

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CUBITT TOWN JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Isle of Dogs, London E14

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100898

Headteacher: Mr Ian Hunt

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale  
19385

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 217247

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manchester Road Isle of Dogs London
Postcode:	E14 3NE
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gay Harrington
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> October 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; design and technology	School's results and pupils' achievements
9275	Candy Kalms	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; the school's care for its pupils; partnership with parents
23805	Margaret Lygoe	Team inspector	Science; geography; equal opportunities; special educational needs; English as an additional language	Curriculum
22147	Anne Holland	Team inspector	English; history; music; religious education	
1714	Geoff Headley	Team inspector	Art and design; physical education	Teaching; assessment; leadership and management

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is an above average sized junior school for pupils from 7 to 11 years of age. There are more boys than girls amongst the 303 pupils. There is a small but significant movement of pupils into and out of the school during the year. The school serves part of the Isle of Dogs in East London, and many pupils come from low-income families. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 60%, is well above average. Pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the largest group being about 100 from Bangladeshi families. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is very high and the main first language spoken is Sylheti. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs, including those with statements, is above average. The main needs identified are specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The attainment of pupils on entry, from National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 2 in the infant school, is well below average.

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

The school provides a very good education for pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. Staff have high expectations and work with success to ensure that all pupils benefit from the opportunities provided by the school. Much of the teaching is of high quality, leading to pupils making very good progress and achieving test results that are very high in comparison with similar schools. Pupils work and play happily together in a harmonious atmosphere. Strong and effective leadership from the headteacher and deputy head gives the school a clear direction based firmly on raising standards, and as a consequence the school provides good value for money.

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

- Well above average standards are achieved by pupils in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- Pupils learn rapidly and make very good progress as a result of the high quality of much of the teaching.
- Strong and effective leadership has resulted in significant improvements to the school.
- Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of their teachers by behaving well and establishing constructive relationships with each other.
- Very good provision is made for the pupils' moral development.
- The needs of pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs are carefully identified and their learning successfully catered for.

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

- Insufficient teaching of design and technology takes place, and as a consequence standards are low and National Curriculum requirements are not being met.
- The school has not succeeded in impressing on some parents the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Very good progress has been made in the two years since the last inspection in October 1999. National Curriculum test results have improved considerably largely because there is much more teaching of a high quality. Considerable progress has been made in dealing with the serious weaknesses identified in the previous report. Standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) have improved. National Curriculum requirements are now being met for the teaching of ICT. Less attention has been paid to developing a closer partnership with parents, which is now a priority of the school development plan. Planning for improvement is thorough and is based upon a systematic evaluation of the work of teachers and the effectiveness of the school. The structures to move the school forward and for further improvement to be secured are firmly in place.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	C	B	A*
mathematics	D	A	A	A*
science	E	C	A	A*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

National Curriculum test results have improved markedly in the last two years, and to such an extent that they placed the school in the top five per cent of similar schools in 2001. The school's targets were exceeded by a considerable margin. A high proportion of the pupils achieved results at Level 5 (above the standard expected for their age), with slightly more in mathematics and science than in English accounting for the slightly lower overall English results. There has been no pattern to any difference in performance by ethnic background; Bangladeshi pupils achieved similar results to others in 2000, but slightly lower results in 2001. There has also been no significant pattern to any variation by gender.

Standards are below average in Year 3 reflecting the attainment of these pupils on entry to the school; however, because of the very good progress made throughout the school, standards rise steadily and are above average by Year 6. Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science and at their current rate of progress Year 6 pupils are likely to repeat the same high test results in 2002. There is no discernible difference in the attainment of Bangladeshi pupils, who are equally represented in all ability groups. Pupils with English as an additional language or with special educational needs make the same very good progress as others in their classes. The attention paid to ICT has resulted in rising standards, although the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is below average because they had little experience of ICT until the introduction of the computer suite. Consequently there are gaps in their skills and understanding. Less attention has been paid to other subjects and most pupils do not achieve the same high standards as in English, mathematics and science. The one area of significant weakness is design and technology where pupils do not develop skills systematically and standards are well below the expectations of the National Curriculum.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very keen and interested in their lessons, and are enthused by the high quality of the teaching. They work hard and respond well to the demands of their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils are very well behaved in lessons and in the school buildings, particularly during wet lunchtimes. Their behaviour improves considerably as they become older.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are polite and courteous. They grow considerably in maturity as they move through the school, although they have few opportunities to exercise responsibility. Relationships are very strong, helping to create a harmonious atmosphere in which pupils from different backgrounds mix well together.

Attendance	Attendance is below average and unauthorised absence is above average. A significant number of pupils arrive late to school each day.
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The school is being very effective in improving behaviour. There is considerable mutual respect between staff and pupils. Attendance and punctuality remain unsatisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

It is as a result of the high quality of much of the teaching that pupils learn new skills rapidly, building carefully on what has been taught before. Learning is made enjoyable and interesting by staff who show a genuine enthusiasm for their teaching. The concentration on improving teaching in English and mathematics has been particularly successful; teaching in both subjects is now very good. High expectations of work and behaviour are features of much of the best teaching. Lessons are carefully planned, and taught with briskness and confidence to which pupils respond well by concentrating and working hard, either individually or in small groups. One consequence of this planning is that both literacy and numeracy are developed well, and work undertaken in ICT relates closely to topics being studied in other subjects. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. Gifted and talented pupils are not specifically identified but teaching for more able pupils provides them with a good challenge, particularly in core subjects, and extends their thinking well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is enriched by very good links with the community, is well planned and successfully exploits links between subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are catered for very well. Their needs are carefully assessed, and the high quality individual education plans are used well by teachers to plan activities that support the pupils' learning very effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language. The rigorous assessment and regular monitoring of the pupils' progress enable those with the greatest need to receive focused and very effective support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The pupils' personal development is promoted well. Moral development is very good; there is good promotion of tolerance and respect for others. Spiritual and social development is fostered well and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a level of care and support that meets the wide variety of personal and educational needs of the pupils in the school.

The concentration in the last two years on improving standards in English, mathematics, science,



religious education and ICT has resulted in less attention being given to other subjects, and to design and technology in particular where National Curriculum requirements are not being met. The progress of pupils is carefully monitored in English and mathematics and the information is used well to set individual targets. A constructive and effective partnership has not been established with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The very good leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy head have secured considerable improvements for the school by successfully focusing on high quality teaching as the key to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body has been central to the development of the school. It fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily, although some policies such as that for health and safety are not in place.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring the work of teachers and evaluating the results of National Curriculum tests has enabled managers to identify areas of weakness and successfully plan for their improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The priority of small classes with a high level of classroom support has been successfully financed. Through careful budget planning the deficit has been eliminated and financial planning placed on a secure footing.

Several co-ordinators are new in post and have not yet had the opportunity to influence significantly the provision and standards in their subjects. Staffing levels are very good, the accommodation is good and learning resources are satisfactory. Satisfactory use is made of the principles of best value when purchasing goods and services.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teachers have high expectations.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and as a result their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to grow more mature and to take responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consistency and expectations for homework.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The inspection team supports the favourable views of the school expressed by parents and also agrees to some extent with areas that some parents would like to see improved. Homework, in particular, does not follow a regular pattern. The range of clubs and other activities is limited at present, but the school has plans to extend these once the inspection has been completed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has responded very effectively to the need to raise standards as highlighted by the last inspection. Standards have risen sharply in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as well as in ICT and religious education, all of which were identified as areas requiring attention. The vigorous action taken to improve teaching in these subjects has been rewarded. Standards in other subjects have not risen at the same rapid rate.
2. National Curriculum test results for pupils in Year 6 have risen rapidly in the last two years. Results in 1999 in English and science were well below the national average, and they were below average in mathematics. By 2001, results were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. Results in all three subjects placed Cubitt Town in the top 5 per cent of similar schools. The slight difference between the subjects was because a higher proportion of pupils achieved Level 5 (above the nationally expected level) in mathematics and science than in English. There has been no significant pattern to any variation in results by gender, although girls have done better than boys in English, as is the position nationally.
3. There has been no consistent pattern to any variation in the test results of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Bangladeshi pupils, for example, achieved similar overall results as other pupils in 2000, although slightly lower results in 2001. No variation was discernible during the inspection either in lessons or from a scrutiny of pupils' work. Bangladeshi pupils are represented in similar proportions to their number on roll in ability groups in Years 3 and 4 as well as in English and mathematics sets in Years 5 and 6. They are also represented in similar proportions on the special educational needs register.
4. Test results are not only very much improved but they also represent very good progress from the pupils' earlier test results taken at the end of Year 2. This same very good progress was evident during the inspection, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Several factors contribute to this. Pupils achieve very well in these subjects because much of the teaching is of a high quality, most pupils are keen to learn and the organisation of pupils into ability groups enables teachers to pitch work more closely at the right level for each pupil. This enables the more able to be extended well and challenged by the teaching, while slower learners receive extra support and work that is carefully adapted to their needs. The thorough assessment of pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs enables teaching, support from classroom assistants and the materials used to be adapted carefully. This enables these pupils to make very good progress, particularly in the core subjects, and to be successful in meeting the targets set for them. Most pupils start from a low base when they enter the school. Attainment in the current Year 3, for example, was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the start of the year. By Year 6 standards are above average, with a clear indication that at their current rate of progress, standards are likely to match the 2001 test results by the end of the year.
5. Literacy is promoted very well, not just in English lessons but also in many other subjects. This is particularly successful in supporting early and more advanced learners of English as an additional language. All staff seek opportunities to support the development of reading, writing and the skills of speaking and listening. The correct use of subject-specific vocabulary is a common feature of most lessons, with definitions often displayed around each classroom. Extra time is devoted on a regular basis to reading and to extended writing sessions. Probing questioning, and the teachers' expectations that pupils should answer in full sentences, is also effective in promoting the pupils' speaking skills. Numeracy is also promoted very successfully, in particular through the daily mathematics lesson but also through the opportunities taken by many teachers to extend the pupils' number skills at other times. As a result, most pupils become confident in their use of number and can apply their skills to solving problems in subjects other than mathematics.

6. Standards in ICT have risen significantly in the last two years. Pupils now enter the school having had experience in the computer suite in the infant school. Consequently teachers in Years 3 and 4 can build upon the skills developed by the younger pupils. Pupils benefit from teaching in the new computer suite in the junior school, supported by the recently purchased interactive white boards. All pupils achieve well and make good progress, although the attainment of the pupils in Year 6 has yet to reach standards expected by the National Curriculum because of the previous shortcomings in ICT provision. Pupils in Year 6 are largely one year behind what should be expected and are mostly working on the same material as pupils in Year 5.
7. In concentrating on raising standards in the subjects identified by the last inspection less has been done elsewhere. The progress made by pupils in other subjects is less consistent because the school has not focused on subjects such as art, music and physical education with the same rigour. The standard of work seen in these subjects is patchy. Some is of a good quality, but skills do not develop systematically as pupils move through the school and some aspects of each subject have not received sufficient emphasis. The subject that has been most affected by this lack of attention is design and technology. Most pupils experience teaching of design and technology in small blocks at the end of each term and not on a regular basis. Even this arrangement is not consistent and not sufficiently well planned for pupils either to develop the full range of skills systematically or to be taught all aspects of the National Curriculum. Subjects such as this now need to receive more thorough attention, similar, if not to the same extent, to that given to the core subjects in the last two years.

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

8. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are very good and their personal development is satisfactory. It is the combination of these factors that creates a harmonious atmosphere in the school and a positive learning experience for its pupils.
9. Most pupils enjoy school and come keen to learn. They are well motivated and interested in their work. They listen attentively to their teachers and follow instructions quickly. For most of the time, pupils concentrate well during lessons, although on a few occasions younger pupils are less attentive and do not always sustain their concentration. Pupils are keen to participate in lessons, asking and answering questions. Many participate willingly in discussions, as illustrated in a Year 6 history lesson where pupils confidently spoke about how they identified with children of their age being sent away from home during the Second World War.
10. Behaviour in the school is very good. Most pupils are clear about the standards of behaviour expected and behave well in lessons and around the school. This benefits the quality of life in the school and the learning that takes place. A small number of younger pupils did not always behave appropriately in lessons; however, teachers coped very well so that the flow of learning was not seriously disrupted. Pupils work in an atmosphere that is generally free from oppressive behaviour, where any incidents are quickly dealt with. Pupils play well together on the playground; however, documentary evidence does indicate that incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour do sometimes occur both in lessons and at playtimes. There have been four fixed-term exclusions in the past year. The school uses exclusion only when it is essential and works hard, involving parents wherever possible, to prevent it from occurring.
11. The very good relationships throughout the school are firmly based on the high level of mutual respect between teachers and pupils. This contributes to pupils' motivation and learning. Pupils are aware of the impact of their actions on others. There are harmonious relationships between pupils from the wide variety of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. They are all well integrated, and this is in response to the school's measures to include all its pupils. Pupils settle quickly and work well independently, in small groups and pairs. They co-operate and collaborate, sensibly sharing equipment and resources.
12. The pupils are friendly, polite and courteous to visitors. As they move up through the school, they

gain an increasing sense of responsibility and maturity. This was evident in Year 6 where the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are consistently very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils listen carefully in lessons, showing respect for each other's views, feelings, values and beliefs. This was illustrated in a Year 6 religious education lesson where pupils recapped on a recent visit to a Buddhist centre and also showed their awareness and respect for the special places and artefacts associated with other religions. Pupils conscientiously carry out individual classroom duties but older pupils are not involved in the day-to-day routines around the school. Pupils speak highly of their school and sensibly express their opinions about school life. In their role as representatives on the school council, they show a clear understanding of problems and issues around the school.

13. Attendance is unsatisfactory, being below the national average. There are no significant differences between the different groups of pupils. Although levels of attendance have been static since the previous inspection, data for the most recent half-term shows levels have declined slightly. There are several reasons for absences, but a considerable number are due to the relaxed attitude of parents to the importance of regular attendance and because many parents take their children on extended holidays. Patterns of attendance are not consistent and vary between year groups and between classes in the same year group. In some classes attendance falls below 90 per cent. Current data shows that the school has several pupils with attendance below 80 per cent. Unauthorised absences are well above the national average. This is because parents do not always provide reasons for absence and because the current procedures to follow-up unexplained absence are not sufficiently regular and systematic to improve the situation. Punctuality is a further problem in the school. Many pupils arrive late including some who are regularly late. The school is not fully aware of how many pupils arrive late, as many who arrive after the start of the school day go straight to their classrooms rather than reporting to the office.

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

14. Teaching was satisfactory when the school was inspected in 1999; since then, measures taken to increase the effectiveness of teachers and enhance the support given by classroom assistants have been successful in raising the overall quality, which is now very good overall. During this inspection, teaching in all but 6% of lessons was satisfactory or better, and slightly more than two-thirds was at least good. Almost a third of lessons were very good or excellent, mostly in English, mathematics and science, but there was also very good teaching in a history lesson, a religious education lesson and a music and drama lesson. The five lessons of the highest quality were all in the core subjects. For example, an English lesson was taught exceptionally well to Year 3 pupils; they rose to the teacher's enthusiastic and demanding approach and the well-planned challenges designed to help them understand and use synonyms, whilst enlivening their writing and speaking with expressive words. Mathematics was taught very rigorously to Year 6 pupils. With an emphasis on the requirements of the end of key stage national tests the teacher sharpened the pupils' mental arithmetic skills and then cemented their understanding of rotation and reflection whilst expertly increasing the degree of difficulty. These pupils thrived on the lively atmosphere and contributed to their very good progress by setting challenges for themselves and other members of the class. A Year 5 class benefited from an excellent science lesson, in which the teacher displayed first-rate knowledge about exercise and its effect on the heart rate before establishing a class hypothesis and drawing out ideas for testing it. In this lesson, pupils' excitement and enthusiasm for the topic and their serious approach to finding solutions enhanced their learning.
15. A feature of successful classrooms is the very focused support given by the staff employed as classroom assistants and those who work with pupils who have special educational needs or speak English as an additional language. Support staff are able to contribute fully and ensure that the pupils make good progress because they plan with the teachers and understand the purpose and stages of the learning activities. They know the pupils well and ensure that concepts are explained to individuals and small groups. In these circumstances, there are examples of support staff applying good teaching techniques by giving pupils a range of options when an answer is needed. They are also successful at helping to boost the confidence of the lower-attaining pupils or those who are less forthcoming with a verbal response.

16. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers have a good understanding of individual needs through regular assessment, and they target support accurately. Specialist staff and classroom assistants give very effective help, enabling pupils to play a full part in lessons. Effective questioning by teachers engages the pupils' interest and checks their understanding, while the good use of praise and encouragement helps to motivate them. Teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is good overall. All teachers use effective strategies to ensure that work is clearly explained and that pupils understand and use correct subject vocabulary. Specific support for pupils at the early stages of learning English is very good. In a Year 6 English lesson the skilful use of Sylhetti alongside English enabled two pupils to relax, discuss their answers fully, and to learn to use prepositions accurately.
17. There is a good standard of teaching in all year groups but particularly in Year 6 where nine out of every ten lessons observed were good or better. A notable quality of the best teaching is the high expectations of teachers which are clearly expressed at the outset of lessons. From the time the learning objectives are shared with the pupils, as they are in most lessons, there is a purposeful atmosphere in which questioning is widespread and effective, and challenges are appropriately demanding to pupils of differing levels of attainment. In most lessons, teachers are firm in their expectations about both the quality and quantity of their pupils' work. Carefully constructed tasks consolidate learning and secure knowledge when new ground is covered. As a consequence of skilfully applied classroom management little time is wasted and pupils who find it hard to concentrate are kept on task.
18. The substantial improvement in literacy and numeracy has come about partly because the nationally recommended structure of lessons is applied well; teachers deal effortlessly with the methods in English and mathematics and also use them effectively in most other subjects. Subject material is usually presented well, and pupils' recall as well as their understanding of new content is monitored throughout the lesson, and especially during the concluding phase. Much of the teaching is enhanced by good use of routine assessment; this is particularly so in the core subjects but is also apparent to varying degrees in others. Teachers generally know their pupils well enough to be able to help appropriately when they are having difficulty and when they need to be extended with more demanding work. There is often an emphasis on the development of listening skills, with teachers explaining fully and then requiring pupils to demonstrate their understanding with a verbal response. The pupils' very good attitude to learning is as a direct consequence of effective teaching. For instance, the pupils' willingness to please and their determination to succeed come about because they are supported well when working as a whole class or in small groups. A distinctive feature of most classrooms is the mutual respect shown between the pupils and their teachers.
19. In the small percentage of unsatisfactory lessons the shortcomings are because of weaknesses in classroom management caused by professional inexperience and when the chosen teaching methods are inappropriate and therefore unsuccessful with younger pupils. In two lessons the teachers' lack of confidence and knowledge about physical education inhibited pupils' progress. In the weak lessons the pupils did not learn successfully and in most cases their behaviour and attitudes were unsatisfactory.

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

20. The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided for pupils are good, although there remain aspects which need further development. The school has systematically and effectively tackled areas of weakness identified by the previous inspection. As a result standards in English, mathematics science, religious education and ICT have risen. The school has just embarked on a programme of reviewing all other subjects. The provision for these is satisfactory with the exception of design and technology, which does not meet statutory requirements: there is no planned programme to ensure that the required skills and techniques are taught. There is scope in art for

greater focus on the teaching of skills systematically. Not enough attention is given in music lessons to singing. There is no formal programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), but relevant aspects are covered as pupils move through the school. There is good liaison with the local police to cover aspects such as personal safety and drug awareness.

21. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very good. Reading and writing are used very well in all relevant subjects and pupils use reference books competently. Mathematical skills are used well in science where pupils read scales and record measurements confidently. The computer suite is in almost constant use, and pupils are making good progress. There remains scope for increasing the use of the classroom computers to support learning across the curriculum. Good links are made whenever relevant between subjects, for example history and geography, thus making the curriculum more coherent for the pupils.
22. There is good equality of access and opportunity. Curriculum planning is securely linked with assessment, and there is a good understanding of individual needs. As a result all pupils are fully included in the life of the school. Joint planning between teachers ensures that pupils in the same year groups, but in different classes, have similar experiences. The pupils are organised in ability groups across Years 5 and 6 for some literacy and numeracy teaching. This enables teachers to give better support to all pupils. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well, although the school has yet to identify formally those pupils who are gifted and talented.
23. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. There is very good provision to support their literacy and numeracy development. Class teachers and support staff are very well aware of individual needs. The pupils' individual education plans are very well written. Targets are precise and specifically tailored to match individual needs. Progress is monitored and the targets are regularly reviewed and revised. There is good provision for pupils with English as an additional language, and they have access to the full curriculum. In all lessons, subject language is always clearly explained and this ensures that pupils' learning is well supported. Specific help for those at the early stages of learning English is very good. Progress is monitored and reviewed regularly and any special educational needs are identified at an early stage.
24. There were very few extra-curricular activities when the inspection took place, although a good range of clubs is to be introduced later in the term. Pupils take part in a suitable variety of educational visits and a residential trip is to take place for Year 4 pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Links with the local community are very good, and will improve still further as the Education Action Zone initiatives get under way. There are good links with the secondary school to which the majority of pupils transfer, but links with the infant school need to be improved.
25. Provision for the pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection, and is good overall. The science programme strongly emphasises the importance of healthy living, and proper attention is given to drugs awareness and aspects of personal safety. The governors' policy on sex education meets statutory requirements. Provision for promoting pupils' moral development is very good. The teachers and support staff are very good role models for pupils, demonstrating respect, tolerance and fairness, and there is a strong sense of community. High standards are expected, and the staff help pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong. Racial harmony and understanding are promoted very effectively. Good attitudes and behaviour are praised regularly in class and in assemblies.
26. The school council offers pupils the opportunity to have their say in the running of the school. Pupils' social development and awareness are promoted well by the links with local pensioners. Harvest gifts are collected and delivered to the elderly, and the pupils visit to sing carols at Christmas. In return, visiting pensioners talk about their experiences during the Second World War. The assemblies meet statutory requirements and offer pupils suitable opportunities to pray and to reflect on their own lives. Spiritual development is also promoted effectively through poetry, religious education and at times in science. Although pupils' cultural development is suitably promoted through literature, art and religious education lessons in school, the programme of visits to places of worship is limited.



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

27. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and have maintained a commitment to ensuring high standards of care. They create a good atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure, and are able to develop confidence and learn.
28. Day-to-day arrangements for first aid and care for pupils who are unwell are satisfactory. The senior primary helper co-ordinates all areas of pupils' welfare, although her formal training is out of date. She keeps accurate records and ensures teachers are aware of pupils with asthmatic conditions. In the event of a head injury, the school generally contacts parents by phone but there are no formal systems to ensure parents are informed. The school has not established a clear structure for health and safety. There is no policy, and formal risk assessments are not carried out, although informal checks of the site and premises frequently take place and appropriate action is taken where needed. Fire drills are not recorded. Equipment in the school is checked regularly. Child protection is taken seriously. Issues are informally discussed in staff meetings and most staff know the headteacher is the designated person responsible and would refer any concerns to him. There is, however, no policy clearly explaining procedures, training for the designated person is out of date and a formal pattern of staff training has not been established.
29. Very good procedures are in place to promote good behaviour. All staff have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and a shared commitment to promoting high standards. The behaviour policy provides staff with a framework of rewards and sanctions but does not include guidance on when to apply them. Class teachers have individual discretion on managing behaviour in the classroom and generally do so very well. This contributes to the high standards of behaviour seen in the school. Serious behavioural concerns are discussed with the headteacher. Where necessary individual programmes are introduced and closely monitored by the deputy headteacher. Bullying does sometimes occur. Parents and pupils agree that the school deals well with such incidents.
30. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. The school has some procedures to monitor attendance and follow up absence, but these are not sufficiently systematic or rigorous to improve the situation. The school does identify and monitor the many pupils with poor and irregular attendance and is working closely with the education welfare officer to try to improve their attendance. There are, however, few strategies to improve overall attendance in the school or routinely follow up absences in order to reduce the high levels of unauthorised absence. There are no systems to monitor pupils who arrive late, and parents of pupils who are frequently late are not routinely contacted. The school has not successfully impressed upon parents the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
31. The pupils' personal development is well supported through the caring atmosphere in the school and the good relations between teachers and their pupils. Class teachers, supported by their assistants, know pupils well and are aware of their individual needs and difficulties. They use this knowledge to monitor personal development informally and discuss any concerns with the headteacher. Although there are no standard methods for teachers to record or monitor pupils' personal development, where there is cause for concern, individual monitoring systems are put in place. Pupils' achievements and good work are recognised and rewarded in assemblies.
32. The school cares well for pupils with special educational needs at all stages. Assessment is detailed and used well to plan for individual needs. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational need is good. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well. Their needs are regularly assessed and reviewed.
33. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are good overall. A central recording system enables the school to match pupils' expected attainment to what they achieve in each of Years 3 to 6. Under the guidance of the head and deputy, the information is used increasingly to ensure that teachers have appropriate expectations of their pupils and they are able to intervene when they detect under-achievement. This is supplemented by procedures that match pupils' attainment against nationally prescribed levels and set targets for individuals as well as whole classes, year groups and ultimately the school. In the core subjects, especially English



and mathematics, the assessment information is gathered through both regular testing and careful day-to-day monitoring. The latter is seen frequently in mathematics lessons, where teaching is enhanced because pupils having difficulty are spotted quickly and given help. In English, assessment data provides a firm basis for lesson planning and setting appropriate goals for pupils and groups. The use of assessment and subsequent monitoring is mostly unsatisfactory in subjects other than the core. Some teachers keep relevant information that helps them monitor progress in their own classrooms but there is no whole-school approach and not enough is known of how well pupils are doing against national expectations. A very close eye is kept on the progress of the pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. In addition to benefiting from the assessment procedures already outlined, their particular needs are identified when they join the school and their progress is monitored closely and regularly.

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

34. The parents who returned the questionnaires and the very few parents who attended the meeting are generally happy with the school, although some concerns were expressed. Most agree that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. They feel the school is well led and managed and that it helps pupils to become mature and take responsibility. They consider teaching is good, feel that their children like school and staff are approachable. Most are also happy with behaviour and their children's progress. Inspection evidence supports the favourable views parents have of the school. A few parents were unhappy about the information they receive on progress and do not feel the school works closely with them. They also expressed concerns about the levels and consistency of homework and feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum. Inspectors confirm some of the parents' concerns but found the school to offer a reasonable range of activities outside lessons. These include visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. Although only two after-school activities are currently offered, the school has an extensive list planned for after the inspection.
35. The school has still not developed an effective partnership with parents and has not responded effectively to a key issue in the previous report to improve the relationship between home and school. There are few initiatives to encourage parents to work more closely with the school to support their children's education. Parents have very little involvement in school life. There is no parent-teacher association although parents willingly help at the summer fair. The home-school agreement has only just been sent to parents.
36. There is no provision to involve parents of other cultures, particularly Bangladeshi parents, in the education of their children and the life of the school generally. The variety of different cultures represented by parents is not being used as a resource. Few documents are available translated into the main community languages, although the special educational needs co-ordinator can translate at meetings.
37. Parents make a limited contribution to their children's learning at home. Pupils are encouraged to take reading books home regularly and some teachers set homework, although a regular pattern of homework has not been established for all classes. Some parents do share reading and homework with their children, but many pupils are not sufficiently supported and encouraged at home. The homework policy outlines general guidance but does not give parents any specific information about the work children will receive each week.
38. Information that the school gives to parents shows little improvement since the previous inspection. There are no regular newsletters, but letters when necessary keep parents informed about school matters, forthcoming events and key dates. The school provides some information for parents to gain an understanding of the curriculum. Each half-term they are provided with brief information about the topics being covered in lessons but there is some variation in the detail between year groups. Curriculum focus meetings have been arranged in the past but they are no longer a feature in the school. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress through two formal parents' meetings. A third meeting in the summer term offers parents the opportunity to discuss their

child's annual written report, but few take this opportunity. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory. They provide information on work covered, but parents are not given clear information on strengths and weaknesses or targets for future development.

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

39. In the two years since the last inspection the leadership of the headteacher, his deputy and the Governing Body has strengthened considerably. Several important weaknesses, inherited from previous management and still apparent in 1999, have been eradicated. The school has improved significantly because it is now given firm direction with a strong emphasis on raising attainment. The head and deputy form an effective partnership and have earned the respect of the staff, governors and parents. There is good teamwork because of positive relationships; all who work within the school enjoy a clear sense of purpose because they understand their roles and carry out their responsibilities appropriately. The improvement of teaching has rightly been given priority, partly because it was a key issue in the last inspection and also because its impact on standards is widely understood. Sound monitoring of classrooms and pupils' work has contributed to the present position where there is much good teaching and learning, and better national test results. There are plans to extend monitoring beyond the head and deputy and make it a remit of subject leaders also. The implementation of these intentions needs to be accelerated so that standards in the foundation subjects rise at the same rate as the core subjects.
40. Planning for the school's future is good. There have been significant improvements in both the way the development plan is constructed and the effectiveness of it as a tool for managing change. The plan identifies what remains to be tackled from the last inspection as well as other matters that need improvement. The criticisms of planning, noted in the last inspection report, have been faced and there are now clear and achievable targets, with timescales and staff named to lead each initiative. There are firm expectations about the role of subject leaders and staff with responsibility for other aspects of the school; all carry out their work competently within the time available to them. Their greatest impact is in the help they give to colleagues who need ideas for lesson content and method, but there is less emphasis on ensuring that learning is planned progressively, particularly in design and technology, art, music and physical education. Where responsibilities have been newly assigned there is evidence of weaknesses being tackled and progress achieved. All leaders have declared plans for developing their subject or area; these sit firmly within the school development plan and are monitored by the head and deputy.
41. A deficit budget was a constraining factor preventing faster school improvement after the headteacher took up his position four years ago. The difficulties have been overcome and the school's finances are now on a sound footing. Financial planning is not yet closely linked to the stated priorities but wise decisions, such as to reduce class sizes and invest in more classroom assistants, have been taken and have had a major impact on pupils' learning and the standards attained. Financial control is secure and the school seeks to achieve best value in the goods and services it buys and in comparing its performance to similar schools. The various grants given to support whole-school initiatives and pupils' learning are used correctly. Support for pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language pupils is targeted appropriately. Although the school is generously financed compared with other schools nationally, it gives good value for money because it provides good quality education and pupils achieve very well.
42. After a period of unsatisfactory governance there were encouraging signs by the time the school was inspected in 1999. Since then improvement has been sustained. Governors carry out their business properly and a refined structure enables them to concentrate on important matters and make informed decisions. They share the staff's commitment to school improvement and contribute to its success by increasing their knowledge of the way it works and having a strategic view of its developments. Mutual respect enables governors to be critical friends, challenging sensibly when they see fit, and staff to work hard to raise standards, unafraid of being unjustly criticised when implementing new procedures. Overall, governors fulfil their responsibilities well; however, they have not been rigorous in monitoring the way the school is tackling persistent

weaknesses such as pupils' lateness and insufficient communication with parents.

43. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. Funding is used effectively to meet individual needs across the school. Staffing levels are good, and support staff are competent. The management of provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good, and resources are used effectively to meet the needs of the pupils.
44. The quality and quantity of teachers and support staff ensure that the specified subjects are taught and other aspects of school life are carried out well; staff deployment is effective and efficient. After considerable turmoil no teacher has left in the last two years, and this stability is a contributory factor to the school's effectiveness. When new teachers do join the school they receive adequate induction and those new to the profession are mentored appropriately; supervision continues after induction if a teacher requires it. Professional development is managed soundly and available to all staff. There is ample accommodation, with most classrooms benefiting from a shared resource base. These are sometimes used for computer work or to provide a group working space; however, these areas are not used extensively and their potential is not fully tapped. Outside play space is adequate but generous compared with many inner city schools. Learning resources are sufficient and satisfactory in quality but with variability between subjects. For instance the resources available for teaching science and ICT are good, whereas there are inadequacies in design and technology, art and music. The well-stocked library is used efficiently by pupils to support their learning.

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

45. To continue the very good progress made by the school in the last two years, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:
  - 1) Improve standards in design and technology by: (paragraphs 7, 20, 70, 71 and 72)
    - ensuring that all requirements of the National Curriculum are fulfilled
    - providing teaching of design and technology skills on a regular basis in all classes.
  - 2) Reduce absence and improve punctuality to school by adopting rigorous and systematic procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality to identify and deal with unauthorised absence and those pupils with irregular patterns of attendance. (paragraphs 13 and 30)

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

46. In addition to the items above, the governors may wish to consider the inclusion of the following points in their action plan:
  - Involve parents more in the work of the school\* (paragraph 35, 36 and 38)
  - Adopt and implement a consistent homework policy\* (paragraph 37)
  - Strengthen links with the feeder infant school\* (paragraph 24)
  - Ensure that all health and safety requirements are fulfilled (paragraph 28)
  - Identify and provide programmes to support the learning of gifted and talented pupils.\* (paragraph 22)

\* These items have already been identified as areas for development in the school's improvement plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	15	25	18	4		
Percentage	7	22	37	27	6		

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	303
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	180

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	88

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	34

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	30	31	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	23	30	29
	Girls	27	28	28
	Total	50	58	57
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (91)	95 (82)	93 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	23	29	29
	Girls	27	29	28
	Total	50	58	57
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (80)	95 (79)	93 (85)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	4
Indian	0
Pakistani	10
Bangladeshi	98
Chinese	14
White	161
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	25.3

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	850349
Total expenditure	848021
Expenditure per pupil	2799
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	2328

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	303
Number of questionnaires returned	106

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	32	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	52	39	5	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	40	4	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	44	15	2	3
The teaching is good.	57	36	3	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	44	10	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	40	3	1	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	32	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	44	8	1	7
The school is well led and managed.	47	42	2	1	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	41	2	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	29	13	4	18



## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

47. National Curriculum test results for Year 6 pupils in 2001 were above the national average and very high when compared with similar schools. Test results in the subject have risen dramatically since 1999 and in 2001 show a considerable increase in the number of pupils obtaining the higher Level 5. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make very good gains in their learning as they move through each of the classes. As a result many of them achieve the level expected for an eleven-year-old before they leave the school, in all aspects of their literacy development. There is no significant variation in the attainment of pupils in different ethnic groups or between boys and girls.
48. Inspection evidence shows that overall standards in English are above average by Year 6. This reflects very good progress, as a significant number of pupils are at below nationally expected levels of attainment on entry to the school. The school has raised standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening from below to above average, since the last inspection. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy combined with an emphasis on writing, not only in English lessons but also in many other subjects, has had a beneficial effect on learning. The overall quality of teaching in the subject is very good, with only one unsatisfactory lesson observed. High expectations of behaviour and work are features of the best teaching. This has a significant impact on pupils' learning. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed, the structure of the lesson was good, but it was some elements of management, for example resources and the transition from class teaching to group activities, that contributed to its lack of success. In an excellent lesson observed in Year 3, an introduction to synonyms, group tasks were well matched to pupils' abilities and offered challenge at each level. In most classes, pupils generally behave well, remain on task throughout lessons and make very good progress. Activities are very carefully planned with a good choice of resources.
49. Support for the development of literacy in other subjects is very good. Subjects such as history, science and religious education are used for developing subject-specific vocabulary and explanation. The provision for reading is good. Initiatives such as booster classes and setting for the subject in Years 5 and 6 have proved beneficial for pupils at the early stages of learning English and for higher-attaining pupils. A concentration on raising standards in boys' writing is reflected in the considerable improvement made by this group. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and they make very good progress. Their individual education plans have a clear focus on their needs in language and literacy.
50. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening as they move up the school, and reach standards above the expected level for their age by Year 6. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Most pupils make contributions to lessons, and teachers ensure that those more reluctant to volunteer answers are encouraged to do so. Pupils pay attention to what others say and, aided by very good teaching, use appropriate language in discussions. A feature of most of the very good lessons observed was the skilful use of questioning by teachers to move learning forward and to ensure understanding. Pupils also give very good responses during the revision of previous learning and the summing-up of lessons.
51. Pupils make very good progress in reading; they achieve very well and their attainment is mostly above national expectations by Year 6. Class records are carefully kept and there is good provision of books to support their reading, although the school could establish stronger home-school liaison in this aspect of pupils' learning. Most pupils in Year 6 read fluently and accurately, with expression and understanding. They discuss the main points and themes of texts they read and make predictions and inferences. Pupils in all years enjoy reading a wide range of literature. For example, they read modern children's novels, poetry, classics and non-fiction. Very good use is made of group reading in the literacy hour. Teachers generally have a very good understanding of

how to teach reading as well as developing the pupils' taste for literature. Throughout the school, pupils are acquiring the skills for finding information from books, computers and other sources, and they use them in various study projects. Early on in the school, pupils talk confidently about using the Internet as a source of information.

52. The high standards in reading are reflected in the pupils' writing. Standards have risen significantly since 1999. The school has focused on improving English, and writing in particular, which has resulted in various strategies to support its development. Particular attention has been paid to raising levels of attainment in boys' writing; test results reflect the success of this strategy. Increased opportunities have been provided throughout the school for pupils to write across a wider range and for a variety of purposes. For example, an examination of pupils' work revealed a wide range of English use across the curriculum. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are familiar with writing in a journalistic style, writing poems, recording factual analysis and extended creative writing. Teachers ensure that pupils acquire conventions of writing from what they read. There are many examples where older pupils have developed good technical accuracy. This is particularly evident in their use of grammatically correct complex sentences and a range of punctuation. They attain good standards in spelling and in their handwriting, which is fluent and legible; however, there are occasions when the spelling of some teachers is not as accurate as it should be. There is a strong emphasis on good presentation of work and it is marked regularly, and clearly annotated with references to individual targets where relevant.
53. The very careful analysis of the school's results and the monitoring of planning and teaching have resulted in the identification of weaknesses and the introduction of strategies to overcome them. A good example of this is the improvement in standards of writing throughout the school. Assessment is particularly well used on a daily basis. Marking is consistent throughout the school and targets set for individual pupils are relevant and offer challenge. The subject is very well managed and resourced, and there is a clear sense of commitment to sustaining the improvements made in recent years.

## **MATHEMATICS**

54. The concentration over the last two years on raising standards in mathematics has produced dividends. Considerable improvements have been made in the quality of teaching, the progress made by pupils and their subsequent attainment. Standards, in particular, have risen considerably and National Curriculum test results are now well above average. The work seen during the inspection did not fully reflect these results for one main reason. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 3 is well below average and although the youngest pupils are making at least good progress, they understandably have a considerable margin to make up. Overall standards in Year 6 are already above average, and at the current very good rate of progress, pupils are on course to repeat the recent well above average test results by next summer.
55. Teaching is now very good overall, with some outstanding lessons taking place, particularly in Year 6. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and how they should behave. Most pupils achieve very well, and learn new skills and ideas quickly while consolidating what they have already learnt with confidence. Their desire to succeed and to please their teachers contributes significantly to their progress. Pupils achieve very well in individual lessons and make very good progress over time. There is no difference in attainment by pupils of different ethnic groups. The daily mathematics lesson has been successfully implemented in all classes. Mental arithmetic sessions are lively, hold pupils' attention and consolidate skills well. Classroom assistants are effectively involved in these activities, supporting individual pupils and encouraging their answers. Most pupils develop a good range of methods for calculating mentally, and the speed with which they recall number facts, such as their multiplication tables, increases considerably as they move up the school. Main teaching sections have clear learning intentions, which are explained to pupils and revisited regularly during lessons so that pupils have a clear understanding of how successful they have been in meeting the lesson's aims. Teaching is brisk and all explanations by teachers are given clearly. By Year 6 most pupils have very secure number

skills and the higher-attaining calculate using whole numbers, decimals, fractions and percentages with confidence. Several formal written methods are taught to aid calculation, and most pupils have one secure method with which they feel confident and can use to calculate accurately. Pupils develop a good understanding of the characteristics of regular shapes, such as their reflection and rotational symmetries and their angle properties. Younger pupils present data in the form of simple charts and graphs, sometimes with the aid of the computer. By Year 6 pupils can interpret and compare sets of data and present their findings clearly.

56. A further contributory factor to the rapid rate of progress made by pupils is that teaching and tasks are provided at different levels to meet the varying needs of pupils. This takes place in Years 3 and 4 through the careful planning of activities and by the very good support of classroom assistants. Material is carefully prepared for the less able and for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to participate fully and to make similar progress to others in the class. The focus placed by teachers on using and understanding correct mathematical vocabulary and encouraging pupils' speaking skills by requiring full answers, enables pupils with English as an additional language to make similarly very good progress. Furthermore, the most able are challenged and extended in lessons, although the school has not identified any pupils with particular mathematical talents.
57. Teaching becomes even more sharply focused in Years 5 and 6 where pupils are taught in sets organised by ability. This enables work and teaching to be more finely tuned with the result that the most able are extended to achieve very high standards, while those requiring more time to learn and gain confidence can move at a slower pace. Progress is again very good and at times outstanding. An excellent Year 6 lesson with the middle ability group used the setting arrangements to very good effect. This lesson very effectively used a mathematical investigation with matchstick patterns as the task for pupils to learn how to write a number pattern as a simple formula. The activity was pitched at three different levels in the class, with the weakest pupils given direct support from a classroom assistant while the teacher gave additional direct teaching to two separate groups. The most able were challenged considerably by the task and by the end a few pupils could spot several different patterns by generalising from what they had discovered, writing them correctly as formulae. The use of mathematical investigations is not a common feature of lessons.
58. The leadership and management of mathematics have been particularly successful in securing very good improvement since the last inspection. Systematic classroom observations by senior staff and local authority consultants, the support given to staff to improve their teaching, the increased use of very effective classroom assistants and the identification of priorities for development have been instrumental in raising standards. The assessment of pupils' attainment is also used well to set targets and to monitor progress. Further refinements are still needed. More use could be made of both ICT and mathematical investigations to extend learning, and the identification of talented pupils and the introduction of individual programmes to support their learning are areas for the school to consider.

## **SCIENCE**

59. Standards in science have improved significantly since the previous inspection when attainment was found to be well below average. Standards are now well above average, having risen dramatically in 2000 and improved further in 2001. Pupils have made very good progress compared with their achievement at the end of the infant stage. These high standards are being maintained because of the very good standard of teaching across the school. Test results in 2002 may drop slightly because of the higher number of pupils with special educational needs, but standards generally are very good and the pupils' achievement is well above average.
60. An analysis of pupils' work shows that progress is good across the school and in almost all classes. Teachers in the same year group plan well together. This ensures that all pupils within the year have similar experiences, while allowing teachers to share ideas and resources and

discuss teaching strategies. The curriculum is covered thoroughly, with many pupils working at an above average level. By Year 6 pupils' work is generally very neat and well presented.

61. The pupils gain a good factual understanding of all aspects of the science curriculum. All teachers place a strong emphasis on the use of correct subject vocabulary, and ensure that pupils are able to explain their understanding clearly. By the end of a good lesson in Year 3, pupils of all abilities could explain in simple terms the significant differences between solids, liquids and gases. The teacher's questioning and the written tasks were skilfully matched to individual needs, so that lower-attaining pupils were supported while those capable of high attainment were challenged.
62. Wherever possible all lessons are securely based on practical work, and teachers' explanations are usually illustrated by practical examples. This interests and involves all pupils and ensures that pupils with English as an additional language are clear about what is being discussed. The pupils develop a secure understanding of how to carry out and to record investigations, and their skills are developed progressively. By Year 4 they understand some of the principles of fair testing as when they make small parachutes to test air resistance. Year 6 pupils make predictions based on their scientific understanding and most offer logical explanations for what they expect to happen. They use simple equipment confidently as when they measure the forces needed to stretch various different rubber bands. Good skills developed during literacy and numeracy periods are used confidently as pupils make measurements and write up their experiments. One area for development is that there is scope for pupils to be more involved in planning and organising their own investigative work.
63. Pupils respond very well to the enthusiastic teaching, which is a characteristic of many of the lessons. They are swept along, and at times interested in spite of themselves. This was very effectively demonstrated in a Year 5 lesson at the end of a wet day. Initially unenthusiastic about writing up their work on links between respiration and the circulatory system, the pupils were highly motivated when the teacher suggested recording the work as an adventure – "The fantastic journey of Mr Oxy Gen". Learning is made enjoyable and relevant, but the teachers maintain a strong focus on increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers expect, and in most cases achieve, high standards of behaviour, and this enables them to maintain a good pace in lessons, with few interruptions. In an outstanding lesson in Year 5, pupils enjoyed running vigorously on the spot for one minute, but calmed down immediately to take their pulses after the exercise.
64. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen, when pupils became restless after an explanation which was too long and complex. An analysis of pupils' books indicates that teaching is very rarely less than satisfactory, although there is some variation between the expectations of teachers in the parallel classes in Years 3 and 4. Standards of teaching have improved markedly over the past two years. Pupils with special educational needs are given very effective support and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson where a learning support assistant skilfully ensured that pupils remained focused and on task. The teachers are adept at encouraging and involving pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, ensuring that they have full access to the lessons. Teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is good, and at times very good. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson where a small group of Sylhetti speakers made very good progress because of focused support in their home language and in English.
65. Management of the subject is good, and teachers appreciate the quality of help and advice given by the co-ordinator. To improve even further the school needs to focus on monitoring standards of work and teacher expectation in parallel classes to ensure that the very high standards in some classes are achieved by all. Resources for the subject are of good quality and are used well, although further resources need to be provided to enable pupils to use ICT to monitor and record data in the classrooms.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

66. Standards were in line with national expectations when the school was last inspected. On this

occasion it was possible to see only four lessons; however, from these observations and from looking at pupils' work on display around the school it is evident that particular pieces of work reach the appropriate standard but attainment overall is not high enough. Although pupils have the opportunity to undertake different kinds of art as required by the National Curriculum, and they mostly deal with the basic skills and processes competently, the majority do not achieve what is expected by the age of 11.

67. With the exception of the subject leader, teachers are not confident about teaching art. Their lessons are satisfactory because they are skilled classroom practitioners but they do not have sufficient knowledge of how to extend pupils' visual awareness or develop their technical and expressive skills. Furthermore, the failure of pupils to reach the required standard is because the planning of the subject does not ensure sufficient progression. For instance, there is no agreed procedure to ensure that the visual elements such as colour, pattern, shape and form are introduced and applied in different ways, or to ensure that pupils communicate their ideas in two and three-dimensions. Relevant and potentially stimulating activities, based on local education authority publications, are presented to pupils, but class teachers do not always require sufficient creativity or invite pupils to work imaginatively. For instance there is little manipulation of images and too few opportunities to explore outcomes by using a range of tools and materials. Pupils are rightly introduced to the work of artists, such as Cezanne, Klee and Matisse, and they often work satisfactorily in the particular style; however, they are rarely asked to regard these as influences, and as a forerunner to experimentation and the development of a personal response. The best work shows that pupils have sound ability to draw from direct observation, as some have done by looking closely at shells; in these drawings they have achieved good shape and tonal quality.
68. In the most successful lesson seen, a Year 5 class was well taught and made good progress in learning about portraiture. The teacher prepared them well by showing a wide range of styles and techniques. Because focused tasks and good advice about looking closely at human features followed this, the pupils worked at a good pace and concentrated well. A Year 6 class displayed very good attitudes in a lesson which gave them the opportunity to look at a painting by Picasso. They demonstrated secure understanding of primary and secondary colours, and most were sufficiently skilled to mix and apply paint successfully; however, despite the teacher's attempt to have them analyse the techniques used by the artist, they were unable to do so at the level expected of their age group. Although there is exposure to the work of established artists, pupils across the school are not given sufficient opportunities to evaluate what they see and this constrains their ability to appraise their own work. Pupils use sketchbooks but they are not promoted as a way of recording their observations or collecting ideas. Often the content represents the finished product rather than it being an important part of the research and experimental process.
69. Because the teacher with responsibility for art also leads a core subject, the time available for monitoring what is going on in other classrooms and for ensuring higher standards is severely restricted. She offers advice but has not been able to ensure good whole-school planning or assessment of pupils' progress. As a consequence pupils are not developing sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding over time and the school does not have an accurate picture of what level pupils are achieving. Inadequate resources including reference material, further constrains attainment and progress.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

70. Design and technology has a low profile in the school and teaching does not take place on a regular basis. No lessons took place during the inspection, although there is some teaching of design and technology skills at the end of each term and after National Curriculum tests. Very little that could be called design and technology has been undertaken this year. Although some work was on display from tasks completed to support science work in Year 6 and history in Year 5, it was of a low quality. It is not possible to make overall judgements about standards, teaching or the progress made by pupils.

71. Teachers do not plan for the systematic development of design and technology skills. The co-ordinator has identified where suitable activities could fit into the current topic framework, but this work is at an early stage. Plans do not consider how skills are to develop over time or how pupils are to receive their entitlement to the full National Curriculum for design and technology.
72. Arrangements for teaching design and technology are poor, and the school can not guarantee that the National Curriculum is being fulfilled. No progress has been made since the last inspection and the subject has suffered by only recently having a co-ordinator. Much needs to be done if pupils are to receive coherent and planned teaching of design and technology skills through well-resourced activities that fulfil National Curriculum requirements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

73. No geography lessons took place during the inspection, and work was only available for scrutiny in Years 3 and 4. Consequently it is not possible to make judgements about either the quality of teaching or the overall standards achieved by the pupils by the time they reach Year 6.
74. The standard of work seen in the pupils' books was satisfactory. Year 3 pupils gain a sound understanding of their immediate locality on the Isle of Dogs, and use the information in their local history project as they find out about how the area has changed. Pupils in Year 4 develop satisfactory skills in using maps. An analysis of pupils' books indicates that work is tackled systematically and that a good quantity of work was covered during one half-term. The pupils learn to use simple signs and symbols, revise earlier work on simple plans and keys, then move on to using co-ordinates and four-figure map references. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language learn at a similar rate to other pupils in their classes.
75. Teachers make good links with geography when teaching other subjects, such as religious education and history. Joint planning across the year groups ensures that pupils all have similar experiences.
76. Management of the subject is satisfactory. A review of the subject is due this year, and consideration will be given to adopting a nationally approved scheme of work, and to introducing a system of assessment for the whole school. Resources are adequate and there are suitable ICT resources for use in the computer suite and classrooms. At present pupils study Kenya as a less economically developed country. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when no overseas area was studied.

## **HISTORY**

77. Standards are at least in line with that expected by the National Curriculum for pupils in this age range. The school has maintained standards in the subject since the last inspection. In some areas, such as pupils' attitudes and their presentation of work, there has been an improvement. The very good links that have been made with literacy have supported learning in the subject and have had a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress.
78. By Year 6, pupils have a well-developed understanding of the past. Pupils empathise with the children who were evacuated at the beginning of the Second World War, and they can write letters home expressing both their homesickness and the excitement of their new lives. They show an awareness of the intensity of the bombing in their own area and an understanding of why the area was a prime target. They can distinguish between primary and secondary sources of information, and their work shows a developing sense of chronology. In Year 5, they understood the need for a Board of Health in Victorian times to improve living conditions for the poor. Year 3 pupils are becoming aware of how their own area, the Isle of Dogs, has changed over the years. Teaching is effective in developing pupils' knowledge of the past and their curiosity about how people lived. Teachers also help pupils to understand the events which helped to shape history, and the lasting

effects of these events.

79. Most of the teaching observed was good or very good. In a Year 5 lesson related to Victorians, the teacher used drama effectively to enhance learning. Teachers present the subject with enthusiasm and this stimulates the interest of the pupils. They are encouraged to find out more on the various topics in their own time and many do. Teachers ensure that wherever possible, effective links are made with other subjects such as English, art and geography. This helps to deepen pupils' historical understanding. In most lessons observed, the pace was brisk and teachers used questioning effectively to extend learning.
80. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. At present, there are no set schemes of work and there are no formal methods to track and record pupils' progress. Resources are satisfactory, although more artefacts are required to support some topics. There is, however, a good range of non-fiction and historical fiction books to support teachers and pupils in their work. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development and good use is made of local resources to complement provision.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

81. There has been a considerable improvement in the provision for ICT, the quality of teaching and the level of resources since the last inspection. As a result, pupils make good progress in the development of ICT skills, standards are rising and all National Curriculum requirements are being fulfilled.
82. A new computer suite has been opened since the last inspection. In addition, pupils in Year 3 enter the school having benefited from teaching in the relatively new computer suite in the infant school. Standards in the lower years are now close to those expected by the National Curriculum; however, Year 6 pupils are not significantly further advanced than Year 5 pupils. This is because of earlier shortcomings in the provision for ICT, which resulted in very little teaching for some time. As a result there are gaps in the skills and understanding of Year 6 pupils, who are generally following the same course as Year 5. Pupils in Year 6 are making good progress and standards are rising, but they are still below the level expected for pupils of this age.
83. Teaching is good overall. Staff are gaining confidence and the resources in the computer suite are well used, although the room is cramped and its layout presents difficulties. The work undertaken in ICT lessons is usually linked well to other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 designed a Muslim prayer mat using the symmetry properties of the graphics software and Year 5 and 6 pupils used a spreadsheet to calculate the cost of a class party, varying the amount they could buy to keep in budget. One weakness, however, is that since the opening of the computer suite pupils now use computers less in their classrooms to support their learning in other subjects.
84. The school has recently received funding for an interactive whiteboard from the Education Action Zone. It was, bravely, being used by teachers for the first time during the inspection. It is an excellent resource that is already enhancing demonstrations and whole-class teaching. The school has sought to extend this resource by investing in portable versions of the same equipment for use in classrooms.
85. The co-ordinator has been appointed only recently but has already re-organised the curriculum to take account of the previous shortcomings in provision for older pupils. The introduction of the new assessment system should enable standards to be monitored, although there has been no recent monitoring of teaching. The computer suite, although a valuable resource, is small and becomes very hot by late afternoon. Plans to extend the library as a learning resource centre and re-site the computers there should eliminate this problem.

## **MUSIC**

86. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are in line with those expected for pupils in this age range. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they achieve a satisfactory standard in music. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Three lessons were observed in the inspection. In two of these, the teaching was good; in the third, it was very good. The teaching displays high expectations of pupil involvement, learning and behaviour. Teaching methods integrate music making, composition, performance and appreciation. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were also learning how to use music as sound effects to support work in drama. In all of the lessons observed, pupils were encouraged to create their own beat and rhythm.
87. One weakness is that there are few opportunities for pupils to sing. No singing was observed in assemblies or in any lesson. Currently, there are no concerts or other events for pupils to perform to parents. This is an area which needs development. Pupils are encouraged to listen to music as they come in and out of assemblies and their attention is drawn to the composer and compared with other pieces they have heard. There are plans to start a school choir and to include music as an extra-curricular activity. A peripatetic music teacher comes into school one day each week to teach the trumpet and the keyboard. The school is very supportive of this provision, purchasing instruments for the pupils to use. There are some good displays of musical instruments in some classes.
88. A new co-ordinator who is a musician has recently been appointed following a period when there has been no co-ordinator in post. The school has been using a commercial scheme to support teaching. All staff are taking part in a review of the subject. It is planned to introduce national guidance to provide an effective scheme of work so that skills can be developed systematically and assessment introduced in the subject. There are adequate resources for the subject but they are not always readily available as many are stored in an outside container. Those that are available are used appropriately. The subject could make an increased contribution to the social and cultural development of pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

89. Provision is made for pupils to perform the range of activities required by the National Curriculum; however, it was mainly gymnastics that was seen during the inspection, as well as one swimming and one games lesson. This imbalance makes an overall judgement difficult, but on the evidence from the lesson observations, the average standards, noted when the school was last inspected, have not been maintained.
90. The emphasis placed on the importance of swimming continues to pay dividends. As was the case in 1999, all pupils in Years 5 and 6 have lessons at a local swimming pool throughout the year. They benefit from specialist instruction, well supported by their class teacher and classroom assistant. In the one lesson seen, three discrete groups worked on appropriately challenging activities matched to their swimming abilities. The teacher and the assistant were able to make important contributions to stroke and breathing technique because they received frequent advice from the instructor, who worked mainly with the middle-ranking group. Pupils at all levels persevered and made good attempts to do what was asked of them; their very positive response contributed to above average standards for a Year 6 class. In the only games lesson seen, in which Year 5 pupils worked on throwing and catching skills, attainment was below expectations. Although the pupils were able to pass and receive when unchallenged, they were unable to dodge, mark, and move in and out of space when required to outwit an opponent. Despite the below average standards seen, several pupils do achieve well in games activities. Some compete at school level and some go on to gain representative honours.
91. The school provides opportunities for pupils to excel at gymnastics through club activities led by the teacher who was until very recently the subject leader for physical education. His expertise as a gymnastic coach, allied to that of a visiting national coach, has raised standards and provided



opportunities for some pupils to perform in this country and abroad. His knowledge of the activity enables his own Year 3 class to achieve satisfactorily, with some reaching beyond the age-related expectations. In one lesson, despite a few unco-operative boys, the teacher's focused and calm approach ensured that the pupils were generally successful at finding ways of balancing on different parts of their bodies. By the end of the lesson good quality was achieved because of his attention to control and muscular tension. In Years 4 and 6, standards are very variable but below expectations overall. Teachers are mostly satisfactory in the way they teach individual lessons, although there is much uncertainty about how to help pupils achieve the standards of which they are undoubtedly capable. Some of the higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently in lessons and those who need help with basic skills are not given sufficient support. Occasionally a teacher's insecurity with the subject results in unsatisfactory teaching and low standards. For instance in one lesson the pupils' behaviour deteriorated significantly after being moved on to partner work without enough preparation and guidance on how to support each other's weight.

92. The challenge for the newly-appointed subject leader is to increase all teachers' expertise and provide a scheme of work which ensures much better progression from Year 3 to 6. Presently, despite the Year 6 pupils' willingness to attempt what is asked of them, the standard of their work in gymnastics especially is not significantly higher than the youngest pupils in the school. The school's intention to enhance the role of subject leaders to include monitoring the quality of provision needs rapid implementation. Existing good practice must be spread more widely and where needed; standards must be raised.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

93. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by Year 6. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards were reported to be generally below levels recommended in local and national guidelines, and the improvement of the subject was a key issue for the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make good progress. Pupils have a sound awareness of the sequence and events of the religious calendars. They have a clear understanding and knowledge of the special ceremonies and the importance of symbols to various faiths. By Year 4, they understand that there are many similarities as well as differences between the varying faiths. By the time they reach Year 6, they have made considerable progress in their understanding of comparative religions.
94. The teaching in religious education is at least satisfactory and mostly good. The good teaching is characterised by sound subject knowledge, together with enthusiastic and lively presentational skills, which promote good learning. Pupils who find learning more difficult are managed and supported well. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour. A wide variety of differing faiths are represented amongst the pupils, who show great respect for the beliefs of others. This variety is seen as a strength by the school, and is used sensitively to support learning. Teachers develop links with other subjects such as history, art and English. Throughout the school, there are several good displays relating to aspects of religious education.
95. There is a newly-appointed co-ordinator and the policy is currently under review in order to bring it in line with the locally agreed syllabus. At present there are no set schemes of work and no formal methods to record and track pupils' progress in the subject. These aspects form part of the review of the subject currently being undertaken by the school. There are good links with a local Christian mission. The leader comes in to take assembly once a week. Pupils visit the local Buddhist centre and attend a carol service at the local church; however, more use could be made by the school of the local environment and community to support learning in the subject. Significant improvements have been made; staff are much more confident teaching the subject and religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral education of the pupils.