

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Camden Town, London

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100044

Headteacher: Doreen Hainsworth

Reporting inspector: Cherry R Jackson
5358

Dates of inspection: 4-7 December 2000

Inspection number: 224096

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	88 Camden Street Camden Town London
Postcode:	NW1 0JA
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dorothea Hackman Powell
Date of previous inspection:	25 June 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's is a Church of England, voluntary aided, primary school for children aged 3 to 11 years. The school shares its building, playgrounds and nursery class with the neighbouring Roman Catholic school, Our Lady's. The nursery was not inspected on this occasion. There are 178 pupils on the roll of St Michael's, including the 12 part time children in the shared nursery. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high, at half, although it has fallen about a tenth over the last five years. Almost a third of the children in the school are Bangladeshi and a quarter are black African. There are also small numbers from other minority ethnic groups and, currently, close to a fifth of the roll are refugees, mainly from Albania. The proportion of pupils learning English is very high, currently about four fifths, and has increased by almost two fifths since the last inspection in 1996. These pupils' home languages, in order of group size, are Bengali, Albanian, Yoruba, and Hindi. About a third of pupils have special educational needs. Their needs centre on learning difficulty and emotional and behavioural difficulty. Generally the ability profile of the pupils when they start school is below average. Some year groups have a group of high attaining pupils but can also have a large group who are low attaining at the start. About a fifth of the roll changes each year as pupils move. St Michael's is preparing to be part of an Education Action Zone and is bidding for support from Excellence in Cities funding.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school's strengths are its concern for pupils as individuals, both academically and personally, and the very sound teaching which leads to good learning for many pupils. Standards are satisfactory by Year 6 with good achievement for the older pupils. Personal development is good with each child valued as part of the community. Governors, headteacher and staff are committed and the headteacher nurtures good team spirit. The school lacks systems to check the quality of its own work. That means strategic planning is not well focused. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The oldest pupils are achieving well in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and music, with sound standards.
- Their standards in history and art are good.
- Infant pupils make satisfactory progress and junior pupils make good progress, considering that many are learning English as a second language.
- The under sixes in the reception class reach good standards and are achieving well.
- The school involves the community very well in helping the children to learn.
- Assemblies and lessons ensure excellent for spiritual and cultural provision.
- The headteacher and teachers know and support the pupils very well.
- The school sets itself high moral aims and meets them very well.

What could be improved

- The infant pupils do not reach expected standards.
- The standards throughout the school in information technology and, for juniors, in physical education are unsatisfactory.
- Infant pupils' behaviour reflects the frustration of those learning English and the emotional instability of some refugees.
- The lack of punctuality of some pupils prevents a crisp start to the day.
- Teaching for the foundation subjects has some weaknesses.
- The role of the teachers as managers is supportive for colleagues but not focused well on standards.
- The school does not systematically check how high standards are or how good teaching is.
- Governors do not have the information they need to target strategic planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound progress since the 1996 inspection. Standards are better in reading, mathematics, science, history and art. Planning for the curriculum is better. Challenge is appropriate for the more able juniors. Progress for the pupils with special educational needs is good now. Marking is better and individual assessment is good. Spiritual and cultural education are even better than they were. The

management benefits from a new deputy head with a clear role. The safety of the playground trees is addressed. Standards in information and communication technology and physical education have deteriorated. The roles of teachers as managers could still develop more. Governors still need strategic information to use. There is insufficient improvement in meeting curriculum requirements for the children in the Foundation Stage and in the provision of computers.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	C	A
mathematics	C	C	D	C
science	C	D	C	B

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

Over recent years the test results for the 11 year olds have been around the national average. The trend has been improving since 1996. Year 6 are working at the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, St Michael's results this year and last were above average or better and the pupils are achieving well. They can hold mature discussions, plan scientific investigations and manipulate number well. They are very good at history and art, but in physical education their skills are weak.

Standards for the seven year olds are not as secure. Reading and writing results have been at or below the national average over the last four years and mathematics results have usually been below average. All the test results were in the bottom 5% nationally in 2000, because of difficulties with teaching that management did not resolve. In 1999 the infants' attainment was average or better compared with similar schools and their achievement is satisfactory. Year 2 read competently although not always with understanding, they write meaningfully but their spelling is weak; they understand 2 digit numbers and know about some common materials but are hesitant when explaining their learning.

Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. Whilst the pupils have some appropriate skills and Year 6 can use the Internet for information seeking, they have not learned to use programmable devices or computer simulations.

Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress. They do not reach their full potential in the infants but by Year 6 they do. The pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English, make sound progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors.

The under sixes in the reception class are on course to attain the standards expected for their age by the end of the year and are achieving well. They are benefiting from good levels of adult support and have well developed language and literacy skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The great majority show enthusiasm and interest in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour is satisfactory but there are extremes. Learning and emotional difficulties make it hard for some infants to behave well. There are better standards in the juniors.
Personal development and	Good overall. Although the infants are immature in their understanding of the

relationships	impact of their actions on others, the juniors are sensitive.
Attendance	Just satisfactory; punctuality is weak and affects the start of the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection, the teaching was satisfactory or better in 91% of the lessons, and unsatisfactory in 9%, with 47% good or better and 14% very good or excellent.

The teaching in English and mathematics is good overall due to detailed lesson planning and work well matched to the needs of the pupils. The pace of lessons is slower for the infants, as the teachers have to manage some difficult behaviour. The teachers plan well for most lessons and use a good range of methods and tasks which interest and involve the pupils. Teachers are alert to assess the pupils' progress and pupils respond well to this concern. Pupils with special educational needs learn well because their teachers plan work and special materials for them, which meet their individual needs well. The large majority who are learning English learn well in the juniors in all subjects because their fluency allows better participation. Teachers work hard to make learning visual and to stress the language needed. Pupils who are gifted and talented make sound progress in the infants and are well challenged in the juniors in English, mathematics, science and history.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, with a good range of interesting activities and visits. The literacy and numeracy lessons are good. All the pupils learn with each other but individual needs are met. The curriculum for the under sixes is still not well adapted to their needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are identified carefully and have good support in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The co-ordinator maintains good oversight of their progress in English and the class teachers work hard to provide variety.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is a strength as before, with outstanding provision for spiritual and cultural development and good support for moral and social learning. There are excellent opportunities for the children to reflect in lessons and to enjoy the range of cultures they share.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care is sound. Strengths are the effective procedures for assessing what the pupils have learned, and the good personal care from the adults

The school works in good partnership with parents. The school is approachable and makes an effort to communicate, and to draw in minority groups. The parents support the curriculum well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound. The school has high moral aims and values for its multi-ethnic, multi-faith community. Through the headteacher's positive leadership, the aims are excellently fulfilled. There is good support for teachers but not enough is asked of them as managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors support their school particularly well. They know a lot about pupils and activities but they do not receive enough analysis of data to help them plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses local authority services sensibly for this work but the school's arrangements overall are unsatisfactory because they are not systematic enough nor impacting enough on improvement planning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory, with adequate accommodation, good learning resources, satisfactory staffing with good provision of full time co-ordinators for pupils with special needs and those learning English as another language. The long term need for more computers has not been met and more adult support is wanted in some classes. The school generally applies the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards have improved, particularly in reading and mathematics. • The teaching is effective and the children make good progress. • The children like school. • The school picks up difficulties, including behaviour problems, and particular abilities, and supports all the children well. • The school promotes good attitudes and encourages children to take responsibility. • The uniform is very successful. • The headteacher and staff are very approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less homework for Year 6 and more for younger children. • Less rough behaviour in the playground and more adult supervision. • More money to support the pupils who have special educational needs. • An after school homework club like some other schools have. • More extra curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. They think that levels of homework should be made clearer for the teachers and parents and graded across the year groups. The shared playground is cramped. This could cause disputes, although only one incident of rough behaviour was seen. The number of supervising adults is adequate although the lunchtime staff are not deployed in a systematic way to ensure that every area is overseen. The school provides a sound range of extra curricular activities. The pupils with special educational needs have good, appropriate, support from their class teachers. Reading Recovery teaching is available to those who need it most but there are many others who would benefit from this very

costly provision. After school homework clubs are provided in some schools through grant aid which is not currently available to St Michael's. The school will provide English and mathematics booster classes after school later in the year and cannot reasonably be asked to do more until funding is found.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, the under sixes in the reception class reach good standards and achieve well. The pupils in the infant classes do not meet the national expectation when they are seven, but their achievement is satisfactory compared with their starting point. The juniors do meet the national expectation in many subjects when they are 11, and their achievement is good. The large majority of the pupils are learning English as a second language. In the infant classes the levels of English are lower and progress generally is slowed. Junior classes have better English and can learn more quickly.
2. Those infant pupils who are gifted and talented do not achieve quite as well as those in the juniors because of the language constraints upon them. Nonetheless they make sound progress. By the end of the junior years the gifted and talented pupils are fulfilling their potential in English, mathematics, science, history and art. Their achievement is not as good in design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education and music, where they need higher objectives set for their learning.
3. **By the age of six**, the few children currently in the Foundation Stage are likely to attain or exceed the standards expected for them. This is a small group, more able when they started school than pupils in some other classes. They are benefiting from much adult support and are achieving well in most of their areas of learning. They are interested in their work and make confident choices of activity and equipment, concentrating well and persisting. They understand what books are for and enjoy using them, guessing and remembering what the text says. They can write their names and form letters. The children, several of whom are learning English as a second language, converse sensibly but do not use language very proactively to organise their play. Most can count to 10 and can compare weight and height. They have basic computer keyboard skills, can use classroom tools and materials and are learning about the differences between substances. Their art-work is confident and well observed. They can move and change their way of moving competently but could achieve better in physical development with more regular outdoor activity.
4. **By the age of seven** the formal test results in reading, writing and mathematics for the oldest infants have, over the last three years, been close to or below the national average but reasonable or good when compared with similar schools. The proportion of high scores at level 3 can be low as better language is needed for these. Results in 2000 were weaker than the preceding years and the pupils tested then underachieved. The school has identified a number of reasons for this, including significant periods of absence from school for 11 pupils of the 25, and disrupted teaching at an earlier stage, which management did not remedy. These pupils are in Year 3 now and are making good progress in catching up. 2000 was an atypical year for the school.
5. **By the age of 11** the formal test results for the juniors have shown a broadly rising trend over the last four years. Reading, mathematics and science standards were unsatisfactory at the last inspection and all are improved now to the point where they are satisfactory.
6. In **reading and writing, the infants'** standards were below the national expectation when the school was last inspected. Test results have improved since and reached the national average in 1999. The improvement is due to the introduction of the literacy hour and of Reading Recovery one to one support for the pupils in most need.
7. The large majority of infants who are learning English as a second language have real difficulties. In their lessons during the inspection the attainments of the Year 2 class were below the national expectation. Their achievement, considering the nature of their needs, is satisfactory. In their English lessons, the pupils listen carefully but only use phrases and short sentences when they

speak. When they read many can use phonics and pictures sensibly to help themselves but may not understand everything they read. They can write simple phrases with a good deal of support and their spelling and punctuation are limited.

8. **In English, for the juniors**, standards are sound, with good progress and achievement. The test results each year are usually close to or above the national average and the standards in the lessons meet the national expectation. For the last two years the proportion of higher attainment at level 5 has been above average, and higher attaining pupils are making good progress. The progress made by last year's Year 6 from when they were 7 to when they were 11 was well above average. Compared with similar schools St Michael's juniors' results were very high. In their speaking, younger juniors are still hesitant but, by Year 6, can hold discussions maturely. They can write for a good range of purposes and in a good range of styles, although handwriting and spelling are weak. They enjoy their reading and discuss it with interest. Some pupils still stumble over unknown words whilst others follow punctuation well and enjoy difficult children's fiction.
9. **In mathematics, the infants'** results were satisfactory at the 1996 inspection. Test scores rose the next year but over the last three years have shown a downward trend. Standards do not meet the national expectation. However, apart from in 2000, the pupils' achievement has been broadly satisfactory, and was during the inspection. In their lessons, Year 2 can measure and are accurate with number. They understand the composition of two digit numbers and recognise odd and even numbers. Higher attaining pupils can use calculators sensibly but may not attain level 3 at the end of the year because they would have to explain their thinking.
10. **In junior mathematics**, standards at the top of the school are satisfactory, and the higher attaining pupils make good progress. Results have improved since 1996. Compared with similar schools, St Michael's mathematics results have been average or above average in the last two years. The pupils are achieving well. Number competency is strong, most can multiply and divide to one place of decimals, add to two places of decimals, equate fractions with decimals, add, subtract, multiply and divide hundreds and thousands. Everyone can find perimeters and areas of shapes and the higher attaining pupils can work out areas for complicated shapes by adding and multiplying. In applying their mathematics, most can choose resourceful ways to solve problems and complete number patterns and can think independently.
11. **In science, the infants'** standards were below the national expectation when the school was inspected last and are still. The teachers' assessment results in 1999 were below the national average. Standards in the lessons during this inspection were below the national expectation. Although not the case in 2000, pupils' achievement is usually satisfactory. The current Year 2 pupils can describe the properties of some materials and know what happens to common substances, like chocolate, during heating and cooling. They can carry out simple investigations and make gains in vocabulary but do not communicate findings in a scientific way, which is what they would need for level 3.
12. **The juniors' science** standards are satisfactory. Their results have met the national average for two of the last four years. In their lessons during the inspection, Year 6 are reaching satisfactory standards. Compared with similar schools St Michael's results have been above average for the last two years. The progress the pupils make across the junior years is good and Year 6 are achieving well. They use their English to plan scientific investigations and work collaboratively in groups, hypothesising and setting up fair tests. They are knowledgeable about electrical circuits and life processes. All this is a sound improvement from the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory.
13. In the other core subject which was inspected, **information and communication technology (ICT), infants and juniors** have gaps in knowledge and skill. Standards are not meeting the national expectation and the pupils are underachieving. The older infants can write and manipulate text and the older juniors can find information competently on the Internet. They cannot give instructions to programmable devices or use computer simulations to explore patterns and relationships. This is a deterioration since the last inspection when standards were sound.

14. There is a common pattern within the pupils' progress in many subjects. After a struggle in the infants the achievement picks up through the juniors and Year 6 achieve well by meeting the national expectation. The pattern is evident in art, design and technology and history. In **history** the Year 2 pupils work does not meet the national expectation, although they are achieving satisfactorily in the light of their English needs. They know some differences between past periods and the present for example in clothes or transport, but not enough to talk about why people acted as they did or how history can be represented in lots of different ways. The pupils in Year 6 are working above what is expected for them and achieving very well. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Some have a good knowledge and deep understanding of features of periods they have studied, like the Second World War or the time of Henry VIII, and can discuss the impact of change maturely. The school works alternately at history or **geography** in any one term so that no judgement could be made about geography standards. They were sound in 1996.
15. In **art**, the oldest infants' work is satisfactory, with detailed drawing showing a sense of proportion and shape and work well finished. By the end of Year 6 the work is good, an improvement from the 1996 inspection. The pupils use sketches to build up sustained studies and choose, from a wide range of images they are familiar with, those which convey their perceptions. Pupils throughout are achieving well.
16. In **design and technology**, Year 2 are close to meeting the national expectation and they are making a sound achievement. They can design and make wheeled vehicles whose wheels turn. They need to be able to select appropriate tools and materials for themselves now. The oldest juniors are attaining satisfactorily. They made a complex design for a model ferris wheel with a battery-operated circuit to power it. They made their own decisions and were able to offer sensible evaluations of materials and products. Their achievement is sound and would be good if they could offer the same levels of finish in their products as they can in art. Standards in this subject show a good improvement from the 1996 inspection when they were unsatisfactory.
17. In **music** the older infants do not meet the national expectation. Although they can enjoy singing and rhythm their playing, on percussion instruments, is uncontrolled. The oldest juniors just meet the expectation, with sweet sensitive singing a feature of their work. Their achievement in music is sound.
18. **Physical education** is the subject where the usual pattern for standards is not evident. Standards are not satisfactory for infants or juniors. The infants are achieving satisfactorily because they can make some movements and make very simple judgements about their work. They are not very good at linking movements or understanding about exercising safely. The oldest juniors are not achieving satisfactorily because their skills are undeveloped and they cannot evaluate their performance with a view to improving it.
19. **Pupils with special educational needs** are achieving well and are making predominately good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. This is because of the focused adult support they receive in lessons, the support that is given by a specialist Reading Recovery teacher to help identified pupils develop their reading skills; and the resources and teaching aids that enable them to develop their understanding. The pupils have a clear understanding of what their targets are and what they have to do to achieve them, this also ensures that they make good progress.
20. The test results for the juniors taken over the last four years, show that **boys** at St Michael's do not usually attain as well as girls in English, mathematics or science. The difference is not great in English, because the Reading Recovery provision has helped many of the boys. In mathematics and science the teachers make sure that both genders have equal demand placed on them. There were occasions in mathematics lessons when boys were more challenging in their behaviour which slows their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good. Overall their behaviour is satisfactory in the school. Within this satisfactory picture, there are some extremes of good and unacceptable behaviour.
22. Children in the reception class show good attitudes to learning, behave well and enjoy good relationships with the adults in their class. In the infant classes, there are a few pupils who find behaving well and relating positively to others very difficult. Standards of behaviour and personal development improve in the junior classes, although there are individuals in each class whose attitudes and behaviour are challenging. By Year 6, however, many of the pupils are mature, confident and poised. Through the school, the pupils are enabled to develop good attitudes and behaviour through the hard work, positive approach and constant careful management of behaviour by their teachers and the classroom support staff.
23. A significant strength in the pupils' values and behaviour is their excellent response in school assemblies. At these times, the pupils come into the hall very quietly. They engage well with the special atmosphere created on these occasions listening and watching carefully, singing sweetly and joining in with the prayers.
24. The great majority of the pupils enjoy school, showing enthusiasm and interest in their lessons; their teachers give them motivating and relevant activities in their lessons. The reception children are often keen to share their work with adults. In science lessons, pupils work well and enthusiastically. In English, the pupils enjoy and respond well to stories; older juniors tackle their writing tasks well. A minority of junior pupils can be negative about their learning, in PE lessons for example, when asked to keep practising passing the ball.
25. The pupils have been taught well how to care for school property. They understand the importance of putting things away tidily, and there is no evidence of them mishandling books or equipment. The classrooms and school corridors are orderly and the many attractive displays are safe and undisturbed. There is no graffiti anywhere.
26. Behaviour outside the classrooms and around the school, is generally good. The pupils know and follow the routines for negotiating the many stairs in the school, waiting for adults so they can pass. Playground behaviour can be boisterous, but during the inspection, only one example of violent behaviour was seen and this was from a pupil with significant emotional difficulties. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection, although this has been a problem in the past, with a very few junior pupils. The teachers have successfully dealt with these issues.
27. The infants are immature in their understanding of the impact of their actions on others but the juniors are quick to notice what's happening and are clear about how they need to think of others. They talk to the younger pupils about the implications of poor behaviour at lunchtime. The junior pupils are sensitive to the needs of others; they help each other when they are accidentally hurt in the playground. In their lessons, they are ready to recognise the achievements of their classmates; in one English lesson, the pupils commented positively on each other's writing.
28. The older junior pupils often show good initiative and responsibility. They manage the selling of apples and the issuing of skipping ropes at playtimes. The Year 6 pupils act as "reading buddies" for Year 1 pupils. The juniors act as monitors in the school, tidying up the school library or helping their teachers before the start of the school.
29. There were just three fixed term exclusions last year. Given the volatile nature of some pupils, this is a good record.
30. Attendance levels are satisfactory. They are slightly below the national average. There are a few long absences where children go to visit families abroad which contribute to this. The lateness of a significant proportion of children means that the school is unable always to make a crisp start to the day. A random audit of records showed that almost 20 per cent of children arrived late. This means 18 children were not ready to start work at the beginning of the school day. The

school has written to parents explaining how the lateness of their children disrupts the beginning of the school day and affects the learning of other children who arrive on time. A comparison with records of lateness earlier in the school year suggests only limited success for this strategy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

31. The teachers, some of whom have only recently joined the staff team, are working very hard, with enthusiasm and commitment, to provide well-matched learning opportunities for the pupils. The teaching in the school currently is satisfactory, with much that is good. About nine out of ten lessons were satisfactory or better during the inspection, which is a small improvement on the last inspection. The proportion of teaching which was very good or better is improved from 6% to 14%. The teaching is good for the under sixes in the reception class and the oldest infants in Year 2, and very good for the oldest juniors in Year 6. It is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The few unsatisfactory lessons during the inspection were almost all in the foundation subjects of music, design and technology and physical education. Although standards are low in information and communication technology, the teaching here is sound; the problem is in the curriculum, not the teaching.
32. The teachers ensure that the pupils with special educational needs learn well in the infants and the juniors and that the pupils who are learning English as another language make satisfactory gains in their English during the infant years and good gains in their time in the juniors. These successes are due to careful planning for individuals and groups with tasks well matched to their stages of development. The teachers' selection of appropriate equipment and texts is careful and appropriate. The learning support assistants, support teachers and volunteer helpers all give careful support in lessons. The teachers present learning imaginatively, trying to make the pupils use a range of senses, helpful to those whose speaking and listening is weak. Class teachers focus helpfully on language, pushing the pupils to say what they think or have discovered in their learning.
33. The teachers are careful to involve both genders in all the activities. They value the contributions of children from ethnic minorities and encourage them to talk and write about any experiences they have had in other countries.
34. Good liaison between the class teachers, the teacher responsible for special educational needs and the teacher responsible for English as a second language supports the pupils well. She works in close liaison with class teachers, making sure that her in-class support is directly linked to what the teachers have identified for the children to learn. This is particularly evident in literacy and numeracy, where her planning is well linked to relevant objectives. Bi-lingual materials prepared by parents and big brothers and sisters at home are very helpful. Mother tongue teaching is very useful and supportive, particularly in the reception class. The teacher who can provide mother tongue input in the infant and junior classes is not working in Year 2 currently, where she could help reduce frustration and consequent behaviour problems.
35. Concentration is weaker in the infant classes because of the large proportion of pupils learning English and productivity is lower than for older pupils. Once in to the juniors, they are more satisfied and calmer, readier to learn in a range of subjects.
36. Generally, throughout the school, the teachers know about the subjects they are teaching and plan well for their lessons. They tell the pupils clearly what they are going to learn. They assess the progress very well while they are teaching and are particularly good at helping the pupils to know how well they are getting on, both by telling them and through sympathetic marking. This is because they are well aware of the subject to be taught and know exactly which part they are dealing with in each lesson. They introduce interesting and useful activities for the pupils to do. They are patient and positive in their management of pupils, using rewards, praise and example rather than blame.

37. The teaching for English and mathematics is, overall, good because the school has adopted the daily literacy hour and numeracy lesson. Lesson plans for these are good. The lessons are broken into shorter units and each unit is thoroughly planned. Key vocabulary and questions to be asked are carefully thought out in advance. The national guidance for the subjects is well used. Books and equipment are well chosen and prepared, like white-boards to write on, number games to play with, dice and cards, texts and number patterns on charts and overhead projector slides. The teachers' expectations are appropriately matched to the pupils and the teachers provide tasks for individuals or groups which are well matched to current abilities. They often use pairs of pupils to discuss questions with each other, giving everyone a helpful chance to think and talk. By keeping the paired talk very short and sharp, the teachers can keep everyone on task.
38. English and mathematics teaching, though good, have some areas where they could improve. During the last unit of the lesson where the classes are brought together to reflect on the days learning, the infants are more restless than the juniors and this is harder to manage. The juniors are able to reflect on what they have learnt and so make progress in English speaking and in the lesson topic. Lessons, on the whole, tend to be too long, which slows the pace of learning. Occasionally, material used for the whole class to read is too small to see properly. The teachers do not emphasise high standards of spelling and punctuation enough. All the pupils have individual targets set for them in English and mathematics, two or three times a term. The teachers and pupils did not talk about those in the lessons, which is a weakness.
39. Science and history lessons have benefited, too, from the strengths developing in literacy and numeracy, with good lesson planning and resourcing. The pupils are told clearly what they are expected to learn. There is a useful emphasis on technical vocabulary. The teaching is interactive, because the teachers ask probing questions and wait for the answers even when pupils learning English take some time to respond. The tasks are interesting tasks and classes have a chance to discuss their learning all together before the lesson ends. One history lesson was excellent, because of imaginative planning and well- informed discussions. A weakness in science, in some classes, is the match of activities to the pupils' stages of development. Higher attaining pupils could achieve more.
40. There are some particular strengths in the teaching for Year 6. The match of tasks to pupils' abilities is consistently good here. The teacher asks the pupils regularly to make a self-assessment of their own achievement, which helps them to stay focused and feel confident. The teacher marks their work not just with interest in the content but also with clear suggestions about how it could be better. Homework is well used for pupils to prepare for coming class work or reflect on previous learning. The tasks set allow for interpretation at different levels, which would explain why some parents report that their children spend a long time.
41. The teaching for Year 2 shares the strengths identified for the school already. In addition, the teaching is consistently good because the teacher remains highly focused on the subject of the lesson in spite of the need to interrupt subject teaching frequently in order to manage the pupils' behaviour. The teaching moves flexibly between the two objectives each minute. Of the 24 children, 18 are learning English as a second language; so that they are grappling not only with what to say but also how to say it. The teacher uses a range of behaviour management strategies while remaining patient and understanding of how individuals feel and their need to be valued. For example: "I know you know, Delia, but I want to give some of the others a chance to think."
42. In the lessons where the teaching is unsatisfactory, this is because the lesson planning needs to be more accurate about what is to be taught and how. In one design and technology lesson there was useful activity but the focus on the specific learning in the subject was not clear. Pupils were making and decorating a book without the specific element of design for function that would improve their design and technology progress. In a physical education lesson the teaching of specific skills was weak and had not been clearly enough prepared.
43. Effort is asked of the pupils in all the lessons but the demand is not always consistent across the subjects. For example, art-work is better finished than design and technology tasks, and

physical education is not executed to the high standard of most other subjects. Handwriting is well stressed in Year 1 but not higher up the school.

44. The teachers set useful homework and Year 5 have homework books although others do not. The use made of the homework that is set, to practise or prepare for learning in a lesson, is sound. Not all the pupils do the homework and some books get lost, which can cause difficulty. The provision is not consistently increased from year to year so that the pupils' expectations are inconsistent, and the parents do not know how long their child should spend each day on homework.

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

45. The curriculum offers the required range of subjects including health education, sex and drugs education. This is all supported by a good range of relevant and stimulating experiences, planned opportunities for visits, and visitors to the school that enrich and extend the pupils' experience. There is some lack of precision in teaching the National Curriculum in some subjects, at its most serious in information and communication technology, where statutory requirements are not being met. Although there have been improvements in some areas, such as the use of the Internet to support learning, some of the obligatory elements of the subject are not being covered. Personal, social and health education is well integrated into other curriculum areas, particularly science, and the school holds a useful 'Healthy Eating' week. The policy for sex education is due to be updated; at present the school nurse talks to older juniors. A drama group provides the stimulus for drugs education for pupils in Year 6.
46. At the time of the last inspection aspects of art, music, design and technology and information and communication technology were not sufficiently emphasised. The introduction of the national schemes of work for these subjects is addressing this issue and will ensure that pupils are taught what is required. At the moment there are still some gaps in what the pupils have learned prior to the swift introduction of the new schemes. The new schemes, and the national frameworks for literacy and numeracy, address the key issue from the previous inspection concerning planning. They provide the basis for teachers' termly and weekly plans, which are improved. The selection of topics from the schemes of work makes helpful links between subjects for the pupils so that the curriculum is coherent for them. The policy for physical education does not address the requirements of the National Curriculum, as it emphasises a narrow range of achievement and does not include the need for pupils to evaluate and improve their performance. This is a particularly important issue where pupils need a means of self expression which is not English language.
47. The school appropriately emphasises English and mathematics in the curriculum by giving these subjects more time than others. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented. The teachers give considerable time and thought to the planning of the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson, using the national guidance well. This is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. The length of these lessons reduces time available for other subjects. Physical education, particularly, would benefit from more frequent lessons, both to improve performance and to allow variety and self expression for the needy pupils. The Numeracy Strategy is currently well supported by an enthusiastic teacher with management responsibilities for mathematics and by the local education authority's consultant for numeracy.
48. Information and communication technology is generally used well across the other subjects, for instance, in literacy to develop writing skills, in science to support the storage and retrieval of data and in history and geography when the Internet is used to find information. The school has planned to develop these links more systematically. Literacy and numeracy are well used across a range of subjects. For example, pupils write about their products in design and technology and use their data handling skills to record findings in history and science. Links between other subjects are also explored where possible, for example pupils are finding out about what it was

like to live in Bangladesh during Victorian times.

49. The planned curriculum for the reception class has not been developed since the last inspection and is not securely based on the six areas of learning defined by the government for this age group. There is an insufficiently clear focus on the children's personal, social and emotional development and the planning does not take full account of the need for children of this age group to learn through well structured play activities.
50. Pupils with special educational needs have good access to the school curriculum. Individual education plans, where appropriate, are written by the class teachers in conjunction with the special needs co-ordinator to ensure that there is a focus on the targets they need to achieve. The majority of support is given within the classroom so that these pupils can participate fully in the work that their class is doing and be part of the class community. Individuals are well supported in lessons by the support teachers and by learning support assistants who help them concentrate and explain work they do not understand. Occasionally pupils are withdrawn from lessons for quiet, individual or small group support with the special educational needs co-ordinator or the teacher who provides support for the pupil with a statement of special educational needs. Good care is taken so that pupils do not consistently miss the same subjects or have long absence from their peers.
51. Support given to pupils by the part time Reading Recovery teacher who was employed after the last inspection is effective. Pupils are identified as needing support through careful assessment and are withdrawn for half an hour each day for twenty sessions. It is not possible to give support to all those who are identified and the school prioritises the level of need.
52. Care is taken that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language with emphasis being given, for instance in history and geography planning, to the pupils' countries of origin. There is a helpful emphasis, for example in science and information and communication technology, on the development of subject-related language and vocabulary. Pupils are well supported in class by the teacher with responsibility for pupils with English as an additional language and by the other adults in the classrooms.
53. There are good links with Our Lady's Roman Catholic school that shares the same site; pupils share the playground during break times and the schools hold shared festivals during the year. Older pupils have the helpful opportunity of attending 'taster' days at the local secondary schools, these involve taking part in lessons and staying for a school lunch. Pupils from several secondary schools undertake work-experience placements at St Michael's, which is also supportive for pupils about to go to secondary school.
54. Links with the community are very good. Year 6 pupils visit elderly patients at the St Pancras Hospital and relate to them sensibly and sensitively. There are numerous links with a range of local ethnic groups, such as the Islamic group, who visit the school, participate in assemblies and contribute to the work that pupils are doing in class. Pupils are also involved in a 'Groundwork' project that involves talking to local groups and citizens about how the environment can be improved. Plans are well underway for projects that the school will be involved in as a result of Education Action Zone funding. The school has developed links with supermarkets and shops. The pupils enjoyed taking part in a fashion show in conjunction with the local Woolworths.
55. The school provides extra curricular clubs in drama, football, netball after school and a craft club during the lunch time. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there were no extra-curricular activities. Booster classes after school in literacy and numeracy are planned for next term, as are refugee and homework clubs.
56. Planned visits, such as those to Camley Gardens, Lauderdale House, museums in London, and Hampstead Heath, enhance the curriculum in areas such as history, geography and science. Visitors extend the pupils' understanding by, for example, talking about what it was like to be evacuated during the Blitz. A visit from the Mayor gave pupils an insight into her role and provided

a starting point for discussions about citizenship.

57. The quality of the school's provision for the pupils' spiritual development is excellent and has improved further since the last inspection. It is a strength of the school. There are planned opportunities to discuss feelings and opinions across the curriculum, particularly in English and art and through empathetic work in history. Pupils are actively encouraged to reflect on important issues such as quality of life, loss of freedom or poverty. Pupils are provided with opportunities to write thoughtful prayers about their hopes and aspirations - for friends, for tolerance, for peace and for an acceptance and understanding of all religions. In another class pupils were helped to think about objects or possessions which were particularly special to them and of the memories they evoked of people and places. The daily act of collective worship provides an excellent starting point for reflection about the pupil's own lives and those of others. The well-chosen music, played as the pupils enter the hall, encourages thoughtful contemplation and opportunities are given for quiet, personal thought about issues that have been discussed.
58. Provision for the pupils' moral development is good and the school has high expectations of their behaviour. The pupils are aware of the class rules that, in some instances, are prominently displayed. Systems for rewards and sanctions underpin the rules although these are not always consistent from class to class. Teachers constantly reinforce the pupils' understanding of what is expected of them through giving praise and explaining why acceptable behaviour is helpful. Planned opportunities for debate in history enable pupils to further develop an understanding of right and wrong and that there is a need to respect the rights and property of others, at levels appropriate to their ages. Pupils are encouraged to develop self-discipline and to consider the effect of their actions on others. Older pupils discuss rules with younger ones who have misbehaved at lunch times. Adults in the school provide very good role models for the pupils and treat everyone with courtesy and respect. During the inspection both teachers and non-teaching assistants discussed with pupils their behaviour and attitudes, offering advice and guidance.
59. The school's provision for the pupils' social development is good and is similar to that found in the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility by looking after their possessions and the classrooms. Monitors take the registers to the office and help in the dining hall. Older pupils are given a range of responsibilities including helping from 8.30am to set out equipment and tidy classrooms and the library, which they do very sensibly, making decisions about what needs to be done. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative, as demonstrated by two Year 6 girls who took the opportunity to interview one of the inspection team for their class newsletter. Pupils are encouraged to assist at playtimes, giving out equipment and recording this on a clipboard and by selling apples. Year 6 pupils have regular paired reading sessions with infants and enjoy this responsibility. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to co-operate and to listen to each other's opinions. Juniors are able to debate issues thoughtfully, giving due regard to other points of view. They are given opportunities to work socially together in pairs and groups across the curriculum. The extra-curricular clubs bring pupils together in a co-operative environment, such as the lunchtime craft club. The numerous visits to places of interest encourage good social behaviour away from the school site. A recent letter to the school from a member of the community praised the behaviour of pupils travelling on a bus.
60. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is excellent and is another strength of the school. This is similar to what was found at the last inspection. Pupils are given planned opportunities to appreciate the work of different musicians and artists. They are able to work with local artists on creative projects; one group has had the opportunity to design a mural to be painted in the local environment. The music curriculum provides opportunities to appreciate live music. A range of music groups are invited to perform at the school, a recent event was the percussion group who played a variety of instruments. Plans to participate in a local music and arts festival are underway as part of the Education Action Zone initiative. Pupils are also able to take part in Camden's bi-annual music festival at the Festival Hall. Provision for multi-cultural development is also a strength. Every opportunity is taken to promote racial harmony and to develop an understanding of, and respect for, different religious and ethnic groups. Pupils have undertaken work in conjunction with the Jewish Museum and a group of pupils from a Jewish school is visiting

to do an assembly about Hanukah. There are links with the local Islamic group and a variety of different groups of parents are invited into school to talk to pupils. A group of Bangladeshi mothers assist with a craft club. African parents performed a dance to the Lord's Prayer in assembly during the schools 'Africa Week'. Photographs displayed around the school celebrate the events that have taken place. The school attractively displays a variety of artefacts and books about other cultures, which stimulate discussions and develop understanding of other cultures.

61. The teacher managing the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language makes a significant contribution to the pupils' awareness of the creative achievements of people from other cultures. She has mounted very attractive displays of artefacts from other cultures around the school. She organised the school's successful Africa Week last year, engaging support from artists, storytellers and local embassies and encouraging parent volunteers to take part in activities such as cooking. She will be helping to organise the 'Asian Week' in February 2001.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

62. This is a caring school which makes satisfactory provision for the children's welfare and for monitoring academic progress. There is very good support and guidance for the pupils.
63. The class teachers know their children well and provide very good pastoral support and very good oversight of their progress. There are good relationships between staff and children and these allow children to approach staff readily and confidently with any personal concerns. Children with special needs have good support which builds on the effective range of informal and positive relationships in the school. For younger pupils, this is helped by useful links and support with parents and carers.
64. The school provides a good standard of support for children learning English as an additional language. Teachers and other adults give these children positive encouragement to promote their self-esteem, so that they play a full part in all aspects of school life. Teachers know children well and good evidence of individual support to children with special needs was observed. This encouragement also takes place during whole class, "circle time" discussions, where the group consider concerns from individual members.
65. The school provides a good level of care for its children. There are sound links with outside support agencies involved in the protection of children. Sound child protection procedures are in place and staff respond quickly and appropriately when the need arises.
66. First aid procedures are good and are carried out effectively. The school promotes healthy living through its personal, health and social education programme. The headteacher, governors premises committee and designated staff carry out periodic risk assessments of the school site. They report any concerns. This ensures the governing body undertakes regular reviews of security and buildings.
67. Playground supervision and oversight were part of the concerns raised by parents. The playgrounds are lively and energetic and are shared by pupils and staff from the two schools on the site. Whilst there are many pervasive ball games there is no particular danger or risk to children. Anyone negotiating the playground designated for football needs to be vigilant, and they are. On several occasions inappropriate, not violent, behaviour was observed. The mid day support assistants have received induction training in the areas of behaviour management and the avoidance of bullying and racially insensitive behaviour. During the inspection the playground area was supervised by an adequate number of adults but there were many unseen areas. Clear co-ordination between the two schools, of the placing of the adults has not been addressed and would be helpful. Staff are well supported by the headteacher who helps children, who have caused lunchtime problems, to consider the implications of their behaviour.
68. Procedures for monitoring children's attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, with the majority of class registers showing reasons for absence. The headteacher regularly reviews absence. The education welfare service visits monthly. The frequency and nature of such visits is determined by the service. The service can also initiate contacts with other care or welfare services and follows up the absence of children referred by the school.
69. The school has satisfactory systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. A prominent mission statement is reinforced with class based behaviour rules, which have been signed by children. There is also a range of rewards and sanctions in use, including; "well done" certificates, and class based reward systems. This means some systems are not applied consistently across the school. The variations, say, from reward points for whole classes, to reward points for individuals or for groups, mean that there is some discontinuity for the pupils and can detract from the often good progress made with individual behaviour. Class teachers use a range of methods to maintain good class order including agreed "silence signals" and "calm down" pauses. Such techniques are similarly not applied consistently across the school and there is no formal sharing of best practice and effectiveness among teachers.

70. The school has successfully improved its assessment procedures since the last inspection. The inspectors then identified a key issue, which was to “provide clearer procedures for the assessment of individual pupils’ academic progress in order to inform teacher’s planning.” This key issue has been dealt with effectively in English, mathematics and science. Useful, less detailed work is done for the other subjects. The school’s improved assessment procedures are undoubtedly contributing to the pupils’ overall good progress.
71. Teachers make termly assessments of their pupils’ achievements in English, mathematics and science. Samples of work are annotated, given levels and kept in the pupils’ individual folders. The school is helpfully putting in place portfolios of sampled and levelled work to help teachers check their assessments of individual pupils’ achievements.
72. In the reception class, the teacher records the outcomes of baseline assessment and discusses them with parents. She then sensibly uses the descriptions of what children should be able to do to monitor their progress by highlighting where the children have made progress. It is evident in the teacher’s lesson planning for literacy and mathematics that she knows the stage children have reached and pitches the work accordingly.
73. Screening of the pupils’ achievements when they reach Year 1 is sensibly used to identify pupils who would benefit from the school’s Reading Recovery programme. Meticulous records are kept on the pupils in the Reading Recovery programme.
74. A key strength in the assessment procedures throughout the school is that every pupil has an individual target in English and mathematics. These targets are recorded either at the front of the pupils’ books, or on sheets or labels on their desks. The teachers’ marking of their pupils’ work has improved since the last inspection with clearer communication to pupils of where they need to improve.
75. All the pupils on the school’s special educational needs (SEN) register have individual education plans (IEPs), which have clear targets for the pupils and the parents, review dates and possible resources and strategies to use to help the pupil. Each teacher also has a useful sheet summarising the targets on their IEPs for all the pupils in his or her class.
76. The teacher managing the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) begins her assessment of individual children’s stages of English acquisition in the reception class and monitors their progress from that point. She has started keeping her own tracking sheets to help her know how well they are doing.
77. At school level, there is a recently introduced tracking sheet for each class showing SEN and EAL stages, levels achieved in National Curriculum tests and modest and challenging targets for the children’s achievements in English and mathematics. This sheet gives each teacher a clear overview of the academic progress and achievements of their pupils.
78. The one weakness in this system is that at a strategic level, there is insufficiently rigorous analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the achievements of different groups of pupils in the school, such as girls, boys or pupils from different ethnic groups. There is a lack of robust, systematic reporting on standards by the headteacher to the governing body for them to know clearly and specifically where the school is succeeding and where further improvements need to be made.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

79. The school has a good partnership with parents. It is viewed positively and as an approachable school. Links with parents, who give strong support to the school and helpful support to the curriculum, are good.
80. Evidence from the parents’ questionnaire and from their meeting before the inspection shows that they have generally positive views of the school and its work. Parents replying to the

questionnaire unanimously stated their children enjoyed school. The parents recognise that the school wishes to encourage their participation. A significant number of parents consider the school gives good support and encouragement to children's academic and personal development. However there were minor concerns about supervision in the playground, the range of extra curricular activities and the amount of homework their children are given.

81. There is a good link between the school and parents. This impacts positively upon children's learning. Parents give the school good support which includes assistance in sewing classes and active participation in 'Africa Week' and other festivals. Their support enriches the curriculum in areas such as the provision of relevant artefacts and items to aid learning. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school, as governors, helpers and members of the Friends Association. This group comprises representatives from all classes, parent governors and staff representatives. The Friends raise valuable amounts of money for the school, and put on a variety of social events. These have included events to provide information and discuss topics and various after school clubs.
82. Parental support is effectively used for children with special needs. The special needs co-ordinator ensures that appropriate parental support for the targets on the children's individual education plans is planned in. However, for pupils generally, their reading records do not always show the extent of activity undertaken at home and targets for this are rarely supplied or monitored. Similarly, the feedback and help given at home to pupils where English is an additional language is not structured or used as effectively as it could be.
83. Parent representatives contribute to the work of the governing body and its committees. There are governor visits to see children at work in the classrooms. Some parents are able to support teachers by helping in classes and other areas of the school while others assist by accompanying staff on educational trips.
84. Parents are given good information about the school's special needs policy and practice. They are informed of their children's progress and are invited to annual reviews. Whenever they have concerns, they are able to contact the class teacher and co-ordinator for special needs.
85. The information, which the school provides to parents, is good. The reports on children's progress cover every subject of the curriculum. They reflect what children have learned and the progress they have made. They allow for child and parent comments but do not include the targets for improvement or indicate how parents can assist in securing such targets.
86. The school prospectus is useful and sound, conveying the information the school needs to provide. The governors' annual report to parents is an excellent, well-written leaflet. It covers all the required areas and is very readable. It is made available in other languages and formats. There is also a folder, with recent letters home and other relevant information for parents, available in the reception area. This is all complemented by a varied and colourful notice board conveying information in several languages about school and community events and activities. Information concerning the curriculum is provided on request at curriculum meetings held for parents after school and during termly consultation evenings.
87. In the reception class, the bi-lingual assistant makes good informal contact with the non-English speaking parents of children in the class. At the beginning of the school day, she meets and greets them and sometimes translates messages for them. The teacher who manages the English as second language provision does not meet with parents individually but is planning to set aside time for parents to make appointments to meet with her if necessary. She intends involving the special educational needs co-ordinator in these meetings, where appropriate. She has established a Friday coffee morning for Bengali parents to encourage their involvement in the life of the school and to give them an opportunity to raise any concerns they might have.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

88. The mission statement for this Church of England school is moral and clear in its determination to

serve its multi-faith community and to provide equality of opportunity for every child. The leadership by example of the headteacher, well supported by governors, staff and parents, ensures that the vision is excellently fulfilled. Different cultures and individual pupils are highly valued within the school and pupils are held secure within the daily affirmation of tolerance and respect for others.

89. Within this principled framework, the management of the school is sound. There has been satisfactory improvement in the senior management team since the last inspection. After many difficulties of recruitment, a deputy headteacher has been appointed who is taking up a useful role in helping to plan and improve the curriculum, as well as being a class teacher.
90. Much of the headteacher's time goes to ensure the smooth daily running of the school. This is a difficult task through the many changes and difficulties in staffing and the emotional problems among the children in this inner city school. The headteacher is very concerned for the well being of the staff, who all value her support. She is aware that class teachers have very demanding days and does not ask them to operate as managers until she considers them ready.
91. However, senior managers do not ask enough of the teachers who are responsible for managing individual subjects within the curriculum and do not give them time away from their classes to manage thoroughly. Subject managers support their colleagues and ensure good resources for their subjects. They helpfully have agreed lists of things they must do. They do not have enough oversight of standards or the quality of teaching in their subjects to allow them to lead well. The school uses LEA advisers for this work, which is helpful, but not systematic enough. The exception to this is the mathematics co-ordinator who has a good action plan and is currently having some release time to work with a local authority consultant to improve mathematics in the school. This is successful but was instigated outside the school. The other co-ordinators need a clearer expectation within the school that they will be more proactive in developing their subjects. This is unchanged from the last inspection.
92. The co-ordinators for the pupils with special educational needs and children learning English as a second language are both supporting pupils well and taking sensible management initiative. The former, recently appointed, is undertaking appropriate training and liaising closely with the local authority adviser. He works closely with school staff and other agencies and has done much to ensure that the pupils are receiving the help they need. He has a detailed improvement plan for his responsibilities and gives effective support to class teachers in planning for pupils. He has ensured that information and communication technology is used appropriately in the school to produce the good tracking system that shows class teachers the progress of each pupil at a glance. This information has not been analysed to give strategic information to governors.
93. The teacher managing the provision for children learning English as an additional language is making an effective contribution to the achievement of the English language learners in the school. She is sensibly seeking to model English language teaching to the staff so that they can take on some of these methods for themselves. She is establishing good monitoring of the progress of English language learners through the school, through twice-yearly monitoring of the stages of the children's language acquisition. She and the teachers have set a challenging target of 80% of pupils learning English to attain at least level 4 in the 2001 English tests for 11 year olds. The monitoring of her work by the headteacher is largely informal. There is little evidence of the headteacher reporting formally to the governing body on the standards being achieved by the different ethnic groups in the school.
94. Management of the Foundation Stage curriculum, which should be taught to pupils under six, needs attention. As the nursery class at St Michael's is shared with the neighbouring school, the task of ensuring continuity in the learning of children in the nursery and reception class in St Michael's is complex. At the moment this is not really being done, and the curriculum for the reception class is not well adapted to the children's needs.
95. The school set statutory targets for all the 11 year olds' English and mathematics results for the

summer of 2000 and has exceeded them. This is due to hard work within the school and local authority support in managing the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

96. The school development plan is not, however very clear on how further targets will be met or how further improvement in other subjects will be achieved. Whilst it offers a broad overview of management activity and indicates that work will be done, it does not focus effort clearly on targets or priorities. The plan does not indicate awareness of areas in the curriculum where teaching and learning need to improve.
97. The governors are provided, by the headteacher and staff, with a good deal of operational information about the school but data is not well enough analysed for the governors to see strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' attainment or the teaching. They cannot therefore use the information for strategic planning. This situation is unchanged from the time of the last inspection.
98. The headteacher and some senior staff have had recent training in school self-evaluation. This has prepared them to draw conclusions from data, analyse pupils' progress and evaluate teaching. They have carried out some useful exercises in the school since the training last year, watching lessons and looking with pupils at their work. This is a helpful start to the gathering of information which governors and staff need to plan for school improvement but is not embedded in a clearly organised system.
99. The governors know a lot about their school and its ethos. They look for ways to involve themselves in school life, make good use of links with teachers, local authority information systems, fulfil their statutory duties appropriately and are managing the budget carefully over a period of years to improve the suitability of their building to primary pupils. They give thought and effort to their work, which would be even more effective if they had better information.
100. The governors and headteacher generally apply the principles of best value satisfactorily. Local authority benchmarking helps them compare their school with others and they know a local school that is statistically similar to their own, which aids comparison. They use competitive tendering appropriately. They challenge themselves to provide well for children by ensuring that there is a strong spiritual element to the education provided and by ensuring that the school is inclusive and does not turn away pupils who are traumatised or difficult to manage.
101. Funding is sensibly used. As in 1996, the classrooms contain good teaching resources and plentiful, qualitative books. Though there are difficulties in recruitment in the inner city, the staffing is currently sound. The high spend on having teachers without class responsibility to manage the provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils learning English as another language is justified by the good oversight these staff have of where individual pupils are with their learning. The high spend on in-service training supports the staff and is impacting positively on the quality of the teaching. Provision of computers is less successful. There are two in each classroom but the school currently has an empty computer suite. Better development planning is needed here to bring the school up to date in terms of the curriculum and the resources for it.
102. In-class support from adults other than class teachers is complex to organise in this school. A relatively large sum is spent on providing a nursery nurse and learning support assistants for the infant classes; the junior classes have much less support from assistants and, because of the range of pupil abilities and needs there, would benefit from more. The learning support assistants work hard in the classrooms but the impact of their work could be improved sometimes if they were specifically focused on identified pupils. There are two mother tongue speakers on the staff, one with Asian languages and one with African. One works exclusively in the Reception class with 11 pupils and one works in blocks of a term with one class only. This leaves many needy pupils, particularly in the infant classes, unsupported.
103. St Michael's has both male and female staff so that pupils of both genders have appropriate role

models. Provision would be even better if there were more staff, particularly males, from minority ethnic groups who could model appropriate behaviour.

104. The school building still raises a need for careful supervision on the stairs and the outside play space is still very limited and shared with the other school on the site. This is a constraint on physical education lessons because each school can only use the space for half the week. Governors are improving the facilities with a plan spanning several years but these two issues are difficult for them to address.
105. The school's funding is relatively high but the school makes a difference to its pupils. Many pupils when they start at St Michael's are needy and have below average attainment but they leave at 11 with good achievement. Thus the school is continuing to provide satisfactory value for money, as it was at the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

106. To improve further the standards of work and the progress the pupils make, the school should address two subjects specifically and improve management strategies. The governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in information and communication technology across the school by:
 - i) ensuring that the full National Curriculum is taught (Paragraphs 13, 42, 46, 224, 28);
 - ii) ensuring that strategic planning addresses the staged equipping of the information and communication technology suite (Paragraphs 101, 230).
- (2) Improve attainment in physical education, particularly for the juniors by ensuring that the principles of the National Curriculum are fully implemented (Paragraphs 47, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246).
- (3) Raise standards for the infants by managing the school's resources to give:
 - i) effective in-class support to manage behaviour (Paragraphs 69, 22, 27, 167, 183); and
 - ii) some mother tongue interaction (Paragraphs 7, 34, 102, 141, 155, 172, 192).
- (4) Improve punctuality by continuing to stress the need with families (Paragraph 30).
- (5) Plan and implement a system for school self evaluation and improvement which ensures that:
 - i) the teachers understand and can take full responsibility for their management roles as curriculum leaders (Paragraphs 90, 91, 169, 20, 213, 223);
 - ii) the quality of lesson planning and teaching are regularly monitored (Paragraph 4, 8);
 - iii) data is analysed to show strengths and weaknesses in learning and progress (Paragraphs 78, 92);
 - iv) findings from monitoring and analysis are clearly reported to the governors in writing (Paragraph 93);
 - v) findings are used to steer future strategic planning (Paragraphs 97, 98);

- vi) strategic planning shows clear priorities and targets related to pupils' attainment (Paragraph 96).

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Paragraph references are in brackets.

- Handwriting, spelling, punctuation (149, 160, 168)
- Teaching (38, 153, 163, 180, 181, 39, 193, 42, 211, 212, 236)
- Homework (44)
- Reception class (49, 109, 122, 131, 113, 94)
- Playground supervision (67)
- Behaviour (69, 176)
- Reading records (82)
- Deployment of support for junior classes (102, 184)
- Role models (103)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	12	33	44	9	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	166
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		89

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	22

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	146

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10	14	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	5	6
	Girls	5	7	7
	Total	8	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	33 (88)	50 (88)	54 (92)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	1	5	6
	Girls	4	6	6
	Total	5	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	21 (88)	46 (96)	50 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	19	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	3	6
	Girls	17	14	18
	Total	22	17	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (79)	63 (68)	89 (75)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	3	4
	Girls	16	13	15
	Total	18	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (57)	59 (68)	70 (64)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	41
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	49
Chinese	4
White	49
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	561997
Total expenditure	581493
Expenditure per pupil	2837
Balance brought forward from previous year	42628
Balance carried forward to next year	23132

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	178
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	24	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	34	3	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	26	11	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	24	16	0	0
The teaching is good.	71	26	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	37	3	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	37	8	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	38	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	37	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	32	3	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	26	8	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	37	21	11	0

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents at the meeting and one on a questionnaire referred to rough play or deliberate aggression at playtime, and felt that supervision was inadequate.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

107. The nursery class was not inspected. There were just 11 children in the reception class. Ten have been subject to baseline assessment which for five of them was what would normally be expected for children of this age. The attainment of the other five was below average for their age. Approximately 15 more children will be joining the class in January. The attainment profile of the class may therefore change in the spring term.
108. These children have benefited from being in a very small class with a teacher and a bi-lingual assistant and have made good progress since joining the reception class in September. In aspects of their learning in each area they are successfully on course to attain the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception year and they are achieving well. A few are likely to exceed the expected standard.
109. The planned curriculum in the reception class is not securely based on the six areas of learning defined by the government for this age group. This means that for example, there is an insufficiently clear focus on the children's personal, social and emotional development and the planning does not take full account of the need for children of this age group to learn through well structured play activities. Currently, because the group is very small, the impact of this weakness is not great. However, this will become important when the reception class is larger in the spring term. This is a weakness identified in the last inspection, which has not been adequately addressed.
110. The accommodation and resources in the reception class are good, except for provision for the children's outdoor play. There is a small area just outside the classroom, but this is currently inadequate. There are plans to improve provision for this area of the children's learning, which are part of the long term remodelling strategy.
111. Overall, teaching and learning in each of the six areas of learning are good.
112. Strengths in the teaching and learning include:
 - Good provision in the reception classroom for children's learning, with attractive areas, such as the book corner, mathematics and role-play areas.
 - Lively displays of things, some of which have dual-language labelling, that children can touch and hold.
 - Very good relationships with the children and praise for their achievements that promote their confidence.
 - Careful lesson planning and focused support for the children's learning that ensures all children in the group can make progress.
 - A good focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills which is supporting well the children's progress in reading and mathematics.
 - Good provision of materials and equipment that effectively support learning, such as real foods to taste, in some early scientific work.
 - Very clear expectations of behaviour that promote good standards in the children's behaviour, in PE and music lessons, for example.
 - Good support for children learning English with good use of their mother tongue to help them understand and learn.
 - A good multi-sensory approach which effectively helps the children's learning; for example in a mathematics lesson, the teacher dropped coins in a tin, so that the children could see and hear them, as they tried to calculate how many coins make 10p.
 - Appropriate use of the descriptions of learning in the baseline assessment system used in

- the school to monitor the children's progress.
- Each a child has a simple target to achieve in literacy or numeracy recorded in their books; these targets are ticked when they have been achieved so their individual progress is well supported.

113. There is some weakness in the teaching and learning for the reception children. There are occasionally heavily directed adult activities that tend to slow the children's learning. For example, three girls were working with the bi-lingual assistant on the names of the days of the week. This was very hard for them. In order to help them, the assistant focused on each individual in turn and the other two girls waited a long time doing nothing. Children working with their teacher spent a long time cutting and sticking sentences and pictures of a story they had heard. They persevered well but overall, the session did not balance sufficiently well the adult directed work with opportunities for the children to learn through structured play. Over direction of children using the class shop led to them losing interest and not learning as well as they might have done.
114. Nearly all of the children's written work is copying their teacher's writing which, although helpful, does not provide sufficient encouragement for them to make their own writing in different situations.

Personal, social and emotional development

115. In this area of learning, most of the children are likely to attain the expected standard and they are achieving well.
116. They show good interest in the many activities in the class and, when given the opportunity, confidently choose what they want to do. Again, when given the opportunity, the children confidently select the materials for activities. When drawing pictures of each other, for example, the children chose the pens or pencils they wanted to use. They concentrate on their chosen activities well, sometimes inviting adults to join them. For example, when using the computer independently the children painstakingly found the right letters on the keyboard to write the words for the "Podd can" game. On another occasion, two girls worked well at their paintings, sometimes checking on each other's work and then inviting the visiting adult to admire what they had done.
117. When working at adult directed activities, the children are good, persevering with the task even when it is hard for them. A group of children cutting and sticking text and pictures into books to reproduce a familiar story stayed on task, with the support of their teacher and were prepared to re-stick when things went wrong! Children making collage were painstaking in their work. The children learning English sometimes have to wait their turn for attention and even then they sit patiently and quietly. In their PE lesson, the children worked quietly with careful concentration.
118. The adults in their class make very good relationships with the children and thus enable them to approach new adults in a friendly and confident manner. The children are gently but firmly taught, and are very successfully learning classroom rules and routines. In their music session, for example, the children sat beautifully in a circle. They can take turns and share when they are playing their percussion instruments for example. They can share books with each other. In a mathematics session, a small group passed a dice round sensibly with no squabbles. The children successfully manage their own personal needs, getting changed sensibly for PE, for example. They can show consideration for each other; on one occasion when a child sneezed, another said, "bless you!"

Communication, language and literacy

119. Most of the children in this small group are likely to attain the expected standard in this area of learning by the end of the reception class and they are achieving well. The few children at a very early stage of learning English are unlikely to attain the expected standard but they are making sound progress. The teacher is aware of the needs of the literacy hour later in the school and

provides appropriate work on letters and words. Overall, the children's speaking skills are, understandably, less well developed than they are in their reading and writing.

120. The children are attentive when they listen to stories and can follow the sequence of events. The clear explanations from their teacher and the bi-lingual assistant successfully help the children to understand and follow instructions. The children are helped to make sound gains in their vocabulary; in a science lesson for example, the teacher revised the names of foods and introduced some descriptive words for the children to use. The children readily engage in conversation with the adults around them. There was little evidence during the inspection of children using talk to structure their role-play or other play activities.
121. The children are learning to recognise simple words such as "on", "for", "go" "by" and "day". They all look at books at the start of the day, and show that they know how to handle them, turning the pages correctly. The average and most able readers in the group use the pictures to guess what the words might say. Children who are confident in English talk articulately about what they see in their books. They are beginning to read simple text mostly correctly and are beginning to link some letters and sounds. They have good emergent understanding of what is involved in reading. For example, when they don't know a word they will insert a word that makes sense. Many children recognise their own names.
122. The most able children have a good grasp of some letters of the alphabet and make good attempts to spell individual words. For example, one child wrote "konck" on the flipchart and said, "that says conker". Nearly all the children can write their names accurately and quite a few write, randomly, individual recognisable letters. The most able children can write independently simple words such as "my", "mum", "dad" and "on". In their books, the children practice and improve their letter formation by going over the teacher's print and then, for some, moving on to copying underneath their writing. A weakness in the children's achievements in this area of learning is that there is insufficient emphasis on their attempting writing independently for themselves for different purposes.

Mathematical development

123. Most children are likely to achieve the expected standard in this area of learning by the end of the reception year and they are achieving well.
124. Most of the children can count to 10. The most able children can write almost accurately numerals to 15, can add and subtract 1 from 10, can order the days of the week and are beginning to be able to tell the time. The teacher provides interesting, real objects to count and attractive dice games to play. The least able children can count to 5. The children have learned about heavy and light things and have compared their heights, looking at the tallest and shortest children in the class. In practical activities such as shop play, the children count out coins reasonably accurately, with help from an adult who makes this requirement clear.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

125. Most children are likely to achieve the expected standard in this area of learning by the end of the reception year and they are achieving well.
126. In their scientific learning, the children learn to describe features of natural things, in this case the tastes of different foods. They are beginning to learn to record what they have found out in very simple grids. With help the children noted on a grid which foods they liked. This was challenging work, but the good level of adult support, in particular the use of the children's mother tongue was very effective in helping their learning.
127. The children have the beginnings of basic computer keyboard skills when using the computer. They can use the mouse, and type in numbers and letters.
128. The children have sound opportunities to use a range of building materials and making

techniques. They have used dough, rollers and cutters and have used recyclable materials to make simple artefacts. They have opportunities to use a range of construction kits and larger building bricks.

Physical development

129. Most children are likely to attain the expected standard in this area of learning and their achievement is sound.
130. In the PE lesson observed, the children have been taught to use the hall space competently, following instructions to change their way of moving, such as taking small steps and moving quickly or slowly. With appropriate supervision, the children can carry stools and benches. They move over the apparatus in different ways and directions and one or two can jump from a stool confidently.
131. Currently, the children do not have regular opportunities for outdoor adventurous play and physical activity. Such provision would be likely to improve the pupils' overall achievement in this area of learning.

Creative development

132. Most children are likely to attain the expected standard in this area of learning by the end of the reception year and they are achieving well.
133. The children have made self-portraits of outstanding quality. They are large, clear, and confident with accurate detail in facial features and colours. The pictures they have made of themselves for the graph showing the class in order of their height are also very well executed, neat and accurate. When they make pictures of each other in small supervised groups, the adults direct their attention with talk and the children observe very carefully. They are learning about colour mixing and about a range of media and techniques including paint, pencils, felt pens, collage and printing.
134. In music, the children are learning to sing together, but this is difficult for some because they are struggling to learn the words of songs. They are learning to play untuned percussion instruments to accompany their singing.

ENGLISH

135. In the 1999 national tests in reading and writing, the seven year olds' attainments were close to those found nationally and were much better than those found in similar schools, so these children achieved very well. In the 2000 tests, the seven year olds' attainments in the reading and writing tests were poor when compared to similar schools, so the children's achievement in these tests was unsatisfactory. The children did poorly in reading and spelling but a little better in writing. No pupils reached above average standards. Over the past four years, the school's results for seven year olds in the national tests in reading and writing have varied greatly but the underlying trend shows gradual improvement in standards since 1996.
136. Taken over time, the infant boys generally do a little better than the girls in the reading tests but do less well in the writing tests. Many of the pupils who have Reading Recovery support are boys. Although there is some variation from year to year, the children learning English generally achieve well in the reading and writing tests with most of them just reaching the expected standard.
137. In the 1999 national tests in English for the 11 years olds, the pupils' attainment was better than that found nationally and much better than that found in similar schools, so these pupils did very well. In the 2000 tests, the school's standards were also very high when compared to similar schools, so again these pupils achieved well. A good proportion reached above average standards in 2000. In 1997, the school's test results in English improved dramatically and have

shown steady improvement since then. The rate of improvement in the school's test results has been better than the national trend.

138. In 2000, the school exceeded its target for the proportion of pupils to attain the expected standard in English and has set a challenging target for 2001 of 80% of pupils to reach at least level 4 in the English test.
139. Over time, the junior boys tend to do less well than the girls in the English tests, but the difference in the performance of boys and girls is not great. The teachers are careful to ensure that both genders have opportunity and challenge. The pupils learning English do well in the junior English tests, with the majority of them achieving at least the nationally expected standard.
140. Standards found in this inspection broadly reflect those in the school's test results. For the infants, the pupils' attainments are below the nationally expected standards, but given the level and nature of the pupils' learning needs, their achievement is satisfactory. The junior pupils' attainments are in line with the nationally expected standards and their achievement is good. There are many infant pupils at the early stages of learning English and their progress in the subject is understandably slower. In the junior classes, as the pupils' confidence in, and command of the English language improve, so does their progress in English. There are also in each class a few pupils with significant special learning or emotional needs for whom progress is difficult and whose behaviour makes a heavy demand on the teachers' management skills. This is particularly true of the two infant classes, where the emotional and behavioural difficulties of some pupils inhibit their ability to learn effectively.
141. The pupils' attainment in speaking and listening at the age of seven falls below expected standards but given the starting point for many pupils their achievement is satisfactory. By the time they are 11, the pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is in line with what is expected nationally for their age and their achievement is good. These standards are broadly similar to those found in the last inspection, although this inspection has found speaking and listening skills to be weaker in the infants than was previously the case.
142. Speaking and listening skills are generally weak in the infant classes, but steadily improve through the junior classes. The infants can listen carefully to their teacher in whole class sessions, but many find it hard to express their ideas in more than simple phrases or short sentences. The juniors can mostly listen carefully to each other at the ends of English lessons and sometimes show they have listened carefully by giving some articulate evaluations of what they have heard. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, when pupils were listening to each other's attempts to write newspaper reports, after some encouragement, they began to be very clear about what worked well in the writing and what didn't. Quite a few pupils in junior classes are still reticent about speaking out and read their work tentatively. However, by the end of Year 6, most pupils show competent command of spoken English and can discuss ideas thoughtfully with each other and their teachers.
143. By the ages of seven and 11, the pupils' attainments in reading are similar to those typically found for children of this age and their achievement is good. This reflects an improvement from the 1996 inspection, when standards in reading were found to be unsatisfactory.
144. The least able readers in Year 2 can read a simple text with little assistance, and are beginning to use their knowledge of the alphabet to help them "sound out" words they don't know. They talk with emerging confidence about the story and the pictures in their books. The average ability readers read confidently using a wider range of strategies; such as phonics and picture and context clues to help them read the text. The most able readers read with expression and interest, understanding most of what they read. However, as a number of these pupils are learning English, they do not always understand all the words they read.
145. By Year 6, the least able readers read simple text accurately and show a good grasp of the plot. They have some trouble with unknown words, generally because their English understanding is still developing. They tend to be more confident with stories than with non-fiction books, again

because of some limitations in their English vocabulary. The readers of average ability show good attention to punctuation and manage comparatively difficult books, such as “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” quite well. The most able pupils are articulate in their reading and in their discussion about books and plays they have met. For example, one boy was able to say that he’d “got the plot” of “Midsummer Night’s Dream”. All of these pupils know how to use contents’ lists and indexes in books and one boy said he would use a dictionary or a thesaurus if he didn’t know the meaning of a word.

146. Generally, the pupils’ attitudes to reading are very good. They talk comfortably about the books they enjoy and are happy to share their thoughts and ideas about reading with adults.
147. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing are below those found nationally for children of this age, but again, given the starting point for many of these pupils, their achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, most of the eleven year olds are reaching the standards that children of their age would be expected to attain and their achievement is good. These standards are similar to those found in the school’s previous inspection, although this inspection has found writing to be weaker for the infants than was previously the case.
148. A significant strength in the standards of writing in the school is the wide range of writing that the pupils do and the successful use of their writing knowledge and skills in other subjects of the curriculum such as science, history and design. The pupils are effectively learning to write for different purposes and in different styles.
149. A weakness in standards throughout the school is in the pupils’ handwriting, their spelling and their punctuation. Progress towards a good style of joined up writing is very variable and there are still quite a few pupils in the older junior classes who are not consistently joining their letters. The pupils’ accuracy in spelling and punctuation is not good enough. Most junior pupils do have a satisfactory grasp of the alphabet and of spelling rules such as “ing” and “e” on the ends of words but do not apply this knowledge sufficiently well when they write.
150. By the age of seven the least able pupils write very simple captions or phrases, mostly with a lot of support from their teacher. The average ability pupils are beginning to use joined up writing, and some of their spelling is accurate, but full stops and punctuation are used fairly indiscriminately. The most able writers retell familiar stories simply, they sometimes make good attempts to spell, but their spelling is generally quite erratic. They are trying to join their letters. They are beginning to develop their use of words to make descriptions, for example, “the smoke was like a cloud.” Overall, though, their writing is still limited in its length and content.
151. By Year 6, the pupils write in different styles, including letters, persuasive writing, simple play scripts, descriptive pieces, poetry and personal accounts. The structure in their writing is better, with the pupils having had more experience of “brainstorming” ideas and planning their writing. The pupils show quite rapid improvement in length, style and presentation of their work towards the end of the juniors. The work of the least able pupils and those with special educational needs still shows simple spelling errors and weak punctuation but the structure of their work is improved. The average ability pupils present their written work better, begin using speech marks and paragraphs and develop their style. The able writers produce lively writing with some mature content, some adventurous vocabulary and good descriptive work.
152. Teaching and learning in English are satisfactory for the infants and good for the juniors. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when standards of teaching were judged to be satisfactory overall.
153. All the teachers are successfully implementing the literacy hour with their classes. They make clear to the children what they are going to learn in the lessons and they check at the end of the lessons how well the children have learned. They provide different levels of work for pupils of different ability so that all pupils are helped to make progress. They choose and use texts well to teach the children what they want them to learn. For example, in Year 2, the teacher successfully used the familiar and popular story of “A Quiet Night In” to develop the pupils’ ability

to extract information from the text. Basic literacy skills are competently taught. In most classes, however, the literacy lessons last much longer than one hour. To some extent this is understandable because of the demands the literacy strategy makes on the St Michael's pupils and the teachers' wish to ensure that pupils have understood the work. However, this does also mean that sometimes overlong whole class or independent working sessions make it difficult for pupils to sustain their concentration.

154. Throughout, the teachers give good emphasis to the pupils' language development and the widening of their spoken vocabulary, and show high expectations of their pupils' ability to understand and handle language. Over time this has a positive impact on the pupils' ability to express themselves orally and in writing. For example, in a Year 1 class, the teacher revisited with the children words they had met in a performance of "The Happy Prince". The teacher almost acted out the words "swoop", "skim" and "dive", using them with great expression, so the children could feel and see the meaning of these words. In a Year 4 lesson, there was useful discussion of the meanings of "enthusiastic", "patiently" and "angrily", with sound contributions from most pupils in the class. Most importantly, the teachers give the pupils time to frame their answers to questions, understanding how difficult it is for some of them.
155. These strategies are of particular importance because of the high numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language. This autumn term, the English language teacher is working solely in the Year 1 class, because this is where the greatest numbers of English language learners are, and next term she will support the Year 6 pupils as they work towards their national tests in English. Unfortunately, this has left the Year 2 pupils learning English without any additional expert support and there is a level of frustration amongst these pupils that is partially contributing to their difficulties in concentrating and behaving well.
156. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make satisfactory progress in the infant classes and good progress in the junior ones. The special educational needs co-ordinator gives good in-class support to groups or individuals with special learning or behavioural needs. Learning support assistants are for the most part deployed well to help pupils with special educational needs and work well with them in small groups. The teachers give these pupils slightly different tasks or give more structure to the tasks to help them. When the class teachers work with pupils with special educational needs on reading and writing, they pitch the work at the right level for them. In Year 6, for instance, three pupils worked with their teacher on comparatively simple sounds blends. Just occasionally, lack of clarity in the task confuses the pupils with special needs and they don't make the progress they might. This was evident in a lesson on play conventions, when there had been insufficient discussion of ideas such as lines, dialogue and stage direction to help the pupils in their independent work. However, it is notable that pupils with special educational needs are often asked to make a contribution in the whole class sessions at the beginnings or ends of lessons, making them feel successful and included.
157. The teachers have good expectations of their higher attaining pupils and generally give them harder work to do, or find other opportunities to extend their learning. For example in Year 2, the lesson ended with work on words that sound the same but have different spelling patterns, such as "flour" and "flower" and therefore have different meanings. This work was too difficult for the majority of the pupils, but there were a few higher attaining pupils who could cope with it. In a Year 3 lesson, a group of more able pupils read the story of "A witch got on at Paddington Station" and then had to write a postcard from a different viewpoint based on this story; this was challenging work for them.
158. The teachers throughout use questioning well to check that pupils have remembered or understood something learned in previous lessons. Sometimes they ask their pupils to reflect on their own learning, by asking, for instance, "How well do you think you know that?" Although this is hard for most pupils, it is helping them to begin to think more about their own learning.
159. The teachers throughout consistently praise and encourage their pupils, often being clear about what the pupils have done well. This helps the pupils to feel successful and to know what they are doing well. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher said, "I love it when people are good wordsmiths,"

when the children tried very hard to tell him how to spell words. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher's praise for those children who were joining in with the whole class reading activity encouraged more pupils to join in and try harder.

160. A weakness in the teaching is that pupils are not always given sufficient support in their spelling. For example, when Year 1 children were trying to write about "The Happy Prince", they had no spelling lists of words they were likely to need and there was little encouragement to the higher attaining pupils to try and use simple dictionaries. This resulted in the pupils struggling too much with their writing and not producing as much as they might have done. In the junior classes, there is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to find spellings in dictionaries and most teachers do not place sufficient emphasis with the pupils on spelling simple words accurately. This results in written work sometimes being done rather carelessly, with too many unnecessary errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
161. A strength in the teaching is the teachers' positive management of the pupils' behaviour, which is often challenging. The teachers work hard and for the most part successfully to keep their pupils on task and paying attention. Discipline is firm but fair, and there are times when the teachers have to be cross with individuals or the whole class. Potential squabbles in the infant classes are dealt with calmly. An instance of this was when two children began to argue about a chair and the teacher swiftly and quietly resolved the situation, by showing one child where he could find another chair. In the junior classes, unacceptable behaviour is dealt with by removing the individual from sitting near other pupils but still near enough to the teacher to continue participating in the lesson. Learning support assistants helpfully sit near pupils who find it difficult to behave. They demonstrate appropriate behaviour, (sitting up straight and listening for example) to the pupils, particularly in the infant classes, so the children see expectations of behaviour reinforced.
162. The teachers think of interesting activities for their pupils that engage their attention and keep them interested. In particular, the teachers find good ways of stimulating their pupils to try and write. In the infant lessons, the teachers try to give the pupils a purpose for their writing, "So Miss... will know all about it" for example. The teachers give the pupils interesting topics such as "Year 1 Book of Sharing" or the Year 2 class book, "Every picture tells a story". In the junior classes the pupils have been given stimuli such as a lovely picture or an interesting object as a focus for their writing, and this has been most effective.
163. Lessons are well prepared with good use of resources that helps the pupils' learning. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils were given small whiteboards to record their ideas in pairs in the whole class session; this was an effective and lively strategy that kept the pupils focused on what they had to do. In a Year 6 lesson, the imaginative presentation of visual images of trains and carriages really helped the pupils' understanding of main and subordinate clauses. In another class, real newspapers for pupils to look at helped them in their work on report writing. Texts are often put on overhead transparencies and this engages the attention of the whole class. However, sometimes photocopied text is too small for all the pupils to see and so their learning slows.
164. Sometimes, computers are used well in English lessons to support the pupils' learning. There is currently a "Happy Prince" project in the school that involves the junior pupils using e-mail and this is being well used in English lessons for developing the pupils' reading and writing skills. In an infant lesson, pupils used the word processing facility competently to produce their own writing. There are also missed opportunities to use computers. In one infant lesson, the pupils were not given the opportunity to record by word processing what they liked about "The Happy Prince" story. In a Year 6 lesson, although the pupils used the computer they were only transcribing written text, rather than drafting their writing using word processing and so the task was insufficiently demanding.
165. In all classes, the teachers effectively use the idea of "response" partners or paired working to keep the children working and thinking, and the pupils respond well to this strategy. In Year 2, for instance, the pupils worked in pairs to think of a "why" question to ask. In Year 6, the pupils successfully worked together to write attention-grabbing newspaper headlines and reports. The

teachers also successfully “model” the process of writing for their pupils, who, as they watch their teachers write, learn what is involved in drafting a piece of writing and what they have to think about when they write.

166. The pupils generally apply themselves to their work quite well in English lessons and sometimes very well. In Year 1, for example, these young children gave concentrated effort to their handwriting practice, with the result that their joining of two letters was accurately done. In Year 2, and in two junior classes, the pupils find concentration difficult but with firm encouragement and support from their teachers manage to get most of their work done.
167. Overall, the clear strengths in the teaching lead to satisfactory attitudes and behaviour in English lessons throughout the school. There are some instances of poor behaviour in the infant classes, where some pupils have particular difficulties. There is very good behaviour in Year 6, where pupils show very good levels of responsiveness to their teacher, work very well co-operatively and show a mature attitude.
168. There are good assessment procedures in English, with very specific target setting for individual pupils throughout the school and some self-assessment by pupils in Year 6. The teachers make notes on their weekly plans identifying pupils who did well or those who will need more support in certain areas. All teachers write constructive comments on their pupils’ writing telling them what they have done well and how they can improve. However, the marking rarely focuses on spelling and punctuation. The recently introduced profiles of each class group enable the teachers to have an overview of their class and to set challenging end of year targets for their attainments, expressed in National Curriculum levels. There are regular checks on pupils’ progress with termly sampling of the pupils’ work. The one weakness in this system is that the home-school reading records do not include comments to the pupils’ parents or carers about specific progress in reading.
169. The co-ordinator for English has visited classrooms in the past to work alongside her colleagues and give advice. She has organised helpful training for the teachers and has supported the work on marking and target setting. This term, however, when there are new teachers and when teachers have changed classes she has done little monitoring of teaching and learning and so far has had little release time to do this work. Whilst she does have a general overview of what standards are like in English, the co-ordinator does not demonstrate a rigorous grasp of standards of teaching and learning in English or of specific strengths and weaknesses in year groups or in aspects of English. There is no evidence of a rigorous audit of English in the school or of a detailed literacy action plan to show where specific improvements are to be made.

MATHEMATICS

170. The infants have not been meeting the national expectation for mathematics over the last few years although this year’s Year 2 are doing some difficult work at telling the time currently and are coming close to some of the expected mathematics. St Michael’s infants usually make satisfactory achievement from where they started and are doing so this year, although last year’s Year 2 underachieved.
171. Test results for the juniors have been improving over recent years and Year 6 pupils usually have test results that are close to the national average. Last year’s results were weaker but the current Year 6 are demonstrating in their lessons that their standards are satisfactory. The achievement of these older pupils, is good. Achievement is better than for the infants because, in their junior years the pupils learning English have become sufficiently fluent for their language to support their mathematics. All this is a reverse of the situation at the last inspection when infant pupils were meeting the national expectation and juniors were not. Over this time results have been dropping for the infants and rising for the juniors. This is a sound improvement for the juniors, although there are still issues to address for the infants.
172. Throughout the infant classes the pupils move from informal working, like measuring with handspans, to more formal working, like counting time in fractions of an hour. Their work in

shape, space and measures is well understood but their attainment is not meeting the national expectation. By Year 2, their accuracy in number is good. They can count, add single digits and tens; they understand the composition of two digit numbers and recognise odd and even numbers. One pupil with special educational needs was able to see the relevance of counting in fives to telling the time. The pupils can construct their two times table for themselves. Able pupils can use calculators sensibly to do work like this and one able pupil multiplied by 2 up to $46 \times 2 = 92$. Able pupils, however, would have a lot of ground to cover to attain an appropriate level 3 in number at the end of the year. Basic competencies are strong and understanding is good. Early data handling work in science shows that most pupils understand how to communicate data in tables and block graphs and the more able can appropriately construct bar charts, so that standards are in line with expectation here. In applying their mathematics, Year 2 begin to use mathematical language, like the names of vulgar fractions, and can use symbols when they meet them. To attain level 3 they would have to explain their thinking. This aspect has particular problems for even the more able of the 17 pupils who are learning English as a second language in this class of 23.

173. The oldest juniors in Year 6 can apply their mathematics in a good range of contexts, using number to calculate journey times, for example, and compare team lap times. Their number work is well established. Most can calculate vulgar fractions of two digit numbers, multiply and divide to one place of decimals, add to two places of decimals, equate fractions with decimals, add, subtract, multiply and divide hundreds and thousands. In their shape and space work everyone can find perimeters and areas of shapes and the able pupils can work out areas for complicated shapes by adding and multiplying. In applying their mathematics, most can choose resourceful ways to solve problems and complete number patterns. The more able begin to consider how sensible their results are. Year 6 play a complex "number challenge" at the end of their mathematics lessons which makes them think independently; they enjoy stretching their competencies then and show that they are meeting the national expectation.
174. The junior classes learn much of their data handling by applying it in other subjects; they produce, for example, block graphs and tables in science and history. Year 5 could offer a good prediction of how a graph might look, given certain data. Year 6 attainment is sound: they can produce line graphs, bar charts and pie charts on computers and explain how to interrogate them.
175. In the juniors, the three older year groups show standards that meet the expectation for the age groups. The youngest, Year 3, do not. This is the group whose test results were weak last year. There were a number of reasons for this, including significant periods of absence from school for 11 pupils of the 25, and disrupted teaching which management did not remedy. They have not yet all caught up to where they should be although the less able have gained ground well. The classes are improving at a good pace this year; they understand, read and write numbers and recognise place value; they can measure time and length. They need to be able to work out their own approaches to problems and take greater responsibility for organising and checking their work in order to catch up completely.
176. Among the juniors there is a tendency for girls to perform better in mathematics tests than boys over the last few years. The school has made no formal analysis of this data. The teachers ensure that both genders have similar demands placed on them but there are occasions when boys, as individuals or in small groups, are restless or challenging in their behaviour. This interrupts their progress.
177. The many pupils learning English as a second language are making good progress overall through the school. In the juniors they grow fluent enough to discuss what they understand in mathematics. They know they are valued because they can see numerals written in their first language on their classroom walls to give them confidence. These pupils include gifted and talented pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Gifted and talented pupils, generally, are challenged in their mathematics work through extension activities planned for them and were achieving well throughout the school overall. Children with special educational needs have carefully staged tasks and materials at the right level for their mathematical ability and make good progress over the school.

178. At the last inspection the quality of the mathematics teaching was inconsistent, ranging from unsatisfactory to good. There has been a sound improvement. Now the teaching is satisfactory for the infants and good for the juniors. For the oldest year groups in each phase, the teaching is better than that: good for Year 2 and very good for Year 6. The Year 2 pupils have more difficulty settling and getting on independently so that their teacher has to spend more time managing them, which makes their progress a little slower.
179. In both infant and junior classes the teachers are competent mathematicians. They set the scene by displaying their classrooms well with useful mathematical vocabulary in various languages, number lines and pupil's work. They plan and prepare lessons in a very detailed way, showing the various stages of the numeracy hour and what they hope the pupils will learn at each stage. The teachers work out what key mathematical vocabulary they will use and what questions they will ask. They show exactly what tasks different individuals and groups will do to match their stages of development. They prepare very carefully for lessons by checking that all the equipment they will need is to hand. This ensures that everyone has a very clear expectation for what will be achieved during the lesson and helps keep the lesson focussed even if individuals become frustrated or restless.
180. The class teachers set individual pupil targets in mathematics two or three times a term, which help them to focus on the individual members of the class and how well they are doing. Many teachers write the targets in their pupils' exercise books for them, as a helpful, permanent reminder. During the inspection, this very good strategy was not followed through for the pupils in the lessons. The teachers did not refer to the targets when telling their classes what the lesson was about. The teaching could be better if the pupils were aware of the relationship of the lesson to their own target. The teachers do, however, maintain good records of their pupils' progress, and use what they know very well to make sure everyone has a task in each lesson with the right degree of challenge.
181. The junior pupils are encouraged to make self-evaluations of their progress. This good strategy supports their sense of self worth and helps focus them on their targets. Both infant and junior teachers mark the work carefully with sympathetic, evaluative comments, helping the pupils to feel valued and showing them how important the work is. Reference to the targets would be helpful here, too.
182. The teachers in the junior classes offer a challenge to their pupils which the children can just about meet. They often ask pupils to make predictions, which pushes the pupils into evaluating evidence and thinking hard. The most successful lessons stress the need to express your mathematical learning in words. "How did you work it out?" "What kind of pattern can you see?" are examples of the kind of open questions teachers use to push their pupils. This is difficult for some learners but they are involved and try hard. One Yoruba speaker wrote: "The pattern is a kind of muddle", because he couldn't get any closer but knew he must make a statement in English. Another strategy that works well with the older pupils is to set them talking in pairs to discuss the answer to a question. This gives all a much-needed chance to formulate thinking in language. The teachers use overhead projectors well to demonstrate calculations and there is particularly good teaching where they ask pupils to demonstrate to each other, using language to consolidate their learning. This use of pupils to demonstrate is more frequent in Year 6 than in younger classes, who do not all use it enough.
183. The teachers in the infant classes do their very best to keep lessons brisk and usually manage to remain good humoured in the face of some noisy working and pupils who are not yet mature enough to settle well. The pupils need to handle equipment to make their learning real. This is well provided but leads to movement and potential for distraction. The teachers are using praise and appropriate strategies to manage the pupils but the pace of lessons can slow and in some, the final, plenary part of the lesson can be skimmed through lack of time or pupil inclination.
184. In the infants, pupils learning English and those with special educational needs often have support from a second teacher or learning support assistant. In the juniors they have less adult support.

Although the teachers give frequent attention, know each individual well and provide carefully for them, more adult support in the numeracy hour for the juniors would be beneficial to support their concentration.

185. Mathematics is a well-managed subject. The co-ordinator has a competent action plan to guide him through the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy; he has release time from his class to work with the local authority's numeracy consultant and their monitoring of teachers' lesson plans and teaching is impacting very successfully on the lessons. The analysis of attainment data, to indicate priorities for improvement, is not as firmly established. The school had set a target for 2000 of 63% pupils at Level 4 and has just met it. The target was lower than the result for 1999 and was based on knowledge of the pupils. For 2001, the target of 75% is more aspirational, which is appropriate.

SCIENCE

186. In the 1999 national tests, the school's results for 11 year olds dropped to below average for the first time since 1996. In 2000 the results were better and close to the national average. However pupils' achievements in the science tests were better than those found in similar schools which shows that the pupils in St Michael's are achieving well. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
187. The findings of this inspection are that standards achieved by the oldest pupils in the school are at the expected level. The progress made by pupils, including the more able, those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, where pupils' attainment was found to be below national expectations and the progress that they made unsatisfactory.
188. The pupils throughout the school are developing skills of scientific enquiry such as observation, prediction, investigation and recording. This strength is due to the teachers' careful planning of appropriate practical activities. Younger juniors have investigated which materials are best for mopping up spills and recorded the results in a variety of ways. They discuss how to make a test fair when exploring whether or not different materials are magnetic. Pupils in Year 4 can construct electrical circuits and understand which materials are conductors. Pupils in the middle junior years have a good knowledge of life processes and living things. Some have investigated the impact of exercise on the human body. They know the names and functions of major organs such as the heart and lungs and understand the function of the skeleton, joints and muscles. The oldest juniors are beginning to plan their own investigations and can work systematically in groups. They know about variables, the need for a fair test and can develop an hypothesis. They make sensible predictions and can talk about the reason for these; 'I think the icing sugar will dissolve more quickly, the particles are finer.' Pupils in the juniors entered the results of their investigations about changing materials, food groups and the effects of exercise into computer databases, producing a variety of charts and graphs.
189. In 1999 teachers assessed standards in science for seven year olds as below average overall, although, within that, standards in scientific enquiry were seen as in line with the national average. In 2000 standards were in the bottom 5% nationally with no pupils gaining the higher levels.
190. Compared with similar schools the pupils' achievement has varied. In 1999 it was good, but in 2000, it was well below that of similar schools. Overall and during the inspection, achievement for the infants in science is satisfactory.
191. Overall these results reflect a decline in standards for the seven year olds since the school's last inspection, when they were satisfactory. However, the inspection shows that the pupils' learning in lessons is good because teachers work hard to develop pupils' scientific vocabulary as well as their skills and knowledge.
192. In the lessons seen during the inspection, standards are still below what is expected for infant

pupils due to the very high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language who still have some difficulty with scientific vocabulary. Younger pupils are learning about materials such as wool, wood, fabric, metal and can describe their properties. On hearing the story of the 'Three Little Pigs' they could say why it is not sensible to build a house from straw 'because it's wobbly'. They are beginning to make predictions and can say which material they think would keep their hands warm. Older infants have been exploring changes and most know what happens to chocolate when it is heated and to water when it freezes. They were developing their observational skills by looking at ice through a magnifying glass; 'I can see lots of little bubbles ... like a rope'. They know about man made and natural materials. They have carried out investigations about whether different materials can change shape, for example squash, bend or stretch. In finding out about 'ourselves' they know why exercise is good for them, know about healthy eating and recognise that some medicines can be dangerous. They record the results of their investigations in charts, tables and graphs.

193. Throughout, the pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well due to the emphasis teachers place on the development of scientific language and to the effective support from additional adults in the classroom. The achievement of the more able children is satisfactory although they are not always provided with opportunities that will enable them to achieve the higher levels.
194. In their lessons throughout the school pupils are making good gains in knowledge and understanding because of good and sometimes very good teaching and this is an improvement since the last inspection. A consistent strength in the teaching is that teachers know clearly, and tell their pupils, what they want them to learn in the science lessons. The pupils are benefiting from the well-planned and well resourced practical activities and from some good, whole class discussions. In one particularly good lesson in Year 6 pupils were given the opportunity to discuss their ideas with partners before feeding back to the whole class debate. The teachers' generally good subject knowledge means that they are able to develop the pupils understanding successfully. They ask questions such as 'Why do you think that?' and pupils think hard in order to respond. There is a helpful emphasis on the development of scientific vocabulary such as 'materials', 'fabric', 'magnetic' and 'dissolve. This is particularly important for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers work extremely hard to make the lessons stimulating and interesting, as a result pupils are generally attentive and responsive in science lessons. Older infants all had the opportunity in groups to observe with magnifying glasses the effects of ice melting. In a particularly good lesson in Year 4, pupils formed a human electrical circuit with pupils adopting the roles of different components; this clearly developed and extended the understanding of all pupils. Although the behaviour of some pupils in science lessons is sometimes restless, particularly in the infants, this is not impacting adversely on the learning of the majority of pupils. The teachers manage successfully to keep the majority of pupils focused on discussion through their careful questioning.
195. Teachers' assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding in science is generally satisfactory and teachers plan lessons as a result of this that builds on the work pupils have done previously. There are inconsistencies in practice with some teachers carrying out more formal tests or recording whether pupils have learned what was intended. New assessment and record keeping systems that have been introduced alongside the introduction of the national scheme of work should give a more coherent approach. The school is usefully collecting moderated pieces of work across the different areas of the science curriculum to support teacher assessment.
196. The management role of the science co-ordinator is, at present under-developed although the school development plan includes the intention that she will monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and the previous co-ordinator has done so. Some analysis of performance data has been undertaken, including an analysis of the performance of different ethnic groups. However improvement strategies are not being drawn up as a result of this information. A newly qualified teacher is very helpfully shadowing the deputy headteacher in her science co-ordinator's role and she has worked hard to build up the resources required to support the scheme of work. These are well organised and stored within the resource area in the new extension, this is an improvement since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

197. Standards for the infants in art are satisfactory for the national expectation and the pupils' achievement is good. For the juniors standards are good compared with the national expectation and now the achievement for the pupils is very good. This shows a sound improvement from the last inspection when standards were satisfactory in both key stages. The pupils with special needs, those learning English as a second language and the gifted and talented all have an equal opportunity to progress in art throughout the school. They, in common with their peers, are making sound progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors.
198. By the time they are seven, the pupils in the infants can produce lively, quite detailed drawings from memory and imagination. Year 2 have recently looked at old pictures to draw from observation buildings at the time of the Great Fire of London and have done a competent job of proportioning them and indicating shape and dimension. They have used their drawings to make paper print blocks and their prints are well finished, clear and individual. An example of good achievement is that, earlier in the year, one of the infants was a winner in the Camden Community Strategy art competition, with a picture of Camden in 2010.
199. The strength of the juniors' work is its sustained quality and the fact that while they do it they refer to the work of other artists. For example, Year 4 pupils have produced thoughtful "dream" images and visual accounts over a number of lessons. They have used pencil sketches of furniture, comic strip versions of events, group discussion, observation and writing about the dream painting of Chagall, all before producing a subtle water colour image on paper of their own.
200. Year 6 has produced similarly sustained work on a theme of movement. They have manipulated materials and processes to communicate the idea of movement, finishing by producing paper print blocks of moving figures that are imaginatively printed and repeated to suggest movement. They have explored ideas and selected visual information: studies for this have included pencil sketches of each other, looking at the work of many other artists and listing useful words like "flowing" and "forceful" and discussing colour, tone, pose, gesture and other elements.
201. In the juniors, generally pupils use paint and charcoal more sensitively than pencil. They produce good one and two dimensional work. No three dimensional work was evident at this early stage in the school year.
202. Not enough lessons were seen during the inspection to make a complete judgement about teaching, but teaching throughout the school clearly values art and individual response. More unusually, there is also a good stress on finishing work and a distinction in the juniors between rough working jottings and finished products. The teachers in the juniors expect a good effort from their classes and their expectation is met. Another good feature of the teaching is the use of speaking and listening and writing within art lessons. Useful questions are asked and answered, some in writing, about artists' purposes and effects. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their work and that way they develop a clear intention for their work, which they can then successfully express.
203. The opportunities the children have to learn are qualitative and well organised. The school is using the national scheme of work and the art co-ordinator has linked the work in art to work in other subjects to give the pupils continuity. Additionally the school has its own sensible policy about how media are to be used and colour mixing taught. The art curriculum is enriched by visits to museums and galleries for pupils to see the work of other artists. For example, recently the three older junior classes went to the Courtauld Institute. This opportunity was well used, with sketching and working at the gallery with specialists as part of the day. The pupils were introduced to a new medium, oil pastels, and were led to consider the theme of movement in the paintings they saw, which they would continue to develop in their own work back at school.
204. The high value the school places on celebrating other cultures supports the art curriculum very well, and vice versa. The school has many displays that include pictures or artefacts from other

countries or periods of history which surround the pupils with interest and diversity. Design from early Twentieth Century England, pottery and beads from Africa, embroidery on silk from Bengal are among many stimuli currently available to the pupils.

205. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that resources are available for the subjects. Generally, resources for art are good with a wide range of media and stimuli; however, information and communication technology is not being used, as it could be, for producing images. It is hard for the co-ordinator to manage improvement as she sees no specific lesson plans nor lessons. She has set the scene well but needs more information if she is to build on that. Art could be improved across the school if the quantity and quality of pencil work and three dimensional work were monitored. There is provision for the teachers to evaluate how well the pupils have done at the end of each term's work. This is being usefully done in some year groups but not in others, where management is needed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

206. When the school was inspected last time, standards did not meet the national expectation for the infants or the juniors. The pupils were not always sure what they were making or, had little sense of design for purpose. There is a definite improvement and sense of purpose in the work now. The oldest infants are coming close to satisfactory standards and the oldest juniors' work is broadly in line with the national expectation. The achievement is sound although the pupils, particularly the gifted and talented ones, are capable of more. In art lessons, the pupils are finishing their work well but the finish in their design and technology is not as qualitative.
207. The pupils in Year 2 have recently made model wheeled vehicles. They thought about what the vehicles were for and drew designs in advance. They joined their models with masking tape and made sensible use of clothes pegs too. They would attain the expected standard if they could select for themselves appropriate tools, techniques and materials to do such work. One able pupil was approaching good attainment when he thought of a sensible variety of functions that his vehicle would have to carry out: "carry bricks, stop for the driver and for the lights".
208. Year 6 pupils have worked for a block of two days on a major task of making a model of a ferris wheel which would move at the flick of a switch. They worked in twos and threes, drawing a design, designing a battery operated circuit and then cutting and joining materials to produce the model. Generally, the circuits worked although the joins were difficult owing to the weight of the batteries. The finish was untidy but the pupils were aware of that and, in their evaluations, discussed how they would do better. Able pupils had modified their designs as they worked and had evaluated their products seriously. The work of the older pupils would be better if they could draw on a range of information sources when designing, like books and other people's views, as well as their own, and if they could then evaluate not just their product but also their information sources.
209. The pupils, particularly in Year 6, use their basic skills in literacy well in design and technology. They write clearly about their plans, their work and their evaluations; those as young as Year 1 use their numeracy competently to show their favourite products on a graph, while older pupils can measure materials and cut thread lengths competently. Information technology, however, is not well used in design and technology lessons, to make designs or control models.
210. As they plan their lessons the teachers are careful to implement the school's expectation for the pupils' personal development. The emphasis in one Year 5 lesson on teamwork and pupils' helping each other was good for their social development. The teachers show the pupils that they are concerned for the individuality of their work and the pupils are generally well motivated and enjoy it. Year 4 pupils were designing, making and decorating Christmas stockings. The work was meaningful for them and they understood the purpose for it. They were learning how to use a template, join and decorate fabric with stitches; and they worked purposefully to extend their skill and complete their task. They had been rather dependent on adult support to thread needles and finish off threads but were trying hard to persevere and help themselves.

211. The teaching and learning are sound. The teachers prepare their lessons carefully, drawing on a good, qualitative, range of materials for the pupils to use. That helps the children to see that their work is important. However, thimbles and needle threaders would have made Year 4 more independent and skilled in their sewing. The teachers are good at getting the pupils started on a meaningful task and in the juniors, will provide a useful demonstration of a technique, like cutting or joining, when appropriate. This is not as regularly done for the infants. The pupils are usually asked to make designs before they work with materials and in better lessons they evaluate how good their plan or product turned out to be. Whilst the pupils' writing shows that some teachers have talked to individuals carefully about work as it develops, in other lessons the teachers do not tell the pupils how well they are getting on with designing something that works and evaluating it. Then the pupils do not have a realistic idea of how well they are doing in the demands of this subject. Teachers tend to talk more with the pupils about the materials and how to manage them.
212. The use of the national scheme of work has given class teachers good, clear guidance on what to do with their pupils and this has ensured that all the classes are doing focussed useful design and technology work. Where the teachers amend the scheme some design and technology components get lost. For example, a lesson on bookmaking did not include designing moving parts of pages, so that an important element of design and technology was missed, because this subject is about design for function.
213. Management of the subject has not been strong. The design and technology action plan after the last inspection was not well focused on standards and an additional difficulty has been that staff changes have left the school without a co-ordinator for the subject until next term. Swift action this year to introduce the national scheme of work has made a very positive difference to the provision. No one is currently monitoring the quality of the lesson planning or teaching or the standards the pupils attain so that teachers who need help with issues like this are not having enough support.

GEOGRAPHY

214. No geography was being taught during the week of the inspection and there was insufficient evidence in the pupils' books or on display around the school to make a judgement about the standard of work achieved.
215. Some useful learning work from previous lessons was on display that was at broadly appropriate levels. The infants can draw simple plans of the classroom and show routes from home to school, and from the front entrance of the school to the classroom. Year 1 pupils have drawn a plan of the local environment and marked on it the flats and houses that they live in as well as shops and churches. Photographs of the area provide a good stimulus for discussion. A world map in Year 2 shows the countries of origin of the class. Pupils in junior classes have some knowledge and understanding of other countries, particularly those that families in the school originated from. They recognise how places compare and how they are linked to others, for instance the relationship between Britain and Bangladesh during the Victorian era.
216. An improvement since the last inspection is the recently introduced curriculum planning which shows that the pupils are taught an appropriate range of knowledge and geographical skills. The co-ordinator for geography has sensibly considered ways of linking geography to other subjects and this is evident from the work in history on the Victorians when pupils learn about Bangladesh during this period. Work on display about el Beled included thoughtful writing about what it would be like to live there, as well as map work, temperature charts showing climatic conditions, and information about the types of work people would do.
217. The library is well stocked with a range of atlases, books about other countries, particularly those that the pupils originate from. There is a helpful focus in the school development plan on collecting a range of resources that will support the teaching of the national scheme of work. The

co-ordinator has not had an opportunity to monitor standards or the quality of teaching and learning in geography.

HISTORY

218. Standards in history for the seven year olds are below what is expected nationally. By the end of the junior years, however, pupils are exceeding nationally expected standards and this is a strength for the school.
219. Standards are better now for the 11 year olds than they were at the last inspection. This is due to the introduction of the national scheme of work for history that provides detailed support for teachers and to the good standard of teaching throughout the school. A particular strength is the ability of the junior pupils to debate, with insight and understanding, various historical issues such as the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon and the evacuation of children from London during the Second World War.
220. In Year 2, although standards are below national expectations, achievement is satisfactory because of the high proportion of pupils with English as a second language and those with special educational needs who are making sound progress. The pupils are learning about the Fire of London and can talk about differences between then and now, including how clothes, houses, transport have changed. They are beginning to develop an understanding of chronology by putting information onto a time line in the correct order. Many can put the events that happened before and during the Great Fire into the right sequence. In links with English, pupils write thoughtful diary accounts that show some understanding of what life was like then.
221. In the junior classes standards are above national expectations and achievement is very good as pupils develop linguistic skills that enable them to demonstrate their understanding. In some instances pupils are showing an in-depth factual knowledge and understanding of features of history, particularly in connection with their topics about the Second World War in Year 6 and Henry VIII in Year 4. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of why the Reformation came about and could talk about Henry's position as the Head of the Church of England and his relationship with Rome. They explored arguments for and against Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and showed an awareness of his desire, through marriage, to form alliances with other countries. In a Year 5 lesson pupils showed a good understanding of some of the achievements of the Victorian era, including improvements in the transport systems and the impact these had on the quality of life. Year 6 pupils talked with understanding about the Blitz and the effect of this on people's lives. In their lesson about Anne Frank, pupils, including those with English as an additional language and the pupils with special needs, made good progress as they used a variety of resources including reference books, articles, her diary and the Internet to research the topic. They understand that events can be interpreted differently and suggest reasons why this might be so.
222. The teaching is very good overall throughout the school which is an improvement since the last inspection. It is very good in Year 6 and excellent in Year 4. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and use a variety of resources including museum visits, visitors, reference books, pictures, diaries, videos and the Internet to capture their pupils interest. This is particularly important as the variety of teaching methods and approaches helpfully supports and develops the understanding of pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils in Year 3 visited the Museum of London to deepen their understanding of what life was like in Roman times. Pupils who find work more difficult are supported to achieve well by good use of other adults in the classroom and by materials which help them structure their ideas. In Year 4 particularly imaginative teaching, linked with extended writing in literacy, involved looking at an obituary of Superman and enabled pupils to structure clearly their knowledge and thoughts about Henry VIII into the key events and issues they had explored. A strength of the subject is provision of planned opportunities to discuss and debate historical issues. Older juniors explored the effect of the Blitz on peoples' lives and debated whether children should have been evacuated during the war.

223. Although the newly adopted scheme of work is providing a helpful structure for teachers in planning their lessons, the role of the co-ordinator is, as yet, under-developed. Monitoring of the subject would enable strengths in the teaching of history to be identified and ensure that good practice is shared.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

224. The school is not meeting statutory requirements in ICT because insufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills in areas such as giving instructions to programmable devices, and using computer simulations to explore patterns and relationships.
225. Across the school standards are below those expected for the pupils' ages, due to gaps in knowledge and skills. This is a decline since the last inspection when standards were satisfactory. However the pupils' achievement and the progress that they make during lessons is satisfactory due to teachers' careful planning and direct teaching of skills.
226. Pupils in Year 1 can 'click', 'drag' and 'highlight' text. In Year 2 pupils know how to use the 'flood fill' tool to add colour to their pictures and some use the computer in the literacy lesson to write questions about what happened in a story. Younger juniors can send e-mails to the Paternoster website as part of 'The Happy Prince' project. Year 4 pupils use a simple database in connection with work about their countries of origin, know how to enter information, use the icons and how to interpret the graphs and pie charts. In Year 5 pupils constructed a table in 'Word' and entered information into a database in relation to their science topic about healthy eating. The older juniors have a good understanding of what the internet can be used for, use search engines and can retrieve information, for example, about the life of Anne Frank. Some are able to send e-mails. They are writing their own newsletters using desktop publishing software. Pupils throughout the school are developing confidence in using the keyboard and tool bars; they are also developing their understanding of word processing packages and databases. The use of the Internet and CD-ROMs to support work in other areas of the curriculum such as history and English is a strength. There is no evidence of work with sensing equipment to support work in science, nor of digital cameras or scanners.
227. Teaching is sound throughout the school and teachers are working extremely hard to ensure that all pupils make progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is adequate to help the pupils develop their skills in the use of word processing, data handling and the use of the Internet. Support given to pupils with English as an additional language is particularly effective. Teachers plan lessons well and give clear instructions to the pupils to ensure that they are motivated and know what is required of them. Teachers are sensibly teaching skills and introducing new programs in whole class lessons. This may, however be inappropriate for some of the younger classes where some pupils have limited concentration spans. ICT is being successfully integrated into subjects across the curriculum such as literacy, science and history.
228. The national scheme of work has been introduced and this should ensure that teachers teach what the pupils need to learn. However, gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills mean that teachers are unable to use it successfully at present without some modification to help them plan work across all the different range of uses of ICT. New assessment procedures have been introduced. At present there are no consistent records which show what pupils know and can do, although records are kept in some classes of the programs used by pupils.
229. The co-ordinator for ICT is recently appointed and although she has monitored lesson planning she has not had an opportunity to identify strengths and areas for development in teaching and learning.
230. There are plans to set up a computer suite and the designated room has been networked ready for use. It is not clear when this room will be equipped and operational. The development plan for ICT is weak; it does not identify areas for development nor set out a co-ordinated strategy to raise standards of attainment. It does not include costs for new equipment. Bids for additional funding

are, however, in progress from the Excellence in cities initiative. There is no documented evidence of where teachers' subject knowledge is lacking and therefore plans for improving teachers' knowledge and confidence are insecure. Training for teachers, using government funds has been planned for 2002.

231. The school has made insufficient progress since the last inspection. Standards have fallen due to weak development planning, an inadequate number of computers and the additional requirements of the current curriculum for ICT. The provision of support and training for teachers to deliver aspects of the newly adopted schemes of work that they are less confident with, should be a priority.

MUSIC

232. Much of the school's music teaching is undertaken by a specialist and because of timetabling, these lessons could not be observed. From the two lessons seen and from observations of singing in assembly, the pupils' attainment in music is below the nationally expected standards for the infants and just meets those expectations for the juniors. Overall, the pupils' achievement in music is satisfactory, although in the one infant lesson seen, the pupils did not do as well as they might. These standards are broadly similar to those found in the last inspection.
233. The infant pupils join in with simple fun action songs with enjoyment. They can feel the rhythm in a song and can copy clapping patterns their teacher makes. They have learned simple symbols for playing long and short sounds, but their playing of untuned percussion instruments is poor and lacks control.
234. The youngest junior pupils can accompany taped singing with reasonable accuracy and they sing quite sweetly. Their phrasing when they sing is not always careful, but they can control their singing to make it louder and softer.
235. In assemblies, the pupils sing sweetly and with sensitivity.
236. Teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in the infant lesson observed but satisfactory in the junior lesson. The infant lesson was marred by poor behaviour from the children. Although they were very keen to play their instruments, their playing was extremely loud and uncontrolled. Their teacher worked hard to encourage appropriate "musician-like" behaviour, showing good expectations of them and praised the attempts they made, but gave them insufficient support in knowing how to do it. In the junior lesson, the teacher helped the pupils to pitch their singing accurately by "conducting" them in a simple way, showing where the notes rose or fell and successfully encouraged some improvement in their singing. The teachers successfully ensured that pupils with special needs and those learning English joined in well with the lessons.
237. Since the last inspection, the range of resources for music has been improved. The school is now using the national guidelines for planning work in music and this should ensure better coverage of the required curriculum than was evident in the last inspection. The co-ordinator for music has clear ideas of how she wants to develop the subject but as yet has had no opportunity to see music lessons, to help her know where teaching and learning can be improved. The list of planned management activities is not well focused on pupils' standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

238. Three lessons in PE were observed during the inspection, one gymnastics lesson for the infant pupils and two games lessons for the juniors. From these observations, the pupils' attainment in these aspects of PE fall below what is expected for children of this age nationally for infants and juniors. The achievement of the infants is satisfactory but the older juniors are not achieving as well as they could in PE. The co-ordinator for PE reports that about half the juniors can swim the required 25 metres but thinks it unlikely that any more will achieve this standard. Overall, these standards are not as good as those found in the school's last inspection.

239. The pupils in Year 2 can run, hop and skip around the school hall, using the space competently. Most of them can do a forward roll on a mat, but there are a few who perform this movement incorrectly. Whilst most pupils can jump competently from a low bench, a few do not land well using bended knees. These few have not learned enough about exercising safely. The pupils can perform three movements, namely travelling on the floor and a bench in different ways and then jumping off onto a mat. Some pupils introduce some variety into these simple sequences, but few can link these actions together effectively. The pupils are learning to handle equipment and can carry a low bench sensibly but have not been taught how to carry floor mats correctly. They are learning the rules of working in PE lessons, such as waiting their turn to practise in their groups. They are beginning to make very simple judgements about their work, but at a very basic level.
240. Junior pupils can jog, run and skip round the playground with energy and reasonable control. The juniors have some basic games skills, such as chest passes, and can play simple team games to practise these skills. They know and follow the routines of PE lessons. Their accuracy in passing and in ball control is sometimes weak. Their understanding of tactics is limited. They do not demonstrate skills in discussing their performance and knowing how to improve it.
241. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for the infants. The infant lesson seen had a sound structure with warming up and cooling down activities to start and end it. Movements were practised on the floor for transferring onto low-level apparatus. The pupils were successfully encouraged by their teacher to practise and to some extent to improve what they did. There was some helpful demonstration of a skill so the pupils knew what they were expected to do and how to do it.
242. Although there are strengths in the teaching of PE for the juniors, overall teaching and learning in this key stage are unsatisfactory. The teachers make brief lesson plans but these are not sufficiently well related to the National Curriculum programmes of study. For example, in the lessons seen there was insufficient reference to understanding about the effects of exercise or to evaluation and improvement of performance, with the result that the pupils did not sufficiently improve on what they were doing. However, there was some good teaching of stretching exercises, which included naming of the muscles and the teachers successfully encouraged their pupils to work with some energy and concentration. The teaching and demonstration of games skills were sound in one lesson but weak in the other, and this led to a lack of progress for some pupils.
243. Throughout, the pupils with special educational needs and those learning English are successfully included in the lessons, except when some poor behaviour means that they have to have "time-out".
244. There is insufficient emphasis, throughout, on working and exercising safely, with the result that sometimes pupils perform movements incorrectly or do not work together as carefully as they might. However, in both infant and junior classes the teachers manage their pupils well so that they mostly stay focused on their PE work. This is sometimes very difficult because of the volatile behaviour of a few individuals. There is occasional loss of pace, with pupils practising one activity for too long, and their concentration wanes.
245. The infant and junior pupils enjoy their PE lessons. The Year 2 pupils were noisy and inattentive at times and this did inhibit to some extent the progress they made in their lesson. However, they watched quietly when other pupils demonstrated a movement and they co-operated well in the class games they played at the start and end of their lesson. The oldest juniors were lively and responsive in their games lesson and concentrated well on their stretching exercises. The juniors are learning well how to work in teams, but in one class poor behaviour by a few individuals led to the teacher needing to talk very seriously with them about teamwork and not cheating.
246. The subject has suffered from a lack of leadership since the last inspection, when there was no identified subject co-ordinator. There is now a recently appointed co-ordinator for PE who is

thinking about how to take the subject forward. Currently she has no release time for looking at PE lessons, to help her know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in the subject. She has helpfully led staff training on ball games, tactics and skills. She has revised the overall school plan for PE so that the pupils will experience the aspects of PE required nationally, including swimming. The PE policy lays emphasis on having houses for competitive PE but makes insufficient reference to the National Curriculum in PE. Resources and accommodation are just adequate although the school has no easy access to playing fields, and may only use the shared playground for half of the week.