

INSPECTION REPORT

Holy Ghost Roman Catholic Primary School

Balham

LEA area: Wandsworth

Unique reference number: [school's URN]

Headteacher: Susan Lawless

Reporting inspector: David Williamson

Inspector number: 3864

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th October 2000

Inspection number: 224427

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Nightingale Square Balham London
Postcode:	SW12 8QJ
Telephone number:	020 8673 3080
Fax number:	020 8673 0788
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Stephen Langridge
Date of previous inspection:	29 th June – 2 nd July 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Williamson	Registered inspector	Science Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Design and Technology	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
John Duncan	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Broadbent	Team inspector	English History Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils? Equal Opportunities Pupils with English as an additional language
Maxine Slater	Team inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs Under fives	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Juliet Winstanley	Team inspector	Art Music Physical Education (PE)	How well is the school, led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

Haringey Council
Haringey PDC
Downhills Park Road
London
N17 6AR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7-11
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12-14
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15-16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16-17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19-21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23-26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27-38

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Ghost RC Primary school provides education for 203 boys and girls aged 4 to 11 years from local families. Many children are from homes that are relatively prosperous, but some are from less advantaged backgrounds. The attainment of pupils on entry to the reception class varies from year to year, but is mainly above average. The school has an average number of pupils with special educational needs. The 26% of pupils speaking English as an additional language is very high compared to the national average, although only 3% of pupils are in the early stages of learning English and the remainder are fully bilingual. The majority ethnic groups are White UK (39.9%) and White European (31.2%). The main ethnic minority groups are Black African (8.7%), Black Caribbean (3.5%) and Black pupils of other heritage (6.4%).

The school was last inspected in July 1998, when serious weaknesses were identified. Since then the LEA has maintained a regular programme of monitoring and in May 1999 Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school to check on progress.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Strong leadership from the new headteacher, improved standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and better teaching contribute to the school's successes. There are still some weaknesses to address before all children reach their full potential, particularly in lessons where teaching is unsuited to their needs, but overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Achieving high standards by the time pupils leave the school, especially in English and science
- Developing pupils' reading abilities
- Giving effective support for pupils with special educational needs and those that speak English as an additional language
- Promoting pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes
- Good moral and social development
- The strong and effective leadership given by the headteacher and chair of governors

What could be improved

- The unsatisfactory teaching still evident in some lessons, especially at Key Stage 1
- The achievements of the most able pupils in speaking, writing, mathematics, ICT and investigations in science
- Provision for design and technology
- The development of multicultural aspects of the curriculum
- The poor subject leadership in science and design and technology
- The targets, success criteria and methods of monitoring and evaluation in the school development plan

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress on the issues identified in the last inspection report. Information technology has improved and is now satisfactory. Good progress has been made on implementing a range of policies to improve the curriculum and assessment, although design and technology is still a weakness. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection.

Teaching has improved and now all lessons have clear objectives and are set within an effective planning framework, which ensures that pupils build on what they have already learned. However, despite these improvements, there are some weaknesses in teaching that makes it unsatisfactory overall. Substantial Improvements have been made in leadership and management. The headteacher and chair of governors provide a clear sense of direction for the school. Pupils' achievements are very well monitored in English and mathematics and satisfactorily in science. Punctuality has been addressed well and is no longer an issue. More responsibility is now given to key members of staff, although further training is needed to improve their management skills and knowledge. There are still weaknesses in the leadership of science and design and technology and a number of staff with responsibilities have only limited management experience. The school now has an ambitious development plan linked to the school budget, but at present it is too complex and lacks the precision that will enable effective evaluation of the outcomes by staff and governors.

The school has a high capacity for further improvement because of the effectiveness of the headteacher and chair of governors, ably supported by other staff and governors.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	B	B	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	B	B	B	
science	C	E	B	B	

In the year 2000 the school improved its overall performance in national tests for pupils aged 11. When compared to both the national average and to the performance of similar schools, pupils at Holy Ghost RC primary school achieved standards well above the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The improvement in science between 1999 and 2000 is particularly noteworthy. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, the national tests in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics, were below the national averages and well below those of similar schools. The reason for this is a higher number of pupils than usual had special educational needs in that cohort. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the current year 2 class are above average in English, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence shows that many pupils exceed the early learning goals by age 5 and are above average in mathematics, creative work and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to school. For most of the time they are keen and eager to learn and respond well to teachers and other adults.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in classes, around school and in the playground, but some pupils are inattentive in lessons and during school assemblies. There have been no exclusions in the past year or incidences of bullying reported.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have good relationships with each other and with all members of staff. Older pupils show good responsibility in the way that they help younger children.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Punctuality is much improved since the last inspection and it is now good.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships make a positive contribution to the ethos for learning in the school. The main weakness is the lack of attention shown by some, especially younger, pupils during whole-class teaching sessions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is best at the end of Key Stage 2 and least good at the beginning of Key Stage 1. Both because of the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons, especially at Key Stage 1, and the limited challenge provided to the most able pupils in both Key Stages, inspectors judged teaching overall to be unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, there are improvements in teaching since the last report, when there was a high number of lessons that were poor or very poor, and inspectors are confident that the school has structures in place to address the weaknesses identified.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, except for the teaching of design and technology and in the provision made for the most able pupils, who need to be given work that is better suited to their needs.
Provision for pupils with	Good provision helps these pupils to make good progress.

special educational needs	
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils that speak English as an additional language make good progress and many outperform their monolingual English-speaking peers by the time they leave the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, but too few opportunities are taken to promote a knowledge and appreciation of the rich cultural diversity of the school's local and wider community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils who feel safe and secure. There are very good records of pupils' achievements and progress through the school. The school effectively promotes punctuality.

The school is developing an effective partnership with parents, the vast majority of whom support the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. The school has plans in place to address the concerns raised by some parents about the effectiveness of communications on some whole-school matters.

The main strengths of the curriculum are the strong emphasis on developing reading, the good plans in place to ensure good coverage in most subjects and the good provision for moral and social education and for activities outside lessons. The main weaknesses lie in the poor provision for design and technology and the lack of challenge in the work given to the most able pupils, especially in writing, mathematics, information and communications technology (ICT) and investigations in science. Despite these shortcomings, the school cares well for its pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and chair of governors provide clear direction and effective leadership for the school. Most other key members of staff are also providing effective leadership, although they currently have limited management experience. However, science and design and technology are poorly led.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors discharge their duties effectively. Committees are established and work well. More attention needs to be given to the school development plan as a tool for school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Evaluation of pupils' progress is good. Other aspects of monitoring are satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally used well. Classroom assistants could be better used in whole-class teaching sessions. More equipment is needed to improve provision in science, design and technology, art, physical education and for children under five.

The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching and support staff are satisfactory, except for the limited management experience of some staff with responsibilities. Accommodation is cramped at present, but a building programme currently underway should redress this weakness. Learning

resources are satisfactory overall and better than the national average in the number of computers the school has. Some subject areas need better resources to help improve teaching. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value, but needs to improve the precision of the school development plan to enable more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Behaviour is good • Teachers are very approachable • The school is well led and managed • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication about whole-school matters • The school's work with parents • The range of activities outside lessons • Information on their child's progress

The inspection team recognise the features that most please parents. Inspectors judged moreover that the school is making good efforts to improve communication and it provides a good range of interesting activities outside lesson times, which have improved substantially since the last inspection. Inspectors also judged that the school has good systems in place to assess pupils' progress: it gives a detailed written report of each child's achievements annually and provides opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher during the school year.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children enter the reception class they are generally well prepared for school and attainment is mainly above average. In the reception class, children make sound progress so that by the end of their reception year most have achieved the specified Early Learning Goals in language and literacy and in their physical, personal and social development. Many exceed the Early Learning Goals in mathematics, creative work and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. More able pupils could make even better progress if their work was more challenging; less able pupils could make better progress in whole-class teaching if the classroom assistant is used to help them during these times. Many children are articulate and keen to learn, but sometimes they are less good at listening and maintaining their attention: this can present a challenge for the class teacher. Nevertheless, children at this early stage of the school year are making better progress than reported in the previous inspection.
2. At Key Stage 1, between 1998 and 1999 the school achieved standards in reading that were well above national average and well above the average when compared to similar schools. In 2000, results in national tests in reading fell and were at the national average and well below those in similar schools. Standards in writing improved from average in 1998 to above average in 1999 and went down to below average in 2000. Standards in national tests in mathematics improved from below average in 1998 to above average in 1999 and then have fallen to below average in 2000. In science, teachers' assessments showed that pupils achieved average standards in 1999 and below average in 2000. This pattern of lower standards in 2000 concerned inspectors, but a more detailed analysis of the 2000 results, showed that a high number of pupils had special educational needs, thereby affecting the overall average. The analysis also showed that more pupils achieved above average results in reading, spelling and mathematics than in previous years.
3. Evidence during the inspection shows that attainment in the current Year 2 class was above average for the time of the academic year and likely to be above average in English and science by the time of the national tests. Some higher attaining pupils could be given even more challenging work in speaking and writing, which would push standards even higher. In mathematics, pupils are achieving average standards for their stage of development, but again higher attaining pupils could achieve better standards if given more support and work that stretched them. In science pupils' attainments at the beginning of the year are already near what is expected by the end of the key stage and a few pupils are beginning to achieve above average standards. Inspectors therefore came to the conclusion that, with the exception of higher attaining pupils in speaking, writing and mathematics, the school is achieving appropriate standards for the majority of its pupils at Key stage 1 and is in a good position to improve standards further.
4. In 2000 the results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English was well above average and in science and mathematics was above average. In 1998 and 1999 standards in English were above the national average and above average for similar schools. From this good base, standards have risen in 2000 so that 93% of pupils achieved level 4 or above, compared to the national average of 75%. 45% of pupils achieved level 5, compared to 29% nationally. Closer analysis shows that the strongest aspect of English is reading and that writing is less strong, although still above average. Standards in science were a significant improvement over those in 1999, which were well below average. In 2000 93% achieved level 4 or above in science, compared to 84% nationally and 45% of pupils achieved level 5, compared to 34% nationally. In

mathematics, standards were well above the national average in 1998 and above average in 1999. In 2000 standards in mathematics were above average. 80% of pupils achieved level 4 or above compared to 72% nationally and 28% achieved level 5 compared to 24% nationally. In art, history, ICT, geography, music and physical education pupils attain broadly in line with what is expected. Standards in design and technology are well below national expectations. The improvements in the English and science results in 2000 are a direct result of changes to the teaching of Year 6 pupils. Whilst the 2000 standards are good overall, there is evidence that even higher standards can be achieved. For example, in national writing tests fewer pupils achieve above average levels than in reading, indicating a need for more attention to be given to this aspect of pupils' development. In mathematics, while the school's overall results are above the national average, the attainment of more able pupils is not as good as in English, which suggests that they are not achieving their full potential in the subject. The national test results in science were above average nationally and when compared to similar schools. But a close analysis of pupils' science books shows that, while they are very knowledgeable about science topics and can answer test questions well, higher attaining pupils do not reach similar standards in their investigations. In ICT whilst the majority attain the level expected for the average pupil, more able pupils do not demonstrate or apply higher order skills in their work such as selecting appropriate applications for different purposes and audiences or using sensors to monitor and measure events in the environment.

5. On the basis of the issues raised in the attainment of above average pupils, inspectors considered whether the school was underachieving. There is some evidence that this was the case until the appointment of the new headteacher and staff. However, the results of national tests at Key Stage 2 were much improved in 2000, especially in English and science and there is good evidence to suggest that the school will again achieve above average results 2001. Because the school is now led well, compares well to similar schools in most aspects of attainment and teaching is particularly strong at the end of Key Stage 2, inspectors came to the conclusion that the school is achieving an acceptable standard of education overall. Furthermore the school has effective systems in place to address the weaknesses identified.
6. In 1998, the school set targets for pupils' attainment in the 2000 national tests. In English the target was 65% to achieve level 4 (the national 'average' expected for eleven year olds) and 21% to achieve level 5. The school achieved 48% at level 4 and 45% at level 5, thereby well exceeding its target. In mathematics the targets were 59% at level 4 and 24% at level 5 and results were 52% at level 4 and 28% at level 5, a level of performance below the figure set by the school. In the light of the general progress being made by the school, the targets set for 2001 and 2002 are too low. They need to be revised to take account of the improved teaching, the potential for pupils to achieve better results and to confirm the school's commitment to the aspirations of pupils and their parents.
7. Inspection findings broadly reflect the results of national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are on line to attain better standards in 2001 than did the 2000 cohort, described above. Inspectors heard a sample of pupils in each year group read and confirmed that they are generally confident readers and that high standards are being achieved throughout the school. Scrutiny of books and other work further highlights the trends in writing and mathematics suggested by the national tests and reinforces the need for more work in these areas, particularly with above average pupils. Evidence from classroom observations and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that a strong emphasis on subject knowledge in science helps pupils to attain high standards in tests, but that attainment is less strong in science investigations, especially for the most able pupils. Test results show that boys attain better standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2, but there was no evidence to substantiate

this during the inspection, where girls were making as much progress as boys and attaining standards not significantly different to them.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well relative to their earlier performance. Pupils that speak English as an additional language also make good progress and many outperform their monolingual English-speaking peers.
9. Information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved since the last inspection and standards are now reaching the national expectations, but with little evidence of higher attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in art, history, geography, music and PE are in line with what is expected at the end of each Key Stage. Standards in design and technology are well below what they should be for all pupils because teachers' subject knowledge is weak, leadership of the subject is poor and the subject is not taught regularly enough.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' have positive attitudes to school. For most of the time they are keen and eager to learn and respond well to their teachers and other adults in the school. They are polite, greeting adults with a cheerful 'good morning', such as when a line of year 2 pupils shook hands with an inspector as they passed him in the passageway.
11. Behaviour is generally good in classrooms, around school and in the playground. The main weakness is that there is a significant minority of younger pupils who lack attentiveness in the classroom and assembly hall. This creates difficulties for the class teacher, especially in the early part of the year in the Reception and Year 1 classes. As pupils get older the problem becomes less pronounced, although even in year 5 there were signs of the same tendency in some pupils.
12. There have been no incidences noted of bullying or gender or racial incidents over the past year, although parents reported that in the past when minor bullying did occur, it was resolved quickly and sensitively.
13. Older pupils rise well to the challenges of responsibility. There is, for example, a buddying system in which pupils from years 5 and 6 link up with Reception and year 1 pupils. This is especially effective at lunch times, when year 6 pupils take responsibility for the management of playground activities. Many year 6 buddies were seen helping their younger partners and responding to them in a helpful way; both seemed well pleased with the arrangement. Some pupils take responsibility for their class in the School Council, which meets fortnightly and has influenced school policy; recent successes have been the reintroduction of achievement certificates and the installation of mirrors in the toilets.
14. Personal development is satisfactory, and individual pupil advances are noted in sections of the annual reports of pupil progress. Parents often comment favourably on this aspect in their response section of the reports.
15. There have been no exclusions since the arrival of the present head teacher.
16. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and, for the autumn term leading up to the inspection, attendance was 96.2 per cent for the entire school with year 2 reaching 97.8 per cent and only year 4 falling to 95 per cent. Although punctuality to the morning session can be erratic on wet, street-clogged mornings, there has been a marked improvement since the last Ofsted

inspection. Pupils old enough to walk to school on their own arrive on time and, except for a few persistent latecomers, punctuality is now good and no longer an issue.

17. The school has improved its overall standards for pupils' attitudes, values and personal development from satisfactory to good. The only remaining issue is now the inattentiveness of a number of pupils when in whole-class teaching sessions and assemblies.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. At the last inspection a quarter of all teaching was unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. During this inspection 87% of teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better and 42% was good or very good. No lessons were judged to be poor, but 13% were judged unsatisfactory and this is unacceptable if pupils are to reach their full potential. Whilst inspectors recognise the improvements made overall, teaching cannot be judged to be satisfactory yet and staff must work with a clear focus to eliminate all traces of teaching that might fall below the quality expected by parents and governors.
19. In the last inspection, teaching in the reception class was drawn out as of particular concern. There have been improvements in the teaching of pupils at this age, which is satisfactory overall, but there are still actions to be taken to make teaching better. It is early in the academic year and both teacher and pupils are new, which might go some way to explaining why at times the teacher found it difficult to secure pupils' attention. Pupils are lively, talkative and quite confident for their age; they are not used to having to sit for 15 or 20 minutes in large groups. Currently this presents a real challenge for the teacher. When the teacher found this liveliness difficult to manage, lessons were unsatisfactory and yet at other times, when the teacher used effective strategies to capture and keep pupils' attention, lessons were good.
20. The teaching of reading is a strength of the school, evident in the high standards achieved. Several areas of teaching identified as weaknesses in the last report are now much improved. Clear objectives are set for each lesson. Medium-term planning of the curriculum is good, ensuring that pupils receive a balanced experience, especially in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Lessons begin on time and generally the pace is good. Extensive use is now made of exercise books, providing a good record of pupils' development across the year. Teachers' support for pupils who have English as an additional language is good and they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are also well supported now in class because teachers make good use of their Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). IEPs are better than reported previously, but need to be even more specific in their literacy objectives and should include targets for mathematics. These improvements show that the school has effectively addressed many of the weaknesses in teaching identified previously
21. In the best lessons teachers use whole-class teaching effectively, with well targeted questions to challenge pupils' understanding and deepen their knowledge. For example, in the reception class, the teacher made good use of pupils' responses to rhyming words, continuously reinforcing the learning objectives of the week. In a number of lessons good use is also made of simple yet effective resources. For example, in the Year 2 class where pupils, after discussing a science investigation, watched spellbound on the carpet as one pupil carried out a test to see which model car would travel furthest after rolling down a slope. At times teaching can be very good, such as in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were studying 'Romeo and Juliet'. The teacher showed good subject knowledge in the way that she inspired and motivated pupils to interpret the play in their own terms and explore the possibilities of a similar theme in a modern setting.

22. Whilst most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been addressed, some new weaknesses have appeared. The biggest weakness is the way that teachers find it difficult to gain and maintain pupils' attention, resulting in some pupils being unclear about the purpose of the lesson or what is expected. This feature was evident in a number of year groups, but some teachers were at times unable to tackle it effectively, resulting in pupils making slower progress than expected in those lessons. For example, a Year 1 literacy lesson began well with pupils listening carefully to what the teacher was saying. But within a short time the concentration of some began to wane and continuity was lost when the teacher had to interrupt her flow to regain pupils' attention. Later in the lesson high noise levels, especially from pupils working independently, led to distraction and some groups of pupils made progress more slowly than might be expected. This issue is most obvious in younger pupils; as pupils mature the issue diminishes, but it is still a problem right up to Year 5, where the class teacher has to keep a tight rein on pupils to maintain their attention.
23. In lessons that were otherwise sound there are occasionally some weaker aspects. For example, the use made of classroom assistants is not always effective. When working with groups of pupils, learning assistants are very helpful and pupils make sound or good progress. However, it is common practice in most classes for the assistant to be busy preparing resources while the teacher is introducing the lesson. This in itself is a distraction for pupils, some of whom already have problems concentrating. It would be a better use of this valuable staff resource if assistants were fully involved in whole-class sessions, so that they can provide support for pupils who need it and help teachers to maintain pupils' attention. Another weakness in teaching is that the most able pupils are not always well supported in, or stretched by the work given. This was an issue in the last report and only limited progress has been made in addressing it. The issue is evident in pupils' written work, where it is clear that often the whole class has been given the same task. Observations show that the least able are supported well by the class teacher or a learning assistant and, while helpful for those pupils, the highest attainers are required to work independently for much of the time. Whilst this weakness is less evident in English and mathematics than in other subjects, because of the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, it is still a feature in a number of classes. The school does not currently have any additional activities to compensate for this shortcoming, such as special classes or clubs for gifted and talented pupils.
24. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally satisfactory and at times good. The clear guidance provided by the national strategy, linked with the school's emphasis on English and mathematics means that pupils generally make satisfactory progress in these areas. Apart from the literacy hour, there is an additional session of guided reading each day which, in conjunction with pupils' reading habits at home, accounts for the high standards of reading seen in the school. Homework is generally used appropriately to reinforce and extend learning in a number of subjects, but particularly in English and mathematics.
25. Most pupils make suitable progress because they are keen to do what is asked of them. For the majority of lesson time most pupils listen carefully and answer the teacher's questions keenly. Most are clear about what they have to do and can get on with it. Some are very knowledgeable and can make good connections between what they are learning in one subject to what they have learnt previously, either at home, in other lessons or from earlier years at school. All pupils are well motivated when the work matches their stage of development, but some younger pupils find concentrating for longer periods difficult and their learning suffers. Older pupils act responsibly and learn well when asked to carry out tasks independently, such as when working in pairs on the computer. Whilst pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, the most able could be given

more challenging work and make better progress than at present, for example in writing, mathematics, ICT and aspects of science.

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

26. The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements and the quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory except in design and technology, where the standards reached are unsatisfactory because pupils have limited experiences in the subject. ICT provision has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Long term planning for most subjects, and especially core subjects, is good. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are well understood and the early learning goals for the new foundation stage are operating well. Teachers use the national guidance for most subjects successfully. Results from testing at the end of Year 4 are used to plan for groups of pupils, particularly those who need help to achieve level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are well supported in group activities. This has resulted in the latter group often outperforming pupils speaking only one language. However, pupils who are more able or are gifted or talented are not sufficiently challenged in speaking, writing, mathematics, ICT and investigations in science
27. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are beginning to have an effect on raising standards further. Many pupils with special educational needs have shown good progress. For example, all pupils on the special needs register achieved level 4 in reading and 90% achieved level 4 in writing in tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000. The structure of the strategies is followed well overall, but in some whole class sessions the introduction can be too long, especially for younger pupils.
28. The provision of extra curricular activities is good and much improved since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. There is a mixture of outside specialists from St Francis Xavier College and school staff running after-school sports and music clubs. The youngest pupils are catered for in 'Yoga Bugs' and there are sport skills sessions for pupils in years 2 to 4 as well as football and netball clubs for pupils in years 5 and 6. Individual instrumental tuition contributes to the school orchestra and there is a recorder group. Trips for all years contribute well to both curricular and extra-curricular provision. Inspectors therefore judged that the concerns of some parents about extra-curricular activities expressed in the questionnaire were unfounded.
29. A policy has been developed for personal and social education, which has been submitted to the governors. Other aspects of personal, social and health education (PSHE) are taught within the religious education (RE) curriculum or in specific PSHE lessons. There is a 'buddy' system in place where pupils in years 5 and 6 link with pupils from Reception and year 1. This encourages responsibility and initiative in the older pupils. Pupils in year 5 take part in the Wandsworth junior citizenship scheme run by the police but also involving other emergency services. They develop a good sense of community responsibility through these activities.
30. Other community links, which benefit the pupils, are gained in sporting, social and cultural activities. The school takes part in carol singing, football and netball leagues and the pupils have had fundraising activities for CAFOD, the Catholic Children's Society, RNLI, Trinity Hospice and Marie Curie Cancer Care. There are no formal links with other schools although many of the reception age pupils have previously attended Balham Nursery Centre.
31. Overall, the provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted through the Catholic ethos, which permeates many aspects of school life. Assemblies and religious education also make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. However,

opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual development in areas such as art, music and drama are sometimes missed.

32. The provision for moral education is good. Pupils' sense of right and wrong is reflected and extended in all classes, during assemblies and at break times. All adults act as good role models and effectively develop in pupils the same responsibility to each other. Moral education is also well embedded in activities like the 'buddy' system, which encourages pupils to empathise with the situations and feelings of other people after particular events. The impact of this provision is evident in the improvements made in pupils' playground behaviour, which has improved since the last inspection.
33. The social development of pupils is good and effective systems are in place to encourage pupils to take responsibility, show initiative and to develop their understanding of living within a community. For example, the School Council promotes responsibility in Key Stage 2 pupils by discussing such issues as games for the playground and fundraising ideas. The church is an important part of this aspect of school life and forms a strong bridge between the school and the faith community, further enhancing the social development of pupils.
34. Some aspects of pupils' cultural education are under-developed and its is therefore unsatisfactory. Pupils enjoy singing and gain great enjoyment from it. They have had opportunities in art to study and work in the style of artists such as Picasso and they have taken part in a range of educational visits, including trips to the National Portrait Gallery, the Polka Theatre, and to Wandsworth Museum. However, there is little sense in the school of the multi-cultural nature of its local or wider community. Too much of the art and music work is by white Europeans and multi-cultural aspects of the curriculum are not dealt with in any depth. For example, although Year 5 pupils had displays of Indian art on their classroom wall, few were able to talk about it with any confidence.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school provides a caring environment in which pupils feel safe. Structures for recording personal development have improved since the last inspection and are now generally effective. For example, staff work well to identify and improve the confidence of pupils with low self-esteem. Teachers know their pupils well; learning needs are carefully documented and largely responded to, with the exception of those of the most gifted and talented children. Procedures for monitoring racial incidents and for child protection are properly in place but have not needed to be invoked. The environment is secure, for example visitors during the day must use an entry phone system. In their movement around school and during the break times pupils are well supervised. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored and systems are effective. For example, punctuality is much improved since the last inspection and is now good because of the rigorous way that the school promotes good time keeping.
36. The school maintains good records of pupils' achievements and progress. Group targets are set for literacy and numeracy on a weekly basis, while individual education plans are provided for guiding the teaching of children with special educational needs. These processes ensure that progress is appropriately monitored and the relevant next steps are integrated into subsequent teaching, although inspection evidence showed that this was not always the case with the most able pupils. Individual targets are set annually with regard to progression through the level descriptions provided by the National Curriculum; teachers' understandings of these level descriptions have been moderated on one occasion only. More attention should be given to producing a portfolio of work with examples of work conforming to collectively agreed descriptions. Parents are provided with clear reports on their children's progress.

37. The school promotes good behaviour and interpersonal relations through agreed, shared and successfully implemented policies, including a behaviour policy with arrangements to log any serious matters and an equal opportunities policy, which combines religious and moral values with a strong sense of social justice. Pupils' opinions are sought through suggestion boxes and through the representatives of a School Council. This aspect of school organisation has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school is developing an effective partnership with its parents. Emerging from an unsettled period following the last inspection, parents are understandably cautious, some more so than others, but the vast majority wholeheartedly support the school in its strategies. The school and head teacher have taken on board the concerns of a minority of parents who deem communication between school and home to be less than satisfactory, and have planned clearer, more timely explanations of events.
39. The inspectors did not share the parental concern expressed in the Ofsted questionnaire about the quality of information provided about the progress of their children. Annual written reports of pupil progress are thorough and individually relevant, and the school schedules a formal, detailed meeting between parents and class teachers early in the Spring term when there is enough time left before the end of the academic year for parents to help redirect their children's efforts. In addition, parents may meet with class teachers after receiving written reports near the end of the summer term. The school's target-setting arrangements for all pupils will provide a further means by which each child's progress can be discussed between the class teacher and the parent.
40. The questionnaire sent to parents last term convinced many parents of the school's wish to listen to them and share their concerns, and the school gained some useful insights as well. In addition, the year-by-year maths target booklets and such other excellent publications as the prospectus and governing body annual report increase the sense of parental confidence.
41. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is good. Some parents help in the school, working closely with teachers and helping with sports and ICT. The PTA raises considerable funds, which they spend on the school and other initiatives are met from the Friends' Fund. In addition, individual parents have underwritten the cost of redecorating the staff room and building the extension to the Reception class.
42. Parents, in conversing with inspectors, in speaking at the Ofsted meeting and in responding to the questionnaire have reported that their children very much like the school. Parents believe that the school is well led and managed, that substantial improvements have been made in the past eighteen months and that the school is on its way to becoming a very good school indeed.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The headteacher has been in post for just over one year and during that time has provided strong and effective leadership for the school. Since taking up her post she has had a significant impact on improving very weak teaching and raising standards. There is now a clear vision for the future outlined in the school's mission statement and a determined focus on improving the quality of education for all pupils. This commitment to improvement and raising standards is shared fully by the managers present during the inspection, by the governing body and by the Chair of Governors who has been at the forefront of the action to drive the school forward since the previous inspection two years ago.
44. Whilst the management of the school is improving, progress has been hindered by the absence of the deputy headteacher over a period of months due to ill health. The structure of the senior management team has been reviewed to ensure that it has a greater impact on improving the quality of education. The appointment of a Pupil Achievement Manager and a Professional Tutor from within the existing staff has strengthened the team. The management of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is effective. However most

members of the senior management team have little previous management experience and need development in this area. Leadership in science and design and technology are poor and in need particular attention. The headteacher and Chair of Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the action needed to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. National test data and standardised test scores are now beginning to be analysed to show areas of underachievement that need to be addressed. The school's targets for 2000 in English were exceeded but not met in mathematics. The targets for 2001 and 2002 are low, particularly in mathematics. In part this is explained by the particular groups of pupils, but inspectors felt that the school needs to adopt more ambitious targets. By addressing the issues identified in this report and extending the improvements it has made over the last year, inspectors feel confident that the school can reach these more challenging goals.

45. Since taking up her appointment, the headteacher has focused on monitoring and eliminating weak teaching from within the school. As a result there have been some improvements but more support is needed to enable all teachers to develop their teaching skills fully. Systems to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning across the curriculum are not fully in place. The headteacher has monitored the literacy hour in all classes and carried out an audit of the work in pupils' English books across the school. Feedback has targeted those areas of teaching that need to be addressed most urgently in order to raise standards, such as raising teachers' expectations and improving their planning: the result is improved teaching and standards in English. Staff training on the literacy and numeracy initiatives has improved teachers' skills by giving them a planning framework and a structure for lessons. Opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor teaching within their subject areas have been very limited, mainly due to staffing difficulties, and subsequently no training has been provided to enable them to develop their expertise in this area.
46. The governing body has developed clear systems to monitor the work of the school. The full governing body and the individual committees meet every term and all governors are linked to a specific class, which they are encouraged to visit and observe whenever possible. Communication between the headteacher and the governing body is very good. The headteacher meets with the Chair of Governors on a weekly basis to discuss issues and plan future developments and all governors are kept fully informed through the well-organised structure of committees. Governors are very supportive of the school and their role in shaping its direction has become much stronger since the last inspection. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively.
47. The school's aims and values are well promoted in its work and achievements. In particular, the school reflects well its Catholic ethos through the promotion of a faith community, the care it gives to its pupils and their families and the effective development of pupils' social and moral education. This strong base needs now to be built on by developing the spiritual and cultural aspects of the curriculum further.
48. The school development plan is a very ambitious, but disjointed, document that covers curriculum, management, premises and health and safety developments over a one year period. It is appropriately costed in terms of finances and time but has no deadlines or success criteria against which to measure whether the short term targets have been met. The plan is also weak in its references to monitoring and evaluation. As it stands, the plan has limited use to drive the school forward and needs improvement so that staff and governors are working towards clearly defined targets with a appropriate timescale. Despite the weaknesses in the whole school plan, which was drawn up before the current headteacher took up her post, co-ordinators have devised detailed one-year action plans to improve the quality of the curriculum in their subject areas. The school has made reasonable progress in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection but still needs to focus on improving the quality of teaching and developing strategic long term planning

further. The headteacher has plans in place to address these and other priorities within the school. A positive impact can already be seen.

49. Skilled and committed administrative officers ensure that the day to day administration of the school is efficient. Office routines run smoothly, providing friendly contact with parents and visitors. Financial planning is secure and the recommendations in the last audit report have been addressed. Additional funds allocated to the school through the Standards Fund are used appropriately to support school improvement. Part of the budget under-spend from last year has been used to fund an additional teacher to ensure continuity during the deputy headteacher's absence. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value to planned initiatives related to staffing and accommodation.
50. The school is well staffed with a full complement of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers, supported by a good number of classroom and special needs assistants. One teacher is enrolled on the graduate teaching programme and the school has put in place an appropriate training programme to meet her needs. There is sufficient expertise to teach all areas of the curriculum with the exception of design and technology. The lack of more demanding investigative work for more able pupils indicates weaknesses in teachers' confidence and expertise in, for example, aspects of science and mathematics. Good appraisal systems and induction arrangements to support newly qualified teachers are in place.
51. The school has made a high investment in employing learning support assistants. Their deployment is satisfactory for group activities, but is unsatisfactory at some other times, such as during whole class lessons. There is very little evidence in these periods that their presence is contributing to pupils' understanding. They support small groups of pupils well during the main activities but could be used more effectively to help teachers, particularly in Key Stage 1 and the reception class, deal with pupils' inattentiveness during whole class sessions.
52. Accommodation at present is cramped in many classrooms in Key Stage 2 and hinders more practical aspects of the art, design and technology and science curriculum from being taught. Leaks in the roof prevented the use of part of the reception classroom during the inspection week and outdoor activities for these pupils are restricted due to the poor drainage of the outdoor reception play area. The hall is small and the storage of furniture around the perimeter of the room limits its use in physical education lessons. There is no separate library within the school and pupils are taken on a regular basis to the local public library to use their facilities. As a result facilities within the school for pupils to carry out their own research are very limited. Building work, to create a new two-storey Key Stage 2 classroom block, is underway and will improve the accommodation and facilities available to all pupils. The school, including the outside area, is clean and well maintained, providing a pleasant and welcoming environment.
53. The school has an appropriate range of learning resources in most subjects. However, resources in science, design and technology, art, physical education and for children under five are basic, limiting curricular opportunities. They need to be extended.
54. The leadership and management of the school has undoubtedly improved since the last inspection and had considerable impact on the school in a short time. Staff and governors are now working together to move the school forward with a shared commitment to improve standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. To raise standards and improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should

- (1) Improve teaching by:
 - a) developing effective strategies to capture and maintain pupils' attention at all times (*paragraphs 1,11, 17, 19, 22, 25, 58, 59, 60, 80, 88*)
 - b) providing work and support better suited to the needs of the most able especially in speaking, writing, mathematics, ICT and investigations in science (*paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5,7, 21, 23, 25, 26, 50, 58, 68, 69,71, 77, 78, 79, 80, 84, 86, 88, 101, 102*)
 - c) using classroom assistants to support learning during whole-class sessions (*paragraphs 23, 51, 61, 81*)

- (2) Improve the curriculum by:
 - a) Planning for and teaching design and technology effectively, so that pupils achieve appropriate standards (*paragraphs 9, 26, 94-96*)
 - b) recognising and celebrating the diversity of cultural traditions within the population of the school and the wider community (*paragraphs 34, 92*)
 - c) providing better learning resources for science, design and technology, art, physical education and for children under five (*paragraphs 53, 57, 66, 88, 95, 113*)

- (3) Improve strategic planning by:
 - a) producing a school development plan that clearly shows the school's targets, how they will be met, the criteria to measure success and the methods of monitoring and evaluation (*paragraph 48*)
 - b) developing the skills and knowledge of middle managers in school improvement strategies (*paragraphs,44,45*)
 - c) setting more challenging targets for pupil attainment in 2001 and beyond (*paragraphs 6, 44, 68, 76*)
 - d) Improving subject leadership in science and design and technology (*paragraphs 44, 89, 96*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	38	45	13	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	203
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	52

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	12
	Girls	13	11	12
	Total	22	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (100)	72 (97)	82 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	13	12	12
	Total	23	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (100)	86 (93)	80 (100)
	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	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	13
	Girls	14	12	14
	Total	27	23	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (77)	79 (86)	93 (77)
	National	75 (71)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	14
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	24	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (77)	87 (86)	96 (86)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	15
Black – other	11
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	133
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	108.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	476,902
Total expenditure	456,066
Expenditure per pupil	2247
Balance brought forward from previous year	8000
Balance carried forward to next year	28,836 (6%)

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	204
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	27	0	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	45	8	0	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	37	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	36	15	0	11
The teaching is good.	42	42	3	0	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	40	19	6	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	37	1	4	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	41	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	34	14	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	56	38	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	38	7	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	46	18	1	14

Parents' comments in letters to inspectors and in the parents' meeting were very similar to those in the questionnaire. In particular parents were mainly concerned with:

- ? Communication about whole-school matters
- ? The school's work with parents
- ? The range of activities outside lessons
- ? Information on their child's progress

The inspection team recognise the features that most please parents. Inspectors judged moreover that the school is also making good efforts to improve communication and it provides a good range of interesting activities outside lesson times, which have improved substantially since the last inspection. Inspectors also judged that the school has good systems in place to assess pupils' progress: it gives a detailed written report of each child's achievements annually and each term provides an opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher. Whilst inspectors felt that most of

the concerns raised were unfounded, the school could do more to improve communication on whole-school matters.

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

56. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they reach the age of five. The school uses the local education authority's baseline scheme to assess children's attainment upon entry to the school. This baseline information contributes to the 'Pupils' Learning Continuum'; a systematic record which links pupils' progress in the Foundation Stage curriculum to the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Attainment on entry for the majority of children is typically above average in all the areas of learning for children under five, but there is some variation between years which is subsequently reflected in the national tests by the time that pupils reach the end of Key Stages. In the reception class, children make sound progress so that by the end of their reception year most have achieved the specified Early Learning Goals in language and literacy and in their physical, personal and social development. Many exceed the Early Learning Goals in mathematics, creative work and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
57. The poor provision for pupils under five was a key issue in the last inspection. However, evidence now shows that overall the school has made satisfactory improvement in the teaching for children under five and as a result pupils now make satisfactory progress during their first year at school. There are some remaining issues regarding resources for learning, which are limited, and the accommodation, which greatly restricts outdoor play. The completion of the building works will go some way to addressing these difficulties.
58. Teaching for under fives is generally satisfactory. This shows an improvement since the last inspection, although some aspects of teaching literacy need further improvement. Where teaching is good, effective strategies are used to gain and maintain interest, so that all children have a clear idea of what they have to do and as a result they make good progress. Curriculum planning for the whole year and each term is good and links across curriculum areas are well used in every day lesson planning. For example, activities in mathematics were linked to creative work and developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world when conkers and autumn leaves were used for counting and creating patterns. Where teaching is unsatisfactory time is not used effectively and children spend too long sitting on the carpet listening. Consequently, they become distracted and restless which hinders the progress they make during the lesson. Work for less able pupils is appropriately planned but those with above average abilities are not sufficiently challenged. Staff check pupils' work regularly to assess how well pupils are progressing. Suitable comments about how pupils complete set tasks are written on key pieces of work and used appropriately to plan further activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Most pupils entering the reception year adapt quickly to routines and behaviour overall is satisfactory, although the attention and concentration of a significant minority is limited during whole class teacher directed lessons. Pupils move quickly to activities when directed and remain at their assigned tasks. They relate well to one another and relationships between children are good during group work. During these activities, co-operation between pupils is developing well; for instance, pupils take turns when using computer games and they play together well in the school

role-play corner. Teaching is satisfactory and most pupils remain on task for suitable periods. When concentration lapses, adequate strategies are used appropriately to regain their attention. When the pace of the lesson is slow, pupils have to be reminded more frequently to listen, stop talking or interrupting. This hinders the flow of the lesson and further adds to the length of time that pupils might have to spend sitting on the carpet. It particularly affects less able pupils because of frequent distractions. The use of other adults in class is well planned during the group activity periods, but there is no extra support for pupils with poorer concentration during whole class lessons, which adds to the low-level disruption at these times.

Language and literacy

60. Overall, pupils are interested in their work and make satisfactory progress in developing their language and literacy skills.. Pupils have well developed skills in speaking; for instance, they describe items accurately for the rest of the group to guess. Pupils' listening skills during whole class lessons are erratic. Most follow instructions accurately but often only after repeated requests. Some pupils miss parts of the lesson because of others' or their own lack of attention, especially during whole class sessions. When in a small group with an adult, pupils listen well and make good progress.
61. Pupils readily choose books from a good range. A significant number already have well developed early reading skills. They identify initial letter sounds, rhyming words and non-rhyming words. Where teaching is good, a variety of activities and strategies are used for keeping pupils' attention. This includes physical prompts such as putting hands on tummy when a non-rhyming word is used or referring to visual prompts around the classroom. Pupils are beginning to write simple words such as 'cat', 'is' and are attempting more difficult words such as 'zbra' for zebra, 'zro' for zero and 'cule' for curly. The range and quality of writing has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' work is kept in a folder if loose and there is good evidence of evaluative comments written on the work by the teacher. In this way, the teacher keeps a check on pupils' progress and the comments are used to build the 'Learning Continuum' record. The class assistant supports the less able and other ability groups well during activities but is not involved in the whole class sessions

Mathematical development

62. Pupils are making good progress in mathematics and achieving above average standards for their age. Many pupils count, recognise, order and write number symbols to twenty. A few pupils recognise and write symbols above twenty. They add to five in different ways by using the fingers on two hands with some finding different ways of adding to ten. Pupils accurately identify shapes and enjoy activities such as hiding a shape and describing it using three properties for others to guess. These sorts of activities also contribute well to pupils' speaking abilities. Pupils use mathematical descriptions and words well; for instance, identifying and describing repeating patterns. Mathematics activities are varied and opportunities to include mathematical concepts are used in other curriculum areas such as creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, autumn trees were painted by the pupils and mounted on two different colours of backing paper. These were displayed in a sequence and then used as a visual aid in the mathematics lesson. Teaching in mathematics is good. The strongest elements of teaching mathematics in the reception class are the effective planning, the well-organised use of space and resources and the imaginative activities given to children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Pupils' progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Their previous work shows good understanding of making maps by most of the pupils. They understand ordering, sequencing and pictorial representation. On a visit to a local park, they showed great interest and curiosity in the conkers they found and the trees they had come from. One girl described the outside of the conker case as spiky and sharp. A display of paintings in the class showed good observation of the shape of different parts of the trees. Pupils use their senses in everyday work in class by, for example, using a 'feely box' to describe shapes to the class or using their observational skills to describe every day patterns. Pupils use construction toys and computers well. Their mouse skills are well developed and they can drag and drop items on the screen, follow simple instructions that require yes or no answers and move between activities on the screen using the appropriate icons. Good use is made of IT equipment to reinforce reading and mathematical development.

Physical development

64. Pupils are taught physical education by a visiting games coach. The reception teacher and the coach discuss plans in order to take account of the early learning goals. Pupils are developing well in this area. They are confident in their movements during break times and during PE lessons. They follow instructions in such activities as 'Simon says' in pairs either side of a football on a cone. They demonstrate quick reactions at the end of a sequence when the instruction to pick up the ball is given. In the lesson seen, all pupils were actively engaged in careful listening and accurate movements. Their imagination was stimulated during the parachute game when asked to pretend the beanbag was at sea in a storm. Undressing and dressing is planned for systematically as part of the pupils' acquisition of independent skills.

65. However, arrangements for outdoor play are unsatisfactory at the present time, but improvements are due to be made as a result of the current building programme. The area at the back of the pre-fabricated classroom is not used because of its size and slippery surface. Outdoor play equipment is used in part of the main, small playground in a coned off area. Often when older pupils are in the playground. These arrangements are unsatisfactory and limit the progress children make in this area of learning.

Creative development

66. Pupils achieve above average standards in their creative development because staff provide many interesting creative opportunities. For example, exploring colours, shapes and textures in their painting, collage and pictures using a variety of materials. Pupils enjoy singing and rhymes that are used in different contexts to enhance other curriculum areas such as the Teddy Bear poem in a literacy activity. Role-play is provided for in the 'school' area. Pupils use different tools with confidence showing accuracy in the use of different size paintbrushes, scissors and gluing tools. They have good manipulative skills such as neatly gluing patterns of leaves and conkers, or carefully painting shapes to create a repeating pattern. The accommodation restricts some activities as equipment is moved around because of the leaking corrugated plastic roof. Staff make good use of simple resources, but limitations in larger equipment creates difficulties in planning for some activities, such as those taking place in the imaginative play area.

ENGLISH

67. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average up to 1999. In national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, the schools' results in reading and writing were near to the

national average and well below the standards achieved in similar schools. This is explained by the number of pupils in the year group with special educational needs who did not reach the levels expected for seven year olds. However, the percentage of pupils attaining above average results in reading at Key Stage 1 has improved when compared to previous years.

68. At Key Stage 2 the school has maintained above average results in English since the last inspection and in 2000 standards improved so that the school is well above the national average and the average for similar schools. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils reaching level 4 and above – 77% - was close to the national average while the percentage of pupils reaching level 5 or above – 27% - was already above the national average. In 2000 the results have been even better, with a rise from 77% to 93% in the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 and above and a further rise from 27% to 45% in the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 and above. The most significant improvement is in reading where 62% of pupils achieved the higher level 5 in the tests, this is 18% above the national figure for above average pupils, showing that the school achieves good standards in reading. Writing was also above the national average, although only 21% of pupils achieved the higher level, suggesting that more could be done to stretch the highest attainers in this aspect of English. For example, providing more opportunities throughout Key Stage 2 for pupils to base their writing on the structure of texts by professional writers, including information texts. In this way they can begin to incorporate appropriate language in sequencing and categorising their ideas so that by Year 6 they will be achieving high standards in writing. Inspectors are confident that the school has the capacity to address the issues identified and that the good teaching in Year 6 will help to promote better standards in writing, so that more above average pupils reach their full potential. In the light of the standards already being achieved and the improvements in teaching, the targets set for the future need to be revised to reflect higher aspirations for pupils, teachers and parents.
69. The standards of work seen in classroom observations, and through the scrutiny of samples of work, reflects the general pattern of attainment in the national tests. These standards are to be expected, given pupils' attainment on entry, the support given by parents and the strong focus on English in the curriculum. Evidence in the inspection also further consolidates inspectors' view that the most able pupils could reach even higher standards of speaking at Key Stage 1. A concern for higher attaining pupils was mentioned in the previous report and this concern has yet to be fully addressed. Significant numbers of pupils possess very large vocabularies and are able to use a variety of complex structures in conversation with adults, but there are few opportunities to extend these gifts in the day to day curriculum. A number of pupils in Key Stage 1 in particular are able to listen successfully only at times when special efforts are made to engage their interest. In Key Stage 2, by which time all pupils are much more conversant with the conventions of the classroom, they listen to their teachers and to one another with much greater empathy and patience. They respond fluently and intelligently to expert questioning, but have few opportunities to initiate their own discussions or presentations. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, acquire quickly the forms of language they need for conversation and academic success. In many cases they come to outperform their monolingual English-speaking peers.
70. During Key Stage 1, pupils are trained to become competent readers and make good progress as they develop a range of strategies for probing the meanings of the texts they read. The texts they choose increase steadily in complexity, with some cases noted of pupils even choosing books that were too difficult for them. The most able draw inferences beyond the literal meanings of the texts they read. By the time they reach Key Stage 2 there is a strong core of successful readers in each year group. The pupils justify their choices of reading material and encourage others to try their favourite books and authors. They come to understand and use the conventions of a wide range of text types from information books and documents on screen to poetry and stories. By

year 6 the majority are able to understand and respond to selected scenes from Shakespeare's plays.

71. The improved progress in writing at Key Stage 1 contrasts with the findings of the previous report in which a great deal of 'copy-writing' was observed. Writing in exercise books, across a range of subject matter, is now predominantly in the pupils' own words. Clear, fluent joined up handwriting is practically universal across the school from Year 3 onwards and spelling is well practised. In writing tasks, pupils are provided with a wide range of frameworks that encourage a rich range of personal responses. In year 5, for example, pupils had written a series of repetitive statements on 'the dragon inside me'; the range of outcomes revealed great personal, social and expressive maturity:

"There is a strong dragon inside me that protects me from bullies who terrify me."

"There is a nervous dragon inside me who jumps up when people surprise me."

"There is a lonely dragon inside me that makes me think of my friends in America."

Pupils draft their work in exercise books, and subsequently word-process their best products, or write them out more neatly with corrections and improvements for display. Although writing has improved since the last inspection, the work of above average pupils could be even better. For example, evidence from pupils' work in Year 2 suggests that more time is needed for the majority of pupils to complete written tasks to a higher standard. The more capable pupils can construct compound sentences with subordinate clauses, but rarely do so.

72. The unsatisfactory teaching noted in the English section of the previous report has been eliminated: in no single literacy hour was teaching observed to be unsatisfactory, and in some of the English lessons, particularly higher up the school, teaching was good and very good. The strengths noted in the most successful lessons were good planning, based on objectives relating closely to group targets which are derived from clear understandings about the attainment of individual pupils, a thorough extension of phonics work into the consideration of spelling rules in Key Stage 2, well directed questioning, firm behaviour management, and the creation of a good working environment in the classroom. The main shortcoming now is the work and support given to the most able pupils in speaking and writing as described above.
73. Thanks to the efforts of the headteacher and an able supporting colleague, the National Literacy Strategy has been fully embedded in the practice of the school. The procedures for planning, long-term, medium-term and short-term, are having a positive effect upon teaching in areas of the curriculum other than literacy. Schemes of Work are in place and the necessary resources for English are satisfactory: the lack of a school library is compensated for by the collections and displays of books in classrooms and by regular visits to the local public library.
74. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive, particularly from Year 5 onwards and especially where there is a concern on the part of the teacher for the intrinsic interest and challenge contained in the selected texts.

MATHEMATICS

75. In 2000, results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average. Whilst performance is also slightly lower than in 1999, the overall standard was adversely affected by the high number of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, these pupils did well relative to their starting point. Additionally, more pupils achieved above average levels in 2000 than in 1999.
76. In national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, pupils attained results in mathematics above the national average and above the average for similar schools. There was a slightly improved

performance from higher attaining pupils, but the difference was less obvious than in English and science. In 2000 the results fell below the target set by the school and were below the standards achieved in both English and science. Additionally 14% of pupils failed to reach the expected level 4. Future targets in mathematics are too low and need to be increased to meet the performance possible and already evident in English and science.

77. Overall, the mathematics work seen during the inspection at the end of both Key Stages was above average, and an improvement over the previous inspection where it was judged to be in line with the national average. Inspection evidence confirmed the general picture emerging from the national tests, with most pupils achieving standards near to or above the expected level. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriate standards throughout each Key Stage, although there was clear evidence that some of the work given to the brightest mathematicians amongst the pupils in most year groups was repetitious and did not fully stretch them or make full use of their capabilities. For example, in a particular mathematics topic, the whole class might be tackling the same work and the main differentiation occurred as a result of the numbers of problems completed, rather than through targeted work for different ability groups. High attaining pupils therefore made some progress, but at a modest pace in relation to their peers. Lower attainers on the other hand were given more adult support to complete tasks and made better progress.
78. Throughout the school, the national numeracy strategy is beginning to focus staff on targets and is involving pupils in achieving the expected outcomes. The use of objectives has improved this term and they are now used in all classes. However, all teachers are not yet making best use of assessments to inform their day to day planning, especially for above average pupils. Classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs well in group activities, but there is less clarity about their role in whole class sessions. Where pupils have individual educational plans, there are too few references to targets in mathematics.
79. In Key Stage 2, pupils generally make good progress and attitudes to work are usually good. By year 6, pupils' behaviour while at work is consistently good and the majority are able to complete tasks accurately and on time. For example, all pupils can understand data handling and can define such terms as 'discrete' and 'hidden data'. In one lesson pupils who were more able followed a similar topic of greater complexity. The work set broadly matches pupils' abilities but there are few opportunities for the most able to excel. In particular, there is a lack of open-ended, investigative and problem-solving activities.
80. The quality of teaching mathematics in Key Stage 1 is good at times and unsatisfactory at others, but overall is satisfactory. Where teaching is good, pupils are quickly settled and strategies for keeping their interest are used consistently. For instance, in a Year 2 class, strategic thinking games were used to capture interest. The teacher set clear expectations for pupils to complete their tasks. One year 2 pupil demonstrated excellent organisational, grammatical, spelling and handwriting skills as well as completing the maths task correctly. Other pupils in this above average group were doing well but not at such a high level. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because the teacher fails to grab and keep pupils' interest. In a Year 1 class, the good ideas for managing behaviour were not always consistently applied. In such lessons, expectations of behaviour are not always clear to pupils, nor indeed the amount of work pupils are required to do or how much time they have to complete tasks. In Key Stage 1 computers are used to support learning in mathematics, for instance, shape games that help to consolidate understanding of associated terms. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall and often good at the end of the Key Stage. Many of the issues identified in Key Stage 1 are also evident in Key Stage 2, but less exaggerated. The main strength is the clear lesson objectives, good classroom management and

effective use of time. The main weakness in teaching at Key Stage 2 is the work and support given to the highest attainers in some aspects of the curriculum, which does not currently meet their needs or challenge them sufficiently.

81. In both Key Stages learning support assistants are not used effectively during whole class sessions. At other times assistants are used inefficiently. For example, in one Key Stage 2 class in the morning sessions there were two assistants each supporting a pupil with a statement of special educational needs, whilst at other times there were no assistants at all. Homework is regularly set and marked but often without comments that could provide a record of feedback to pupils about how well they have done or what they need to do to improve.
82. Leadership in the subject is good. The mathematics co-ordinator has worked effectively with the staff to make sure the national numeracy strategy is properly in place. The strategy has improved pupils' mental maths in particular. Pupils in years 5 and 6 demonstrated the ability to think rapidly about manipulating numbers and use different ways to arrive at the correct answer. The overall management and monitoring of the subject has improved since the last inspection. The main developments are the tracking of pupils' achievements through target setting and analysis of work. Leading mathematics teachers in other schools have been visited and a programme to observe and analyse colleagues' work was set up last year, although staffing difficulties reduced its success. The planned monitoring cycle will need to be implemented consistently to further improve standards in teaching, learning and behaviour.

SCIENCE

83. In the year 2000, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieved below national average standards in science. The results are lower overall than in previous years, due mainly to the number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. In contrast is the number of pupils that achieved above average results, which is much improved from earlier years and slightly above the national average.
84. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieved standards well above the national average in 2000. Up until 1999 results were relatively poor compared to what might be expected. For example, in 1999 the school's results were well below those in similar schools. However, in 2000 93% of pupils achieved at least the national standard and 45% achieved above average results. Evidence in the inspection indicates that these standards will be maintained in 2001 because of the good teaching pupils receive and the progress that they are making. In particular a strong emphasis is given to the content of science topics, so that pupils are able to answer the national test questions better. In the work seen in classes, pupils showed that, at this early part of the year, they are already achieving national expectations in most aspects of science.
85. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and discussions with pupils shows that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to make informed, rational predictions about what might happen in science investigations and make careful observations about what they find. For example, in a test to see which model car will travel the furthest, they talked beforehand about how friction and weight might affect performance and, after the experiment, why their predictions did not match the results. They understand the idea of fair tests and can explain how they can be set up. Some high achieving pupils can begin to plan their own simple tests, but many are not yet at this stage.
86. Inspection evidence shows that that, by the end of Key Stage 2, teaching has effectively developed in pupils a good knowledge of science topics, which helps them to achieve high standards in national tests. For example, they can talk confidently about the functions of the body's

major organs, such as the lungs, heart and kidneys, and why they are essential to life. They understand the need for careful measurements when carrying out scientific investigations and can record data in charts. However, records of their work shows that above average pupils fail to reach their full potential in all aspects of science because they do not have opportunities to carry out more independent investigations. This practical aspect of science is not assessed in national tests and therefore does not show up on the school's results, but is nevertheless an important part of the subject.

87. Pupils enjoy science and are excited when they are well stimulated, for example when investigating the effects of exercise on the heart rate in a Year 4 class. However, some younger pupils have difficulty in concentrating and teachers have to work hard to capture and retain their attention. When working together, pupils generally co-operate well, contributing to a good sense of community.
88. The teaching of science is satisfactory overall. A strength in teaching is the good programme of work, which is translated into clear learning objectives in the classroom. Teachers make good use of questions and answers to promote pupils' knowledge of science and challenge their understanding. For example, in a Year 1 class carrying out experiments on the senses a pupil asked, "does smell affect your taste?" The teacher exploited this opportunity to ask other pupils and test out the idea. Teachers also promote the use of specialist language in science, such as when a Year 3 teacher developed pupils' use of the word 'permeable' when talking about different types of rocks. Resources, whilst limited, are well organised by class teachers, such as in a year 5 class where the teacher used video to explain the earth's rotation around its axis and its orbit around the sun. The main weaknesses in teaching are the lack of challenge for the highest attainers, particularly in science investigations for older year groups and in the way that in some classes teachers find it difficult to gain and maintain the attention of some pupils.
89. During the inspection the subject co-ordinator was absent on sickness leave, so it was not possible to discuss his management of the subject. However, there is evidence to suggest that poor co-ordination resulted in limited action to address the issues reported in the previous inspection, for example the lack of investigative work. It has therefore been largely the new headteacher and staff working together over the last two terms that has established the effective schemes of work and assessment procedures now in place.

ART

90. During the inspection only two lessons in art were observed in Key Stage 2. This provides insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the teaching in this subject. Of the lessons seen, one was sound and the other was unsatisfactory because of the teacher's limited subject knowledge. Judgements about the standards in art are based on information from other sources, including policy documents, discussion with staff and pupils and examination of past and present work, including displays. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that performance in art is generally consistent with that expected for their age. These standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection.
91. Younger pupils paint and draw real objects, such as fruit, from close observation. They print using different colours and shapes to make regular patterns and they experiment using a variety of art techniques and materials. For example, Year 1 created pictures of fish using a range of collage materials including tissue paper and fabric. Throughout the school pupils in each year group study the work of at least one famous artist. In Year 2 pupils created paintings in the style of Picasso's blue period and copied his unique approach to painting portraits. Year 4 examined a painting by

Magritte and applied his style of mixing the effects of night and day in one picture into their own work. Year 6 created a large collaborative picture in the style of Monet's Water Lilies. Art is used to good effect to support other areas of the curriculum. For example in a mathematics lesson, Year 4 pupils made three dimensional shapes out of clay and in science pupils sketched the skeleton and vital organs of the body to illustrate their topic on healthy bodies. Information technology is used in some years to produce images in 'paint' programmes and in other years to research the work of artists. Overall, however, ICT is at an early stage of development in art.

92. There is a scheme of work for art in place to help teachers plan their work, which is in the process of being updated to take account of the new revised National Curriculum 2000. However, throughout the school there is a lack of progression in the development of pupils' skills in all aspects of their work in art. As a result by the time pupils reach their last year in school they have had limited opportunities to develop their skills fully and higher standards could be achieved if this was rectified. The art curriculum is enriched by visits to the National Art Gallery and the organisation of a creative arts week that focuses on a variety of activities, such as making clay pots and animals, creating a collage picture linked to creative writing about "The Dragon Inside Me" and guidance from a visiting graphic designer on how to sketch a face. These opportunities are useful enrichment, but overall, the influences for pupils' work tend to be Euro-centric and predominantly male, as in the examples above. Opportunities for pupils to appreciate and understand art from other cultures is unsatisfactory because, whilst some attempt is made to use sources such as Indian art, its treatment is superficial. Around the school there is little visual evidence in the art work that it exists within an ethnically and culturally diverse community.
93. The art co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and has had no opportunity to monitor teaching, teachers' planning or the overall art curriculum. Resources for the subject are very basic and limited and the cramped environment in most classrooms limits the range of activities that can take place. However, there is a comprehensive action plan in place to develop the subject that will focus on identifying areas of staff development, improving resources, monitoring and evaluation and developing links between art and other subjects.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. No lessons of design and technology were observed during the inspection, but the school provided some samples of pupils' work. On the basis of this evidence pupils do not achieve the standards expected in design and technology by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
95. Attempts are made by some teachers to encourage designing and making activities, for example in Year 6 designing toothpaste boxes, badges and letters about healthy teeth, or in Year 4 making puppets from felt, but generally the standards achieved are below those expected. In some year groups there is no evidence of pupils' work in design and technology, indicating a lack of continuity between years and a disjointed experience, so that pupils do not effectively build on their achievements from one year to the next. There is no evidence of pupils working with a range of materials and processes, structures or mechanisms. Design work is very limited in its scope.
96. During the inspection the co-ordinator for design and technology was absent, but the evidence suggests poor leadership in the subject. For example, the assessment of design and technology is inadequate when compared to the good records in most other subjects and at times teachers' planning for design and technology is confused with work in art. No tangible action has been taken to address the criticisms made in the last inspection report, when the subject was judged to be unsatisfactory. Substantial improvements are needed in subject leadership to ensure that pupils have worthwhile experiences in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

97. Geography and history are taught to all pupils within a curriculum that concentrates on one subject for a half a term before moving on to the other. No geography or history lessons were observed during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement about teaching in the subjects. Judgements about standards are based on an analysis of pupils' work, on classroom displays and on discussions with staff and pupils. Geographical and historical topics were seen being developed across the curriculum, especially during the Literacy Hour. Opportunities were seen in which pupils were invited to search information texts for insights into Roman life, for example, and to create their own formats for reporting on their findings.
98. The adoption of the Schemes of Work prepared by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in both geography and history for Key Stages 1 and 2 has provided a clearer focus on the particular knowledge, understanding and skills expected in each subject area. Across all year groups and by the end of each Key Stage, pupils achieve standards broadly appropriate for their ages.
99. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can describe and map their journey to and from school. They are also aware of and can comment on the historical features of their school building: they have looked at an old log book from the school and have discovered that in a school inspection in 1900 the standards of needlework were reported to be good. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils can compare maps showing the same area of Balham now and two hundred years ago, explaining why and how features have changed. Pupil progression in history is generally less easy to note: all too often, the same tasks are set right across the ability range. This has the effect of limiting the achievement of both the less and the more able pupils.
100. The improvements to the school's work in geography are the result of the efforts and training of the subject co-ordinator who has produced a new policy and teaching framework. Resources for both geography and history are adequate and are well supplemented by a relevant programme of visits.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

101. Standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils now achieve in line with expectations at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Further development is now needed towards the end of Key Stage 2, where some pupils are not reaching the higher standards of which they are capable.
102. By Year 2 pupils can load and save files, use a word processor to generate and amend text, create and draw images with paint programmes and use simple databases to make graphs and charts. They can control programmable devices, such as the 'Roamer' to follow a set of instructions. In Key Stage 2 pupils consolidate and build on their earlier experiences. By age eleven they can use combinations of text and graphics to produce interesting presentations in their work, use digital thermometers in science to record their investigations into temperatures, use spreadsheets to model mathematical problems and build a procedure to control model traffic lights. They are confident in using a range of software in different subjects - such as for researching history topics using CD ROMs or browsing the Internet for examples of the work of artists. Pupils can talk confidently about what they have done and understand that poor quality information leads to unreliable results, such as when recording the findings of science investigations. Nevertheless, the most able pupils are still very dependent on the teacher's close guidance. For example, they do

not yet demonstrate or apply higher order skills in their work such as selecting appropriate applications for different purposes and audiences or use sensors to monitor and measure events in the environment.

103. Only three lessons were seen where ICT was being taught. In each of these teaching was satisfactory. Teachers generally provide a structured approach to the development of ICT, with whole-class instruction followed by pupils working in pairs to complete focused tasks. This has resulted in improved standards since the last inspection where they were below national expectations. The teachers observed had a secure subject knowledge and gave clear instructions so that pupils understood what had to be done. Pupils work well together to complete tasks and enjoy ICT. For example, Year 6 pupils talked about how well they thought they were doing and how much their ICT experience had improved in recent years. They enjoy the teaching they receive and the better access to ICT since the school introduced 'Dreamwriter' portable computers.
104. The co-ordinator for the subject was on a leave of absence during the inspection. There is currently no policy for ICT, but the school follows the nationally recommended schemes of work in the subject. This has helped to provide a structure for teaching, which is reflected in teachers' weekly planning. The school has benefited from support from the LEA advisory services for ICT. There are connections to the Internet in each classroom, funded through the National Grid for Learning grant, although the school was experiencing difficulties with Internet access during the week of the inspection. Staff have good basic skills in ICT and in spring 2001 they will be trained under the New Opportunities Fund initiative, to learn more about using ICT in subject teaching. The school has a higher than average number of computers and while some are now old, good use is made of them to carry out suitable work, such as in controlling remote devices.

MUSIC

105. During the inspection, only one music lesson and two singing sessions were observed. This provides insufficient evidence to make judgements about teaching in this subject. On the basis of the lessons seen and on other occasions when music was in evidence, such as during assemblies, standards are judged to be broadly in line with those expected for pupils at the age of seven. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Standards in singing are above those expected for pupils aged eleven, which is similar to those reported in the last inspection.
106. In Key Stage 1 pupils sing a variety of songs in tune enthusiastically. They play untuned percussion instruments to accompany different songs and clap in time to the beat. In Year 2 pupils identify the difference between high and low notes and know that when playing, for example, a tambourine or a chime bar, the sound will be lower or higher dependent upon the dimensions of the instrument. Pupils follow simple notation to create a rhythmic pattern when playing their instruments. In Key Stage 2, pupils sing songs in two-part harmony and understand terms such as crescendo and diminuendo. During assemblies pupils sing a variety of hymns well with older pupils leading the singing with confidence. Opportunities for pupils to compose simple tunes on tuned and untuned percussion instruments are limited.
107. The school policy is being updated in line with Curriculum 2000 and a published scheme of work has been purchased to support teachers when teaching music in the classroom. However, the evidence gathered suggests that teachers are insecure in their subject knowledge and need considerable support from the music co-ordinator to provide a quality music curriculum throughout the school.

108. The music co-ordinator is enthusiastic, has a good subject knowledge and has achieved much in a short time. She monitors teachers' planning but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching to ensure that pupils make steady progress in developing their music skills from year to year. Additionally, assessment in music is under-developed and therefore does not provide the records that would help her to monitor pupils' progress. Inspectors felt confident that, on the basis of achievements to date, these issues would be quickly addressed by the co-ordinator. The curriculum is enhanced by after school orchestra and recorder clubs and the visiting instrumentalist who teaches violin to a small number of pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to perform in a termly concert when they audition for solo parts. Resources for music are appropriate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. Four lessons were observed; two in co-operative games skills taught by a coach employed by the school to teach physical education and two in dance. Gymnastics was not taught during the week of the inspection. On the basis of the lessons seen, standards are judged to be broadly in line with expectations at the end of both Key Stages.

110. Year 2 pupils show appropriate awareness of space and of others. They listen and respond to instructions promptly and accurately. They jump, hop and move with developing skill. In Year 6 pupils work together in teams, co-ordinating their attempts to carry out a set task, such as manipulating two beanbags and then two balls across a large parachute. They understand the importance of warming up before an activity and cooling down when they have finished. They move quickly and purposefully with increasing skill and deliberation. In dance, Year 1 pupils are beginning to control their movements in time to the music. Year 4 pupils vary their movements according to a rhythmic beat. They devise sequences in pairs, small groups or on their own working at different speeds dependent on the music. They improve and refine their movements appropriately, learning from the good example of others in the class. All pupils in Key Stage 2 receive swimming instruction during the school year. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils can swim at least 25 metres. Plans to reinstate the annual school journey later this year are in place to give older pupils the opportunity to experience outdoor adventure activities in a different environment.

111. Pupils are generally enthusiastic and keen and this contributes to the sound progress made. However some younger pupils become overexcited and silly, particularly during warm up activities. Pupils are not always attentive and this results in time spent disciplining pupils instead of developing their skills.

112. Teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned appropriately with clear learning objectives for each lesson. However, the co-operative games lessons seen for Year 2 and Year 6 were very similar and did not develop pupils' skills sufficiently across the age gap. Class teachers support the coach during these lessons, managing behaviour and participating alongside the pupils. This partnership approach is most effective where the teacher contributes actively to the skill development of pupils. For example, in one lesson seen, the class teacher took control over part of the warm up activity and led on aspects in the main section of the lesson. In dance lessons teachers motivate pupils well and pace the sessions briskly.

113. The co-ordinator has been recently appointed and has already produced a comprehensive policy for the subject. The scheme of work is presently being updated but the co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching or teachers' planning, although there is a detailed action plan to develop the subject linked to the school development plan. Resources for the subject are very limited and are in need of updating. The hall offers very cramped facilities for

gymnastics and the equipment is unsatisfactory, particularly for older pupils. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 throughout the week. These include football, netball, ball skills and yoga. The school plans to take part in competitive sports by joining the local league and playing netball and football matches against local school teams.