monitoring unsatisfactory behaviour but these are rarely needed. Bullying or racism is rare and any incidents are quickly tackled.

39 The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school analyses the data from national tests in English, mathematics and science, using the information to change and improve curriculum provision in order to remedy weaknesses. The head teacher monitors the progress of three pupils from each year group and is using the information to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision.

40 The results of analysis are also used to establish target groups in literacy and numeracy and to ensure that work is well matched to pupils needs. Assessment information is used to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils for example boys and girls, but not for different ethnic groups. Formal and informal assessments are carried out regularly so that teachers and support staff know what progress pupils are making. These assessments are used effectively to set individual targets for pupils in all subject areas. Targets are clear and specific, but the high number of pupil targets should be under review and synthesised into a manageable number. The quality of teachers' marking is high, positive and constructive in tone and makes clear what pupils need to do to improve.

41 Pupils with EAL are assessed for their literacy and numeracy skills. These assessments are used effectively to place them in the appropriate target group. Bilingual assistants are then deployed and their skilful support ensures that pupils can take part fully in lessons. Pupils' special educational needs are regularly assessed and reviewed. IEPs are very good because the targets are specific, realistic and manageable. The targets focus on behaviour as well as learning. Classroom support assistants are carefully deployed on the basis of pupils' needs and timetabled appropriately. Regular review ensures that the support is directed effectively. The school has carried out an effective evaluation of its procedures for supporting both pupils with SEN and those who are gifted or talented.

42 The school monitors and promotes pupils' personal development well through circle time, clear communications, and effective links with parents. These help staff note

developments and identify concerns. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are promoted through very good relationships and every aspect of school life. Many opportunities have been created for pupils to undertake responsibilities through the arrangements for class monitors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43 Parents are pleased with the school. In particular they think the teaching is good and the school is well led. They are confident that their children like school and that their education is helping them to become mature and responsible. The inspection confirms parents' positive views.

44 The school is building an effective partnership with parents that is having an increasingly beneficial effect on learning. The information provided for parents is good. The prospectus and governors' annual report provide a satisfactory summary of what is going on in school. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. The end-of-year reports are good and parents can meet formally with the teachers every term in order to discuss their children's progress. The teachers are readily accessible and the school is quick to involve parents if there are problems. The arrangements for keeping parents informed on what is taught are good. Parents are invited to workshops and half-termly meetings for each year group. Translators are easily available for those parents whose first language is not English. However much of the school documentation is only written in English and therefore some parents miss what is going on in school.

45 The contribution of parents to their children's learning is good and the school works closely with them. Arrangements for introducing parents and children to the nursery and Reception classes are good. These include meetings for parents, home visits, and a toy library for toddlers. Parents are encouraged to raise concerns and keep the school informed about their children. Many parents support their children at special occasions such as school productions, religious celebrations, and '*Tommy Whitton Week for Reading*'. Parents of nursery children help them to settle in at the start of each session and some parents of the older children join them for shared reading. A few parents help in class with activities such as cooking and sewing. Homework is regularly set and the school plans to have workshops to further help parents support their children at home. Parents' courses in literacy, art, computers, and behaviour management are well established. These courses bring many parents into school and help them to support their children's education. Many parents, relatives, and friends join the yearly summer celebrations such as the picnic trip to Rother Valley Country Park, and these occasions provide an excellent opportunity to encourage all parents to get fully involved and build the school's reputation in the community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46 The leadership and management provided by the head teacher and key staff are very good. Working closely with the staff and governors the head teacher has successfully developed an ethos in which pupils are valued, well cared for, behave well, are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to learn. The purposeful leadership of the head teacher ensures a clear educational direction for the school and an excellent shared commitment to improvement. This commitment is reflected in the aims and vision for the school, which emphasise the personal and social development of pupils as well as their academic progress, respecting their ethnic and cultural backgrounds and their prior learning and specific needs. This is a fully inclusive school. The head teacher, working with the deputy

head teacher and subject coordinators, has secured a consistency in policy and practice throughout the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

47 The head teacher delegates responsibility to the deputy head teacher, senior management team and subject coordinators very well. Their roles are carefully defined and coordinators are enabled to play a full and active role in monitoring and evaluating their subject areas. Each coordinator is provided with time to monitor the quality of planning, to evaluate the quality and consistency of teaching and then to assess the standard of pupils' work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Each half term they write a subject report based on the strengths and weaknesses in their subject areas. These inform the developmental actions and priorities for the school. A yearly report is provided to the governors in each subject area. School improvement planning has a secure basis in the information provided by subject coordinators. Decisions about the priorities for the coming year are synthesised from this detailed information ensuring that they are appropriate to the current needs of the school. Results of the National Curriculum tests in reading, writing, mathematics and science are analysed and the findings are used to further influence the priorities. However the school has yet to fully consider the possible differences in attainment of the various ethnic groups within the school. Subject coordinators keep up-to-date with developments in their subject areas and have been influential in providing very good advice, support and training in relation to planning, teaching, assessment and the use of specialist equipment for example the facilities in the new ICT suite. As a result teachers are more confident about their teaching and the curriculum and can use a variety of strategies and resources effectively, including the use of classroom support assistants, to adapt to the individual needs of pupils and guide learning. The coordination and use of bilingual support is a strength of the school.

48 The head teacher works closely with the governors and keeps them well informed. Governors now have a clearly defined role. A committee structure has been put in place and individual governors have been assigned specific responsibilities, for example subject responsibility. They work hard and are successful in their aim of being critical friends for the school. Planned programmes of regular meetings, committees and working parties enable them to be fully involved in personnel, financial, premises and curriculum matters. They are developing a good system for monitoring and evaluating curriculum developments through the receiving of the yearly subject reports by coordinators. Governors are fully informed about National Curriculum test results and the analysis of data produced through tracking individual pupils and as a result are aware of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are therefore able to play a full role in the development of the school improvement plan. A policy for performance management has been put in place and arrangements for appraising the work of the head teacher are effective enabling appropriate targets to be set for her. Through the delegated responsibilities the head teacher has also ensured that the performance management procedures for the teachers have been put in place and that the resulting targets and information are included in the school improvement plan. The governing body now provides good support to the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However they have not yet identified criteria by which they can monitor value for money and are only just beginning to get to grips with the principles of best value.

49 The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with SEN are a strength of the school. The coordinator is well organised and effective systems have been established for identification, the setting of IEPs and record keeping. Children are assessed on entry to the school in their first language. This enables the school to be aware of the true potential of individual pupils, to separate EAL issues from SEN issues and to have a clear overview of the provision. Targets set for pupils within their IEPs are

appropriate to their needs and are based on small step gains. These targets are reviewed every half term. The use of support staff within the classroom working alongside these pupils is well planned for and managed. In Year 2 groups are set by ability for literacy and numeracy with a separate SEN group. This enables those pupils that require specific help to be taught by the SEN coordinator. As soon as these pupils are able to rejoin the main classes they are moved back. This results in very focused teaching and learning at an appropriate level and pace for these pupils.

50 The school has sufficient qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum for all pupils. Pupils with SEN are well supported. The school has been able to employ extra support staff through the use of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant enabling them to provide very good support for the EAL pupils in school. This decision has resulted in these pupils making very good progress in school and achieving levels of attainment comparable with other pupils in the school. The provision for the induction, support and professional development of staff is very good and relates to the priorities of the school improvement plan, the training plan and to the individual needs of the staff. The requirement to share results with other staff and to evaluate the impact of training on teachers' performance ensures that the school achieves maximum benefit from these opportunities. In the last two years the school has successfully inducted two newly qualified teachers. They have been very well mentored within the school, have been given very good support, training and guidance and been provided with appropriate non-contact time.

51 Financial planning, administration and control are good. The school buys in the services of a bursar. This bursar provides good advice and support in budget preparation, in supporting the head teacher with budget statements to the governing body and in monitoring spending patterns. The head teacher and governing body work well together in planning the budget and in monitoring the spending. The school is a recently opened new school with the buildings owned by a private company. This new Private Finance Initiative (PFI) agreement means that the school has use of the building until 6.00 pm and that the building costs are deducted automatically from the budget share. This deduction is comparable to the building costs previously incurred. However, the maintenance costs associated with the new building are expected to be lower. The governors are closely monitoring spending patterns in this area. School improvement planning is directly linked to the budget. However the governors have yet to fully identify criteria by which they can measure value for money. The school makes good use of new technologies. Administrative systems are computerised and the day-to-day running of the school is carried out efficiently by the office and budget managers. Computers in school are networked and are linked to the Internet. The school has also developed its own web-site. In view of the unit costs of the school, the standards that pupils achieve and the progress they make, the quality of leadership and management and educational provision and the very good improvement since the last inspection, the school provides good value for money.

52 The accommodation and facilities in the new school are excellent. They provide a stimulating, bright and colourful environment for pupils of all ages in the school. The provision of external play and work facilities for the foundation stage has enabled the school to broaden the educational and learning opportunities for these pupils, an improvement since the last inspection. The school has also sufficient accommodation to withdraw pupils for SEN sessions, to provide a separate library and to establish an ICT suite. The school has been built with all pupils in mind and is completely accessible for wheelchair users providing equality of opportunity and access. Cleaning, caretaking and security are provided by the PFI partner and are done to very high standards. The design

of the school enables movement around the building to be done safely eliminating any health and safety problems,

for example the steel pillars have been soft padded preventing any injury from collisions. Staff have embraced the new health and safety policy and have eliminated bad practices, for example carrying hot drinks around the school, noted in the last inspection.

53 The school has and makes effective use of very good resources. The hall is timetabled well ensuring that all classes have access to it for assemblies, PE and some singing sessions. The design of the hall ensures that pupils with hearing difficulties can hear instructions regardless of distance from the teacher. The ICT suite is used effectively to teach the discrete skills. This room is also timetabled for parent and community use providing opportunities for parents to become involved with the school and also to provide instruction in English. Resources in subjects are at least good and in some subjects they are very good. They have improved significantly since the detailed curriculum audits have highlighted deficiencies in resource provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54 The governing body should include the following key issues in the post-inspection plan.

Improve the use and effectiveness of pupils' speaking skills by:

- Providing more opportunities for speaking in order for pupils to clarify thoughts before they start writing and make sense of what they have read to improve comprehension;
- Providing more opportunities for pupils to explain calculations and justify methods. (Paragraphs: 1, 2, 4, 5, 21, 22, 26, 58, 69, 71, 83)

Improve the acquisition, development and application of investigational skills by:

- Providing more opportunities in science for pupils to carry out investigations so that they consistently develop and apply the key investigational skills of scientific enquiry;
- Providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding of number purposefully in mathematics. (Paragraphs: 6, 22, 26, 81, 87, 88, 90)

Other issues the school should consider:

- Further improve attendance; (Paragraphs: 18, 37)
- Reduce the number of targets pupils are expected to achieve; (Paragraphs: 40, 78, 85)
- The balance and the use of time in the morning sessions, for example the length of the literacy sessions. (Paragraphs 26, 77)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	32	41	27	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52	200
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		62

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	204

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	42	34	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	31	33	37
	Girls	29	29	31
	Total	60	62	68
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (77)	82 (79)	89 (79)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	31	34	33
	Girls	29	30	28
	Total	60	64	61
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (77)	84 (75)	80 (73)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	5
Indian	0
Pakistani	108
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	20
Any other minority ethnic group	28

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: N – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	27.6

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	116

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	52

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.4
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	792058
Total expenditure	772536
Expenditure per pupil	2146
Balance brought forward from previous year	18372
Balance carried forward to next year	37894

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	356
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	15	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	39	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	28	6	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	36	9	0	7
The teaching is good.	70	28	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	38	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	39	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	27	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	58	37	4	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	68	25	4	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	30	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	37	11	0	15

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

55 At the time of the inspection there were 52 children attending the nursery for each part-time session. Initial assessment on entry to nursery and baseline assessments are undertaken in the first language of the pupils. This enables the school to gain a picture of the children based on their true potential and ensures that issues related to EAL do not get confused with SEN issues. These assessments indicate that pupils have below average attainment. If the assessments had been administered in English, attainment would be well below average. Pupils enter the nursery with below average attainment in language, literacy and mathematics. The curriculum and experiences provided for pupils enables them to have focused teaching and learning in all the early learning goals (ELGs). The planning shows that skills, knowledge and understanding are taught and developed consistently in the nursery and through the Reception year. By the time they leave the Reception classes a substantial majority of pupils achieve the ELGs in language and literacy, mathematics, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. A substantial number of pupils, if they haven't done so already, are also well on their way to achieving Level 1 of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics. This represents very good progress and is an improvement since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

56 On entry to the school, many children have limited experience of socialising with and collaborating with others in their work and play or developing friendships or relationships with other children or adults. Although many of these children start nursery with little or no understanding of English they are supported very well by teachers and bilingual classroom assistants and soon become confident, outgoing, friendly and willing to undertake activities working alongside other children from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. They are keen to learn and their concentration improves as they move through the Foundation stage. Their enthusiasm for work is visible, for example children in the nursery were talking to each other animatedly and cooperating very well in an activity where water safety and hygiene was being taught. In this activity children were taking turns to bath a doll. The teacher led the dialogue and asked very good searching questions. The children responded very well waiting patiently for their turn, being thoughtful of other people in the group and building on answers already given. In Reception classes pupils cooperate very well in group situations and pool information and knowledge to reach more detailed and alternative solutions, this was particularly evident in an ICT lesson where pupils were helping each other to produce pictures and colour them. Older pupils in Reception classes are also capable of working purposefully on their own. Adults provide very good role models and help children to distinguish between right and wrong. In 'show and tell' sessions and PSHE time children are encouraged to talk about their day and their work, about what they like and dislike and about how they feel. By the age of five most children have achieved the ELGs in this area.

Language and literacy

57 Although children enter the nursery with little or no understanding of English, through very good bilingual support in their first language, they are soon able to communicate with adults and other children using their own language and very quickly develop an understanding of English as a spoken language. This enables teachers to

provide opportunities and focused activities aimed at encouraging the pupils to communicate. By the end of the nursery most children are able to talk confidently about their work in English. Those pupils who are not able to do this find the bilingual support invaluable. This support enables them to fully join in activities and discussions allowing them to contribute answers where appropriate. In an art and design activity children were talking to the teacher and each other about their designs. They were able to explain their choices of pictures and how they were going to stick them to the paper. Through effective questioning these children were able to evaluate their work and make small improvements. Role-play is used well in order to place children in situations where they have to communicate with other children in the class. Teacher and bilingual assistants intervene well keeping the conversation on track and prompting pupils to make appropriate responses. Nursery rhymes and songs are used well to develop confidence and understanding of English and most children join in enthusiastically. A structured approach to the development of letter recognition and initial letter sounds results in most pupils being able to write letters and recognise some of the letters in their name. One very able child was able to recite the alphabet and write her name using upper and lower-case letters.

58 Planning in Reception classes ensures that the skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the nursery are built on throughout the Reception year. Individual targets are based on previous learning and the abilities of all pupils including those with special educational needs. By the end of the Reception year children are being taught literacy in a format very similar to the literacy hour. However, sensibly, more emphasis is placed on providing pupils with focused activities appropriate to their age, for example following a shared text session some children were challenged to find related words and letters hidden in the sand. In another group, children were engaging in a dialogue with a bilingual assistant about associated letters and words while other children went outside and became involved in role-play aimed at reinforcing appropriate vocabulary. This is an improvement since the last inspection. By the end of Reception children are developing a good understanding of letter formation and initial letter sounds, they join in the reading of the shared text well and they know how text and books are organised, for example the front of the book, the title, where to start reading and that full stops or commas mean a pause. More-able pupils are beginning to recognise alliteration. By the end of the Reception year the reading, listening and writing skills are beginning to outpace the speaking skills of the children. However this constitutes very good progress from entry into the school to the end of Reception.

Mathematical development

59 The development of children's mathematical skills has a very good start in the nursery. Children are presented with focused activities designed to improve number recognition, counting and 1-1 matching. They participate enthusiastically in counting games and rhymes. In one lesson an activity had been planned to allow children to count elephants and place them next to the appropriate number. They could reliably count and match up to five objects. These activities complement the drive to improve and develop speaking and listening skills and are very well supported by bilingual classroom support assistants. One able pupil was able to count to 30 and write numbers to 20 and was able to order small numbers. Relevant vocabulary is developed in a cross-curricular way, for example positional language is used in knowledge and understanding of the world but is also relevant to mathematics.

60 Throughout the Reception year mathematical skills and knowledge are developed. Prior learning is considered and appropriate targets are set. Children are developing their counting skills to 100 and their skills in telling the time. In a lesson designed to increase

knowledge and understanding of time, most children were able to recognise numbers to 12 and some could tell hourly times. Most of the pupils were able to count backwards from 20.

61 By the end of the Reception year most of the children have achieved the ELGs and some are on the way to Level 1 of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62 Although the children have little experience of the living world and the world around them when they enter nursery they are supported very well by the rich curriculum and effective teaching to develop knowledge and a range of skills through appropriate activities. By the time they leave Reception most pupils have achieved the relevant ELGs. Planning and teaching in the nursery enables the children to have experience of the locality of the school, the living world and physical science, ICT and a sense of time. For example in one lesson, children were being challenged to develop skills in manipulating the mouse and moving the cursor around the screen to select appropriate items. They have experienced learning situations where they have been challenged to identify the features of living things, for example the number of spots on a ladybird and the number of legs and wings, and investigations into floating and sinking. They can use magnifying glasses effectively in the course of their work. They have extended their knowledge of the locality by looking at houses and comparing these with the buildings they know from their own experiences.

63 Throughout the Reception year children are presented with opportunities to develop their scientific skills and knowledge and to learn about the locality. In addition they compare their cultural and ethnic origins and beliefs for example in work on light and Diwali. In ICT they are expected to use graphics packages, for example *'Paint'* to produce pictures and to colour these. They are able to amend and correct mistakes using appropriate function keys. Discussion and dialogue is used at every opportunity to develop the speaking and listening skills of the children.

Physical development

64 Both nursery and Reception children develop physical skills and attain levels of attainment appropriate to the ELGs. Children enter nursery with few physical skills but they soon learn to manipulate tools, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue and are provided with very good opportunities to develop body control and movement through outdoor play and PE. In one lesson in the nursery, children were cutting out pictures from books and magazines and sticking them to paper to make a collage. These children were able to cut accurately, use glue spreaders and position the pictures with little help from adults. Other children were using construction sets to make square and circular holes to blow bubbles through. The outdoor play facilities have improved since the last inspection and both nursery and Reception children have access to a wide range of equipment and toys. The school is using these well to develop the climbing, balancing and jumping skills of the pupils and their speaking and listening and social skills. In PE these skills are developed well through Reception and children are able to run, hop throw and catch with a good degree of accuracy and confidence.

Creative development

65 Throughout the foundation stage children explore a range of materials and media successfully. They are provided with opportunities to draw, paint, make collages, design, make models and artefacts, use ICT and evaluate their work. Wherever possible cross-

curricular links are explored and utilised. Teachers effectively encourage children to talk about their work, to be imaginative and to discuss ways of improving it. The standard of drawing and painting is very high. Children achieve the ELGs in this area.

Teaching

66 Teaching in the foundation stage is consistently good and is in many cases very good with 50% of teaching very good in the nursery and 45% very good in Reception. This represents much improvement since the last inspection. Planning for teaching and covering the ELGs is now in a consistent format throughout the foundation stage. All plans have clear learning objectives. The skills, knowledge and understanding in each area are consistently and incrementally developed. Targets set for children are based on prior learning and are appropriate to the age and needs of individuals and are based on small step gains. Consideration is given to the ability of the children with activities provided for the less and more able. The use of bilingual classroom assistants to support the learning of pupils is consistently very good. Their work is carefully planned and matched to the lesson objectives. They work very closely with EAL children and encourage them to listen, speak, communicate and work collaboratively in lessons. The quality of this interaction results in the attainment of these children being at least in line with the other children in class. SEN children are also well supported. Their progress towards the targets set is good.

Curriculum provision

67 The curriculum takes into account all six areas of learning. The majority of pupils enter nursery with very few skills and limited knowledge and understanding of English therefore there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and language skills, on personal and social development and on mathematical skills. The foundation stage manager has worked closely with the teachers and the headteacher to produce a policy, scheme and curriculum that will ensure that learning is incremental and based on prior knowledge. This has ensured that there is continuity from nursery through the Reception year. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There has been a strong commitment to improvement. Assessment is directly linked to lesson objectives, to the targets set for individuals and to the ELGs. This combined with very effective systems of tracking children enables an appropriate challenge to be set in lessons and for assessment to inform planning.

ENGLISH

68 The results of the national tests for English in 2000 indicate that standards were below the national average in writing and well below in reading. The proportion of seven-year-olds reaching the higher Level 3 was below the national average in both reading and writing. The school has a very high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. When compared with schools serving pupils from similar backgrounds standards in reading were close to average and in writing they were above average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was close to average in writing and above average in reading. During the inspection the results of the national tests for 2001 became available. They show an improvement in the standards of both reading and writing. This is confirmed by the inspection evidence which indicates standards in reading and writing that are now close to the national average. The results of national tests over the last four years show a trend of rising standards though the rate of improvement has been below the national trend.

69 The present standards are significantly better than those reported during the 1998 inspection. However standards of speaking are below those in listening, reading and writing. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop and apply speaking skills in order to clarify thoughts before starting writing or make sense of what they have read to improve comprehension. The school now caters for the full range of abilities effectively. This is because classes are re-sorted into groups of broadly similar attainment for English lessons and because, within these groups, teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of individual pupils. Classroom supporters are fully briefed before lessons begin. They support both pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language effectively, maintaining their own records and liaising closely with class teachers about future planning. They make an important contribution to the improving standards in English often providing informal support to other pupils in addition to those designated for their help.

70 Pupils enter the nursery with standards in English which are very low particularly in their speaking skills. This, in turn, affects their standards in reading and writing. As a result of teaching which is consistently good and the systematic teaching of basic skills pupils make good progress throughout the school.

71 By the end of the foundation stage pupils have made good progress in listening skills though most still have a limited vocabulary. They listen with enjoyment to stories, poems and songs and are attentive when teachers set tasks. Most pupils can explain their work in simple terms and can discuss it with friends, taking turns to speak and to listen. By the age of seven almost all pupils have good listening skills. They can talk about the main events in their stories and include greater detail when explaining their work or their opinions. Pupils question and explore ideas using a growing vocabulary and a few pupils can adapt their speech appropriately to the needs of the listener. Rightly, teachers have identified the need to develop pupils' speaking skills in explaining clearly and justifying their opinions with reasoned argument and in order to further improve their writing and comprehension. They encourage this through effective questioning which helps pupils to provide greater detail and more rounded explanations.

72 Pupils make good progress in their reading. They are taught how to use the context of the sentence to help them read unfamiliar words and how to split up longer words to recognise familiar letter patterns to help them read the whole. Successful reading is also supported by the systematic acquisition of a sight vocabulary. By the end of the foundation stage most pupils can read a range of simple words. They can link the sounds to many letters and understand the main events in stories. By the age of seven, most pupils can read appropriate texts accurately and talk about the plot and characters in books. Sometimes books which are appropriate and match pupil's' reading level well in all other respects contain some colloquial English. In such cases the pupils' cultural backgrounds inhibits their understanding. Some older pupils can use their developing skills to gain information from reference books. For example, a group of Year 2 pupils found out about how various snakes attack and kill their prey.

73 Pupils make good progress in their writing and standards are now significantly better than those reported in the 1998 inspection. Pupils write in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes. These include stories, explanations, poems, letters, and the labelling of diagrams in such subjects as science and D&T. English is used well across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 used reference books effectively to find out about insects and animals in a science lesson. Another group wrote about the different weather patterns in England and Pakistan in a geography lesson. By the end of the foundation stage most pupils can form their letters correctly and can write the simple, regular words accurately. They are

beginning to form simple sentences and some can use full stops and capital letters appropriately. By the age of seven, most pupils can write in different styles using a growing range of vocabulary to enliven their writing. The spelling of simple words is usually accurate and most pupils can make a sensible attempt at longer, regular words. They can write in sentences, often using the appropriate punctuation. The school has a systematic approach to teaching handwriting in which pupils are shown how to join their letters as soon as they can form them correctly. The standards of handwriting and the general presentation of pupils' work are good. A few older pupils can write with flair and imagination using vocabulary thoughtfully. A number of pupils wrote poems, for example, which they read when the school was officially opened by their local Member of Parliament. In the national tests for 2001 no pupils have currently achieved the higher Level 3. The inspection evidence indicates that some writing does reach this level and that the school may be erring on the side of caution in awarding levels. Progress in listening is better than in speaking. Although pupils are encouraged to speak they need more opportunities to use speech to clarify thoughts and deepen understanding.

74 Teachers plan carefully, in collaboration with support staff, to provide for pupils with SEN and they make good progress. The pupils have clear targets for improvement and are given much encouragement and sensitive support which maintains their self-confidence. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is much better than that reported in the 1998 inspection.

75 Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. Sometimes they arrive in this country at short notice and speak little or no English. Staff and pupils make them very welcome and the school provides extensive and effective support. The school takes great care not to assume that such pupils have special educational needs other than the need to develop their understanding and use of English. For example, all pupils are assessed soon after entry into school in whichever language is most familiar to them and they are placed in English groups higher up the school which reflect their prior attainment and growing skills.

76 Pupils have positive attitudes to English and work hard in lessons. They listen carefully to teachers and to one another during oral work. Some contribute enthusiastically though many are more passive while remaining attentive. Pupils' behaviour is good because the relationships between all adults and pupils are good and teachers are consistent in having high expectations. Pupils cooperate well in discussions which supports their learning.

77 The quality of teaching is very good. The school has successfully adopted the National Literacy Strategy and planning is good. Teachers have clear learning objectives for each lesson which are explained to pupils at the start. This focuses their attention and ensures that they work purposefully. Sometimes lessons are too long, extending to 70 or 75 minutes and though behaviour continues to be good some pupils have difficulty maintaining concentration. The basic skills of reading, writing and spelling are taught systematically throughout the school and this consistency is an important factor in the good progress pupils make. Teachers and support staff assess pupils' work carefully and use the information effectively to plan future work. Marking is thorough. It remains positive in its tone but also gives guidance for improvement. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils do respond to this guidance and make better progress as a result. Homework is set systematically. It reinforces and extends what pupils have been learning in English lessons. Staff are sensitive to the fact that many pupils have daily lessons at the Mosque after school and therefore allow several days before expecting it to be completed.

78 The coordination of English is very good. Provision, teaching methods, the quality of teaching and standards are monitored carefully so that there is a shared sense of purpose and a high degree of consistency throughout the school. Together these make an important contribution to the good progress pupils make. All staff set targets for improvement for individual pupils. These are pasted into English books and act as a constant reminder to pupils. They are discussed with pupils and amended regularly. Though pupils know what their targets are and can explain them the inspection evidence indicates that they are too numerous and that pupils would respond more effectively if they were reduced to three or four. The coordination of SEN is also thorough. Good liaison between the coordinator, class teachers and support staff is an important factor in the progress pupils make.

MATHEMATICS

79 Standards for pupils in Year 2 at the time of the last inspection were broadly in line with the national average with a small number of pupils exceeding the expected level. The school has maintained standards since then and has improved the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Since 1998 the school has generally matched the national rate of improvement. The 2000 test results indicated that the number of pupils achieving both the expected level and the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average, but achievement overall was high when compared to similar schools. The inspection evidence indicates that current standards match the expected levels with some higher standards in number. The school is well placed to continue to raise standards because of improvements to planning, teaching and assessment. Most pupils make good progress. Pupils with SEN and those with EAL make very good progress because of the high quality support provided.

80 By the time they are seven most pupils can count accurately and order random numbers to 100, identifying missing numbers when required. They can count on and back in twos, threes, fives and tens from different starting points and have a sound understanding of place value when working with two and three-digit numbers. They are developing and using a good range of methods for solving problems in number including partitioning, halving, doubling and rounding numbers up and down. For example when doubling 128 some can work out mentally that $100 + 100 = 200$, $20 + 20 = 40$, $8 + 8 = 16$ and $200 + 40 + 16 = 256$.

81 Throughout the school pupils' ability to estimate and to check their own work is developing well. More opportunities are provided for them to carry out investigations than at the time of the last inspection but further improvement is still needed. Pupils can make appropriate estimations when solving problems involving money and use standard measures with reasonable accuracy, for example in measuring length, but do less well in work on capacity. Many pupils can tell the time using 'quarter' and 'half past' and most can recognise and name simple fractions including halves and quarters. Some more able pupils go beyond this to work out fraction problems for example a $\frac{1}{4}$ of 16. They can name two and three-dimensional mathematical shapes and say something about their properties for example *"this is a cube and it has six faces"* or *"this is a sphere and it can bounce"*. Some can recognise, sequence and count numbers to 100 and a few can go well beyond this. Many pupils can add and subtract numbers to 100 quickly and confidently and some more able pupils are beginning to understand inverse operations when adding and subtracting. For example if $64 + 36 = 100$ then $100 - 36 = 64$.

82 The quality of teaching is good and this is a significant improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils are carefully assessed and organised into 'target groups' of different abilities. Planning is detailed, of good quality and takes into account the different ability of

pupils within the target groups. Tasks are well planned and matched both to the lesson objectives and to the needs of pupils. Teachers are confident with the National Numeracy Strategy and a high proportion of direct teaching of mathematics is maintained throughout most lessons. Occasionally, when the mental and oral starter is missed pupils take longer to

settle and opportunities are missed for them to practice and consolidate their skills. Time is generally well managed and the pace of lessons is good so that pupils make good progress. Occasionally, insufficient time is given at the end of lessons to assess pupils' progress and diagnose their mathematical misconceptions.

83 In most lessons, teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment and of their behaviour are high. Pupils respond well to this and their interest levels remain high. Most work independently in pairs or small groups, handle resources sensibly and are keen to answer questions. They behave well and particularly enjoy practical work. In a minority of lessons too much attention is given to minor behavioural difficulties. This slows the pace of teaching and pupils make less progress. Teachers use a good range of strategies, for example in demonstrating ideas or in using resources including number lines and grids. Some teachers make very effective use of empty number lines and this increases the challenge for more able pupils. Teachers are careful to explain and encourage pupils to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary. In most lessons teachers use a good range of questions to assess what pupils know but often miss opportunities to encourage pupils to explain calculations and justify their methods.

84 Pupils with EAL make good progress because of the very good support provided by classroom support assistants. They are well supported in understanding mathematics through their first language and encouraged to respond to the teacher's questions in English. Pupils record their work carefully and accurately, but are not always provided with sufficient opportunity to record a range of calculation methods. Numeracy skills are well taught and pupils make good use of them in other subjects, for example when carrying out a road traffic survey in geography to produce block graphs using a computer.

85 Leadership and management of the subject are very good and there is a strong commitment to improve standards. Procedures for monitoring and evaluation are also very good. The school has a good understanding of what it does well, what needs to be improved and appropriate actions are taken. Non-statutory targets are set for both the school and individual pupils and in 2000 the school exceeded its target. Regular formal and informal assessment of pupils is undertaken and this is used well to establish target groups. The quality of marking is very high, tells pupils what they are good at and what they need to do to improve. Assessment is also used effectively to set targets for individual pupils. These are clear and precise but the number of targets needs to be kept under review. Training has been provided for the staff and this has improved their subject knowledge. The mathematics policy has been updated and this is helping to improve consistency. The school is following the national framework for teaching mathematics and this is helping to improve progression. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in this subject.

SCIENCE

86 In 2000, teachers assessed standards in science as well below the national averages compared to those of other schools nationally at the expected Level 2, and close to them for the higher Level 3. In comparison with similar schools standards were average at Level 2 and above average at Level 3. Analysis of the results within science indicates that standards were well below schools nationally in life and living processes, materials and

their properties and experimental and investigative science, and below average in physical processes. As a result the school is making determined efforts to improve standards in science and the results in 2001 show a significant improvement, especially in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 which is now about a fifth of those assessed. Inspection evidence confirms these results. Overall standards have risen significantly since the last inspection when raising standards in science was a key issue. Pupils now have sufficient time to complete tasks in science, they are systematically taught correct scientific terminology and teachers have received good training since the last inspection which makes them confident in teaching the subject. Leadership by the two science coordinators is very effective, and the effect of these measures is shown in improved teaching and effective planning for science. The school has made good progress in science since the last inspection and since the review by HMI in 1999.

87 Standards in the current Year 2 are in line with the national averages. In their work on materials teachers challenge the pupils well. Pupils understand the significance of 'hard, soft, flexible, transparent' in relation to materials and some even understand 'opaque' and 'translucent'. They know about 'push, pull, squeeze and twist' in manipulating materials. A few can talk about what constitutes a fair test but teachers do not yet sufficiently require them to apply the principles of fair testing in experimental work. Elements of investigative work are confined to observing and recording, for example the properties of materials, and teachers should now identify the skills needed for experimental and investigative science and provide more activities for pupils to use and develop them.

88 Pupils have very positive attitudes and work with genuine effort and enthusiasm. Some teachers recognise that pupils need opportunities to talk about their results and clarify their thinking before they start to record, and when this happens it improves their knowledge and understanding. Pupils normally record their work on sheets prepared by teachers and they could now be given more opportunities to devise their own ways of recording. Computers are sometimes used to record results and more use could be made of them, for example through compiling simple databases. All pupils would make even better progress if challenged more to devise simple tests for themselves through the provision of more open-ended tasks. Younger pupils are introduced to the ideas of prediction and gathering evidence from an early age but there is less emphasis on reaching conclusions. In Year 1 for example, pupils used all of their senses to identify and record sounds around the school and the immediate locality, an enjoyable as well as informative task. These tasks were closely directed by teachers and carried out with enthusiasm by pupils but it was usually the teacher who made appropriate generalisations from the data collected. The tasks could easily have been made open ended with pupils being asked to predict what they might hear, doing the practical work under the same conditions in each location, recording their findings in their own ways and trying, with support, to draw conclusions. When given the chance pupils enjoy investigative work and this is especially beneficial to pupils with EAL or SEN who receive very good quality support from teachers' assistants, parent helpers and other pupils in the class.

89 Otherwise the quality of teaching overall is good and sometimes very good which is a great improvement since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Teachers plan together in year group teams so they regularly share ideas about what works well in lessons. They plan tasks in lessons for three or four different levels of ability, which enables all groups of pupils to make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory. Effective planning gives a secure structure to lessons, with a clear exposition including learning objectives which the teacher then returns to at the end of the lesson to check new learning, make links with the next lesson and sometime set homework for pupils to do with parents. Teachers now need to adapt

this planning when spontaneous opportunities for improved learning occur, such as an open-ended challenge for pupils to explore further. Teaching is based on good subject knowledge that enables teachers to ask probing questions to make pupils think. They increasingly encourage pupils to explain their thinking to others to help clarify their understanding. More opportunities for paired work when engaged with practical activities would encourage the exploratory use of language to clarify thinking and assist those for whom English is not their first language. Teachers have good skills of basic class management so that the school's good collection of resources is readily available for pupils and no time is lost by them in engaging with well-presented tasks. Teachers make good use of assessment to improve standards. All pupils have fresh individual targets each half-term based on their individual needs and each pupil completes a termly self-evaluation of progress. Science is used effectively to promote mathematics, for example through the use of Venn diagrams when pupils are recording the characteristics of different life forms and it makes a good contribution to literacy because pupils learn to write in different styles, for example in recording an account of their work.

90 Coordination of the subject is very good. The two coordinators have a clear understanding of the job and have time to do it. They monitor both teaching and planning effectively and give helpful feedback to teachers and year teams. A portfolio of moderated and levelled work is regularly updated and used to inform teachers' assessments. They have arranged training for the staff, which with the joint planning that occurs within year groups, has greatly increased staff confidence and their ability to teach science well. This is supported by the very effective policy and scheme of work from which planning is drawn. The coordinators lead by example and monitor teaching and the effectiveness with which plans are implemented across the year groups. They recognise the need to improve investigative and experimental work throughout the school and they have the capacity to keep the subject developing well.

ART

91 It was possible to observe only one art lesson during the inspection therefore no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching or of pupils' responses in lessons. However, on the basis of scrutiny of a large volume of pupils' work, standards overall are in line with national expectations and in some respects above them. The scrutiny of work indicates that standards are a little better than those reported at the time of the last inspection.

92 Pupils experience drawing and painting consistently throughout the school. Younger pupils have many opportunities to draw and paint pictures both from observation and from their own experiences. Older pupils explore a wider range of materials such as pencil, charcoal, paint and oil pastels. By the age of seven their use of line, shape, colour, tone and pattern is above the national expectation in observational work, pattern making, and in pictures of remembered scenes. A few pupils can produce work of high quality, for example, when painting the segments of a sliced orange and when using colour and shape more imaginatively to convey the ferocity of a tiger.

93 Collage is experienced by pupils in most year groups. As they move up the school they make increasingly thoughtful choices about the textures and colours they bring together in a picture and progress is good. Some older pupils can use fabric very effectively to create large scale observational pictures of insects. Pupils' progress in print making is just satisfactory. Pupils' experiences are more spasmodic than is the case with drawing, painting and collage and, often, pupils repeat work at a similar level of complexity to that in previous years. The school needs to identify clearer lines of development so that,

as pupils grow older, they experiment with creating new patterns and shapes by rotating and partially overlaying the prints. Little sculptural work is planned for so pupils' understanding of form and ability to use it does not develop satisfactorily. This was also a shortcoming in the last inspection.

94 Pupils study the work of an appropriate range of other artists. These are drawn from different periods and cultures, for example there is evidence of a detailed study of Pakistani art which touches the cultural backgrounds of many pupils and, by contrast, a study of aboriginal art which provides an appropriate balance. In most cases the teaching is handled effectively, pupils either working observationally from artefacts or using the style of an artist in a piece of their own work. ICT is used well to enable pupils to explore further shape, colour and pattern.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95 Pupils' attainment in D&T is broadly in line with national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Although only two lessons were observed during the inspection, a substantial amount of evidence was available in the form of photographs, pupils' work, displays and ongoing work in the classrooms. The pupils are given opportunities to design, make and evaluate their products. These skills are being developed from the nursery onwards. For example in a focused activity in the nursery children were asked about their preferences in terms of materials and designs. They were then asked about which tools they might need and how they were going to fix it. Quality teacher interaction prompted pupils to think about how they were using the tools and the quality of their making. Work samples show that these skills are developed progressively throughout the school. Evidence was provided of pupils' designs including reference to materials and tools, how these designs were made and then the evaluation that took place. The high quality support for SEN and EAL pupils enabled these pupils to produce work of an equivalent standard to other pupils. The bilingual support enabled EAL pupils to understand instructions, join in discussions and to be able to work cooperatively in group situations. For example in a Year 1 class EAL pupils were able to join in a discussion about frames and to provide very good examples and then to contribute in group work.

96 By the age of seven, pupils have had the opportunity to make products of good quality using a variety of materials and construction sets. These opportunities extend to food technology. In doing so they are applying skills incrementally throughout the school. The development of skills has been greatly enhanced through the setting of individual targets for pupils. Taking into consideration the poor level of skill, knowledge and understanding on entry to the school and the fact that pupils achieve standards appropriate to national expectation by the age of seven this is very good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

97 No overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching as only two lessons were observed and they were in the same year group. However planning is good and consistent throughout the school. These plans contain clear learning objectives and are based on prior learning and experience and relate to targets to be achieved. Assessments made are in relation to the learning objectives and targets. In lessons observed, teachers' questioning skills are good and draw out meaningful responses from the pupils demonstrating their level of knowledge and understanding. The very good support provided by bilingual classroom assistants for EAL pupils enables them to show what they know and understand and results in attainment and progress in lessons commensurate with other pupils.

98 Leadership and management of the subject are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The coordinator has led the staff through discussions in relation to the policy and the development of a scheme of work. This scheme is now in place and guides the teaching of the subject in school. The coordinator has provided school-based support and training in order to increase the knowledge, understanding and confidence of staff. The coordinator monitors the quality of planning, teaching and pupils' work and provides feedback to teachers, headteacher and governors. This monitoring has ensured a consistency in practice and teaching throughout the school. Very good use is made of the resources available including linking the subject to ICT with the use of CD-ROMs, videos, the computer for design purposes and the overhead projector.

GEOGRAPHY

99 By the end of Key Stage 1 standards in geography are in line with those expected nationally and the school has maintained these standards since the previous inspection. No lessons were observed but on the basis of the wide range of work seen, including displays and photographic evidence pupils make sound progress. Pupils with SEN make good progress because the tasks provided are varied, rich and relevant. Pupils with difficulties in literacy are provided with a wide range of opportunities to learn about the world and to express their views and opinions through paint, collage, spoken and written language and structured play.

100 In the nursery and Reception classes, experiences with carpet road maps and tabletop buildings and road lay-outs help pupils to develop a sense of plan view and small-scale representation. Well-planned structured play with toy wheeled vehicles helps them develop an understanding of the importance of road safety. In Year 1, they build on this understanding and conduct traffic surveys outside the school. They collect data and construct block graphs to represent the data visually. They express opinions by writing about how the local environment could be made safer for example a *'better road signs would make the drivers slow down'*.

101 Pupils develop sound mapping skills throughout the school. In the foundation stage they make simple diagrams of their classroom and draw maps of their walk around the school and the local area. They use stories for example *'Rosie's Walk'* to map out fictional routes. Year 1 pupils can make sensible observations about the local supermarket, the appropriate route to reach it and the range of goods it sells. By Year 2 most pupils can construct simple maps using symbols to identify physical features such as roads, lakes and buildings. The *'Terrible Tale of the Rain Forest'* is used to develop their understanding of environmental issues through story.

102 From an early stage pupils learn to make comparisons between their own environment and other areas. Younger pupils use the school environment to make observations about local features such as houses and a visit to a farm. Older pupils make visits to local parks to compare and contrast different environments and express their likes and dislikes about the facilities for play. By the end of Year 2, pupils are developing their understanding of the wider world as they study the similarities and differences between the local environment and Pakistan. They express opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of living in a very different environment, how land and buildings serve different purposes, how weather and forms of transport differ in other communities. Through structured play in the 'Travel Shop' they use maps, globes, atlases and travel brochures to locate and find out more about other countries. The school makes good use of both formal and informal opportunities for example by using pupils' holiday experiences

in Jamaica, Pakistan and the Yemen as well as a study of Katie Morag's fictional Scottish island home for contrast and comparison.

103 Coordination of the subject is good. The coordinator is knowledgeable and keeps up-to-date with local and national developments. Planning is firmly linked to the National Curriculum programme of study and provides a coherent experience for pupils as they progress through the school. The development of a new scheme of work, which is already planned, should help improve progress particularly in pupils' mapping skills. Very good use is made of the local environment and local visits including parks, shops, churches, mosques, supermarkets and farms. The units of work which include studies of the local environment and that of Pakistan and other countries, ensures that the curriculum is rich and relevant to pupils. For example, opportunities have been provided for contrast and comparison between the old and new schools. Good opportunities are provided for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum as pupils express their opinions through written or spoken language or in collecting and using data. A good range of secondary sources has been developed but these now need to be updated because of the move to the new school. The school is currently trialling a new approach to assessment and this is helping staff develop a good understanding of the expected levels of work.

HISTORY

104 By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in history are in line with those expected nationally. Most pupils are developing a sense of the passage of time by sequencing events. For example, Year 1 pupils were sequencing main events and holidays that happen throughout the year. Work scrutiny showed that Year 2 pupils could sequence the events leading up to the Great Fire of London and the main events in the life of Florence Nightingale. They show an understanding of the differences in their lives from those of an earlier period. This was evident in the work in Year 1 where pupils were comparing holidays today with holidays in the past. Work scrutiny also showed that a similar comparison had been made with toys. Wherever possible the school attempts to relate information and events to the cultural experiences of the children and teaching takes into consideration prior knowledge. For example, when discussing a yearly time line of holidays pupils were encouraged to include Eid. Pupils are able to ask sensible questions in discussion and when handling artefacts. By Year 2 pupils are using a growing understanding of earlier periods to write with insight about it. For example, they are able to relate how they might have felt being Florence Nightingale and what a hard life this might have been. It is evident in the work scrutiny that pupils have used different sources of evidence and information to inform their work. ICT is used to support the curriculum through the use of word-processing and paint programs. However the evidence from work scrutiny was limited by the number of examples presented in pupils' books. No significant differences were seen in the attainment or progress of pupils of different gender or ethnic background. Standards are broadly similar to those reported in the last inspection.

105 Evidence from the work scrutiny, two lesson observations, displays around the school, from discussions with pupils and the coordinator indicate that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with SEN and for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. The work of support assistants is vitally important in assisting EAL pupils to access information and to take part in class discussions. For example, in a lesson where children were discussing holidays the class assistant was working alongside EAL pupils making sure they understood the discussion, translating and moving between languages where necessary and encouraging these pupils to respond in English. This ensures that language differences do not become a barrier to learning.

106 Pupils have positive attitudes to history. They raise interesting questions, take part in discussions enthusiastically and listen to what is being said by others. This subject contributes well to the development of speaking and listening skills. For example, children talked in animated terms about their holidays, about Eid and their trips to Pakistan. This enthusiasm in the spoken word is not always translated into writing. This is illustrated by the lack of examples of written work in the work scrutiny.

107 No overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching as only two lessons were observed and they were in the same year group. However, planning is good and consistent throughout the school. Specific mention is made in the plans to the support provided for SEN, EAL and higher attaining pupils. The quality of support within class for SEN and EAL pupils is very good. This support is well managed by the teachers through clear guidance in planning. Individual targets are set for pupils in order to make their learning appropriate to their prior knowledge and needs. These targets are reviewed regularly. However there was little evidence in the work sample to show how far these targets have been met. The clearly structured scheme of work guides the teaching in specific year groups, enabling knowledge and skills to be taught progressively and providing satisfactory curriculum balance and coverage. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

108 The subject is well led and managed. The coordinator has worked hard to put a scheme of work in place and to rewrite the policy. In developing these documents the coordinator ensured that all staff were involved from nursery through to Year 2. Staff have been supported through the provision of school-based training, guidance from the coordinator and from the purchase of relevant, good quality resources. The coordinator is enabled to monitor planning, teaching and work. A report is provided to the governors each term. This monitoring is impacting on the quality of planning and emerging work as seen in the portfolio. The enhanced role of the coordinator is an improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109 Standards in ICT are very good for the majority of the pupils and are good in some cases. However some pupils are developing skills, knowledge and understanding that are better than those expected of pupils of a similar age nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line. Skills development is started in the nursery where children are provided with opportunities to work with various software packages. These children are able to use a mouse effectively to move around the screen, locating the cursor accurately. They identify letters on the keyboard and are able to type them on to the screen. Reception children were able to draw pictures using a paint software package. These pictures showed very good mouse control. They were then able to colour these pictures being aware that if they had not drawn the picture accurately then the colour would run. They remedy errors and use tool bars and menus well to access required functions. Pupils systematically develop skills as they move through the school. By the age of seven standards are in line with expectations with most pupils being able to save and retrieve work. Additionally, more able pupils were able to talk about their work and give explanations of what they were doing and were able to talk about how ICT is used in the outside world. Pupils can produce block graphs, pie charts and are able to use ICT to support other curriculum areas. Bearing in mind that pupils are coming in to nursery with low levels of attainment and leaving at seven with attainment at least in line with national expectations this constitutes very good progress overall.

110 In the three lessons observed teaching was very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has a new ICT suite with enough computers for two pupils to share, an electronic white board and a projector system. These facilities enable the discrete skills of ICT to be effectively taught. Teachers have quickly developed a very good working knowledge of these new facilities enabling them to demonstrate to pupils how to use software and the skills they will need to develop to successfully complete work. In a Year 1 lesson, taught by the ICT coordinator, demonstration was very well used to show pupils how text can be amended and improved using specific keys and functions. All pupils have individual targets for improvement based on their own needs. These targets are regularly reviewed with the pupils and help teachers to plan. Planning is carefully done in order to build on previous work and knowledge of pupils and takes in to consideration the needs of pupils. These plans also inform the work of classroom support assistants. These assistants provide valuable support to those pupils with SEN and for whom English is an additional language. The support for EAL pupils impacts on the quality of work and the level of discussion possible. This results in there being little or no difference in attainment or progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Teachers are well guided and supported in their work by the coordinator, a very good curriculum policy, a scheme of work that builds skills, knowledge and understanding incrementally and effective monitoring, evaluation and feedback.

111 Pupils have very good attitudes when learning to use ICT. They are keen and enthusiastic about their work. Relationships in lessons are very good. During whole-class demonstrations pupils behave very well, listen attentively and ask sensible questions in order to help their understanding. In the ICT suite they work cooperatively very well, they take turns, discuss their work in a sensible way and help each other by offering constructive comment and pooling a joint understanding and knowledge. In a lesson where Reception pupils were being challenged to draw and colour a picture using *'Paint'* they were able to help each other to check for gaps in drawing and discuss which functions they needed to use.

112 The management and leadership of ICT is very good. The coordinator has very good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic about the subject. She has attended training in order to improve her own skills and confidence and has encouraged other staff to do the same and has also led school-based training. The coordinator plays a key role in teaching the subject and using these teaching opportunities to demonstrate the use of the new facilities in the ICT suite. Time is provided to enable her to monitor and evaluate the quality of planning, teaching and pupils' work and to provide termly and end-of-year reports to governors. This has done much to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The coordinator has worked with the staff to put an agreed policy and scheme of work in place. This scheme breaks down the curriculum into units of work appropriate to each year group. As a result of this pupils are making good progress in lessons and are presented with a range of ICT experiences. For example, pupils develop their skills and knowledge of control by using the 'Roamer' and other programmable devices and can talk about the application of this in real life as in the programming the video recorder. Each classroom is linked to the school network enabling pupils to access the Internet and use this information to support other curriculum areas. The coordinator was instrumental in creating a school web-site. Pupils are actively encouraged to provide work to be entered on to this site. Planning is of a consistent format and ensures continuity and progression throughout the school.

113 The school has carried out an audit and used this information to inform the detailed action plan for the subject. The action plan is based on the strengths and weaknesses and is directly aimed at improving teaching, learning and standards. This is directly linked to the

monitoring and evaluation that takes place within school. Training for teachers is ongoing and keeping pace with improvements in the ICT facilities within the school. The school is developing clear links with parents and the community by providing ICT sessions for them during the day. The benefit of this is that parents get used to coming into the school and they are encouraged to develop their own understanding of English as spoken language at the same time.

MUSIC

114 Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music-making activities. They develop appropriate skills in composing, performing, listening and appraising. They use their voices well and accompany songs with a good range of percussion instruments. They sing well both in classes and in the weekly session when classes gather together. This session is characterised by enthusiasm and enjoyment as pupils sing together songs that have been well learned in classes. They all take part with gusto and many can confidently align body movements with the rhythm and clap on the correct beat. Some are still singing to themselves as they move off back to their classes. Pupils also compose simple tunes and rhythms using a simple recording system which they all understand and use competently. They then perform them, sometimes using untuned percussion instruments effectively. Pupils learn to create percussion parts to songs, using correct notation such as quaver and bar. However they rarely record their efforts in order to listen to, assess and improve what they have done. Pupils experience music from a range of cultures but the school's generous stock of instruments still does not include sufficient resources to give pupils experience of making music from other cultures.

115 Although most of the staff are not music specialists the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and sometimes good. Music is taught by class teachers who because of the efforts of the coordinator and further training now mostly have sufficient expertise to teach basic skills. For example musical notation is soundly taught and understood by pupils. Pupils are also taught to create and improvise music, and in the best lessons evaluation of their performance is sometimes not only by the teacher but by pupils themselves, which increases knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers provide good opportunities to appreciate and evaluate a range of music in assemblies.

116 Management of the subject is effective. The coordinator has worked hard to improve music since the last inspection and improvement is satisfactory because the few weaknesses noted in the last report have now been dealt with. There is now a well-structured approach to teaching music, and the policy and scheme of work provide detailed guidance to help teachers to plan their lessons. Assessing and recording pupils' progress in music is now satisfactory and helps improve attainment, and all pupils now have their full entitlement to music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117 Standards in PE are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils in the nursery can travel along, climb, and balance with reasonable confidence using fixed and portable apparatus. By the end of the foundation stage most pupils can show changes in speed and direction when travelling on feet in the hall. Some are beginning to show clear changes in body shape when balancing on different parts of the body. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can copy and repeat with control simple gymnastic actions such as travelling, turning and rolling. When working in pairs younger pupils show skills in passing, receiving and controlling a ball which are in line with expectations for their age. A good number of pupils are beginning to understand the bodily

changes which take place at the onset of exercise and some can describe these in simple terms.

118 Standards are broadly similar to those reported in the 1998 inspection, however, progress is now more consistent across the school as a result of the adoption of a scheme of work for PE. Pupils also have a better understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. Pupils with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress as a result of the sensitive support they receive. They are fully included in the programme for PE. On one occasion, for example, no adult could speak the language of a recently-arrived pupil. Full access to the gymnastics lesson was ensured by a classroom support using a mixture of mime and demonstration to explain tasks.

119 Pupils have positive attitudes to PE. They listen carefully to teachers and try hard to improve their performance in response to the guidance given. Behaviour is good and pupils cooperate well when sharing the hall, playground space and the equipment.

120 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and often good or very good. Some teachers have a good knowledge and understanding, however, those who are less secure make good use of the scheme of work and its accompanying lesson plans. The more confident teachers use these as a framework but are able to adapt the lesson when their observation of pupils' responses indicates the need to do so. In some lessons the tasks are too directed by the teacher. As a result pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to explore a gymnastic or games task in their own ways. Although activity levels remain high, the range of pupils' responses is restricted and they make less progress. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Expectations are well established and are consistent across all staff so that pupils enjoy the lessons and work hard.

121 The school has good facilities for PE though the grassed areas, except for those in the nursery area, are not yet ready for use. Resources are good and are used well to ensure that pupils work individually and in small groups. This enables them to practise skills many times and improves their progress.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122 Standards of attainment in RE at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Pupils are developing knowledge and understanding of the major events of the year for Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Younger pupils have a growing understanding of the similarities and differences in family practices in these religions and can talk freely and comfortably about them. This helps their understanding of classmates and the multi-ethnic nature of their school, which enhances relationships. Pupils in Year 2 engage with more challenging concepts such as the nature of 'worship' in the three religions. Throughout the school pupils respect each other's beliefs and values, and cultural diversity is positively celebrated which helps to create a strong and united school community. Most pupils have positive attitudes to the subject because they can see its relevance from the way in which it is taught and can relate it to their own circumstances. Consequently all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress.

123 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is generally good so they are confident in telling religious stories in ways which capture pupils' attention. Their use of the school's rich set of resources is good with interactive displays of pictures, books and artefacts which stimulate interest and require pupils to use them to find answers to questions. Teachers are good at identifying

key values for pupils to discuss in relation to their own lives and challenge older pupils to consider difficult questions involving religious, social and moral issues. For example, they had to consider all the implications of finding a £5 note in different circumstances and pupils responded with insight and integrity, discussing common values within religions. This also ensures that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers ensure that pupils are introduced to the Bible and the Qu'ran and know the significance of them. Planning identifies clear learning objectives and teachers have appropriate expectations of pupils' progress, both of which are a marked improvement since the last inspection. Insufficient use is made of paired work to explore issues and teachers might now create such opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in a subject where there is a rich diversity of experience on which to draw. In the best lessons, personal writing for different audiences is deliberately promoted, but in some these opportunities are missed and more thought should now be given to how the subject can contribute to the development of pupils' writing. Visits to local places of religious significance greatly increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religious practices, particularly when they are followed up on return to school and religious leaders visit to talk to pupils.

124 The coordinator for RE has a clear job description and knows what needs to be done. RE is a priority for development in the current school improvement plan and the coordinator has arranged staff training in the immediate future to increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and further improve teaching methods. She organises the stock of good resources including artefacts and helps staff to use them to make their teaching even more interesting. She is effective in monitoring and evaluating planning, and in improving the subject, for example through the production of a very helpful policy and scheme of work. The coordinator also arranges a very effective programme of assemblies throughout the year, sensitively meeting statutory requirements whilst celebrating the major religions in this very inclusive multi-ethnic school. These assemblies make a very strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, for example, in addition to religious themes there are assemblies dealing with important issues such as caring for all people, family life, and coping with personal anger.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

125 The school population of Owler Brook Nursery and Infant School is approximately 304 pupils. This figure includes 104 nursery children who attend on a part-time basis. Currently 67% of pupils have EAL and 57% are at an early stage of English language acquisition. This is very high by national figures. Most pupils come from an Islamic religious background. Most parents originate from Pakistan and the Yemen. Their main languages are Urdu, Punjabi and Arabic. Increasingly, a number of pupils' parents originate from Somalia. The majority of ethnic minority pupils, who start in the nursery at the age of three, do not speak English.

126 Evaluation of bilingual pupils' competence in their first language, and additionally visits to their homes by the EAL Home School Link Coordinator (HSLC), confirm the low standards in formal education, due to the inability to speak English. After a settling in period, teachers formally test the children in order to assess their literacy and numeracy skills.

127 Bilingual children make satisfactory progress in the nursery. Teachers and EAL staff introduce them to the areas of experience where a strong emphasis is placed on language development. Parental participation is an effective strategy in supporting the bilingual learner. The Home-School Link Coordinator, works closely with parents using her

bilingual skills to inform, advise and encourage parents to be a part of their child's education, for example to join the parent/toddler group or adult literacy class or how to use the Admission Booklet. The child's learning needs involve a collaborative approach between the head of the nursery, childcare assistant, parents and EAL staff. By the time they leave the nursery for Reception appropriate transition processes are in place. These are very effective in ensuring that the pupils and their parents settle quickly into the next phase of education.

128 Pupils begin to make good progress in the Reception classes. The school carries out baseline testing in Reception, National Foundation Education Research (NFER) and Qualifications Curriculum Authority tests at the beginning and end of each year. This helps the school to determine at an early stage what the support needs will be for each pupil. The use of the Key Stage 1, bilingual target group teacher, working with the SEN teacher, is essential at this point. Efficient assessment and evaluation of pupil's abilities ensure that each pupil is targeted in groups according to their need, and have the support of a bilingual learning support assistant (LSA). In line with one of the recommendations of the last inspection pupils are now grouped as lower, average or higher attainers. Higher-attaining pupils have targets that match with their ability.

129 By the end of the Reception year, bilingual pupils have full access to literacy and numeracy sessions and the National Curriculum, with full support from class teachers and bilingual assistants. Teachers encourage pupils to join the ICT Club and to take part in all curricular and extra-curricular activities to enhance their learning.

130 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are making good progress. This is due in no small part to good management of the school, good planning and excellent support by committed staff at all levels. Core subject areas have full bilingual support. Working across different groups, classroom support assistants use their bilingual skills effectively to translate nuances between English and first languages and to offer challenges to the pupils. Pupils new to English are able to extend their learning through a variety of teaching strategies that utilise a range of visual and tactile resources that have a strong cultural element that pupils recognise in their day-to-day lives. For example, eight early English learners put on a play based on '*Crocodile Tea*'. Drawings of the animals they represented and held up, gave meaning to the story as each pupil acted out their part. These pupils are also able to reply to their teacher using full sentences, and are also able to use expression in their reading of the story from the big book. The more advanced pupils are reading at an appropriate level and are beginning to join up their writing. Others enjoy reading with their teachers, can use ICT to communicate ideas using text, and in Year 1 are beginning to understand timelines in history. In D&T for example, the teachers use of 'frames' gives pupils a variety of first-hand learning experiences. Throughout the foundation subjects, pupil's tasks are planned appropriately to match their abilities. Overall achievement of EAL pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is good.

131 Pupils' attitudes and responses to their lessons are invariably very good. They listen carefully, especially when they are obtaining translation support and are able to make positive links in communication with their peers and teachers. Their behaviour is very good.

132 Provision for EAL through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, Excellence in Cities, and Education Action Zones is very good. The grants allocated are well spent. They provide an essential and very important area of support for bilingual pupils, and for the raising of achievement of pupils from an Afro-Caribbean background of a range of attainment. The clear vision and dynamism of the head teacher along with good staff commitment enable good progress and achievement for ethnic minority pupils in this

school. Parents are very appreciative of the care and support their children receive and confirmed this in discussions they had with the inspection team.

133 Two bilingual teachers have responsibility for the coordination of EAL and achievement at the foundation level and at Key Stage 1. They work with a large team of unqualified support teachers and classroom support assistants for Arabic, Urdu and Punjabi.

134 Senior managers monitor teaching and the allocation of EAL support to classes. Support for Somali children is inconsistent, as the school has difficulty in obtaining the level of expertise and continuity necessary on a long-term basis. Notwithstanding, Somali children are not disadvantaged in their access to the curriculum. A Somali speaker supports these children but only for half a day a week. Good support from classroom teachers and classroom support assistants, enables these pupils to have their full entitlement to the curriculum.

135 Training for classroom support assistants in the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies has been a priority in order to provide effective classroom support to bilingual pupils. Seven assistants are National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 or 3 students, and are all Arabic or Urdu/Punjabi speakers. Further training for staff, in personal social and health education as well as drama and music are in place.

136 Policies for providing for pupils with EAL are clear. Objectives are well defined in terms of the raising of attainment of ethnic minority pupils, planning for, assessing and recording of pupils' progress in collaboration with classroom support assistants, parents, class teachers, coordinators and pupils. All classroom support assistants and EAL staff have job descriptions, with the specific brief to support EAL pupils. They have the respect of teachers, parents and pupils and involve themselves in all aspects of the school, for example educational visits and social trips with parents and children.

137 Pupils who are learning EAL respond generally well to the additional support lessons they have and also to classroom activities. Support assistants who can contribute in different languages can be understanding and sometimes challenging. As pupils continue their learning through the school, by the end of Key Stage 1 they gain in confidence and self-esteem in the small groups and are not afraid to contribute in full class lessons. More proficient second language speakers are often supportive and help them.