

ERRATUM

Please substitute page 30 as follows:

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	27
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	15
Indian	19
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	301
Any other minority ethnic group	28

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	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y N – Y 7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.0 :1
Average class size	25.8

Education support staff:

Y N – Y 7

Total number of education support staff	14.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	252

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1003674.00
Total expenditure	995531.00
Expenditure per pupil	2004.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	10008.00

*FTE means full-time
equivalent.*

Balance carried forward to next year	18151.00
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INSPECTION REPORT

TIMBERCROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Plumstead

LEA area: Greenwich

Unique reference number:
130922

Headteacher: Jane Stephenson

Reporting inspector: David Tytler

Dates of inspection: 18th – 22nd September 2000

Inspection number: 224866

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Timbercroft Lane
Plumstead
London

Postcode: SE18 2SG

Telephone number: 020 8854 6915

Fax number: 020 8855 0904

Appropriate authority: The Local Education Authority

Name of chair of governors: Mr. Karl Sewell

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Tytler 8990	<i>Registered inspector</i>		What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
David Martin 9420	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? The community's contribution to the curriculum; Staffing, accommodation and resources; Finances.
Brian Milton 10214	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; English as an additional language; Design and technology; Physical education; Religious education.	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
Pat Lowe 11901	<i>Team inspector</i>	Under fives, Science; Art and design.	
Stephen Parker 23658	<i>Team inspector</i>	English.	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils? Assessment.
Lindsay Howard 7336	<i>Team inspector</i>	Equal opportunities; History, Geography, Music.	
Mervyn Ward 20463	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and communications technology.	.

The inspection contractor was:

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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:

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
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London
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Timbercroft is a large primary school on the borders of the London boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley. At the time of the inspection there were 501 pupils aged from three to 11 taught in 15 classes, with 50 children attending the nursery part-time. The school was formed by the amalgamation in 1997 of the separate infant and junior schools on the same site. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds with many differing needs. There are 47 pupils with English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is the percentage identified as having special educational needs. Children enter the school displaying a wide range of attainment, but overall it matches that expected nationally for children of their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The headteacher, senior staff and governors have introduced a number of important changes in the last 18 months and the school is set on a clear path of improvement. There were examples of good teaching throughout the school. The school provides a satisfactory education for all its pupils. The improvements, particularly in management, have not, however, had sufficient time to have a positive effect on standards which are well below those expected nationally, for pupils aged 11, in English, mathematics, science and information technology. When account is taken of all these factors, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher, in partnership with her deputy, provides good leadership to ensure clear educational objectives in a learning environment where all have equal access to the curriculum.
- Children get a good start to their education in the nursery.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and, in most cases, behave well in classes and around the school.
- The pastoral care for pupils remains good and their social and cultural development is very good.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information technology.
- The provision for information technology.
- Attendance.
- The use of homework.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1998 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses in its management. This is no longer the case. Good leadership and management is now provided by the headteacher and her deputy, who were both appointed in 1999, and governors now have accurate and prompt information which enables them to make informed decisions. The school has addressed all the key issues of the last report, many of them successfully. Standards in English remain low. Information technology does not meet statutory requirements.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

Well above average **A**

Above average

B

Average **C**

Below average

D

Well below average **E**

The results of the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999 in English, mathematics and science were well below the national averages. In comparison with similar schools the results were below in English and science, and well below in mathematics. The school did not meet its targets. Unconfirmed results for 2000 show an improvement in English. The science results are broadly similar to last year, while there has been a drop in the results for mathematics. Evidence gathered during the inspection found that standards are beginning to improve in English, mathematics and science, although they remain below the national expectations. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well below what is expected for children of their age, largely because of inadequate resources. Standards in religious education match those required by the locally Agreed Syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The children are enthusiastic about school and have positive attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in classrooms, around the school and when on trips. In a few lessons, some pupils become restless disturbing the learning of others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and the personal development of pupils is satisfactory.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, with a high rate of unauthorised absence.

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils observed during the inspection was nearly always satisfactory and often better. In a small number of cases, attitudes and behaviour fell below those expected by the school. This was usually linked to inadequacies in the teaching. They were satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of lessons seen.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen: 94	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Examples of good teaching were seen throughout the school. Of the lessons observed, 96 per cent were satisfactory or better, 28 per cent were satisfactory, 51 per cent good, and 17 per cent were very good. Four per cent (four lessons) were unsatisfactory. All the teaching for the under-fives was good or very good, with 75 per cent good and 25 per cent very good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. In Key Stage 1, 35 per cent of lessons were satisfactory, 48 per cent good and 10 per cent very good. Six per cent (two lessons) were unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, 27 per cent of lessons were satisfactory, 49 per cent good and 20 per cent very good. Four per cent (two lessons) were unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy during the inspection was good. The good teaching observed enabled pupils to make good progress in lessons. Pupils' progress over time, however, has been unsatisfactory due to disruptions in the teaching, which have now been addressed.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Whilst the focus is on literacy and numeracy, the curriculum is broad and balanced. Provision for the under-fives is very good. Information and communications technology does not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Provision has been improved recently and is now good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The personal development of pupils is good. Their social and cultural development is very good, their moral development good, and their spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school continues to provide good care for its pupils. Arrangements for gathering information on what pupils know and can do are satisfactory and the information is beginning to be used to meet individual needs.

The school makes every effort to create a partnership with parents, is open to their suggestions and listens to their concerns. Information and communications technology is unsatisfactory, largely because of inadequate resources and shortcomings in the accommodation.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher, who has developed a good working partnership with her deputy, has the active support of the governing body in setting a clear educational direction for the school. The clearly stated priority is to raise standards as a matter of urgency.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	With the exception of information technology, the governing body meets all its statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures for monitoring its performance, but has yet to focus clearly on the learning of pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory use is made of the resources available to it, although best use is not always made of support staff in classrooms.

The school is well staffed with satisfactory resources in all subjects except information technology. The accommodation is adequate although re-wiring to allow the wider use of computers is not complete and sound-proofing in classes and between rooms is in need of improvement to allow classes to be taught undisturbed by what is happening around them. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard. • They feel comfortable in approaching the school. • Their children enjoy coming to school. • The teaching. • The behaviour. • The leadership and management of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of out-of-school activities. • The quantity of homework. • The information available to parents on how their children are getting on. • The partnership with parents.

Evidence gathered during the inspection supports the positive views of the majority of parents. The school makes every effort to build a good partnership with parents and is open to their concerns and questions. Inspectors found that the information provided to parents, including the reports on the progress their children were making, are good, and that while out-of-school activities are limited, they are satisfactory. Inspection evidence, however, also found that homework was used inconsistently.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of children on entry to the school covers a wide range of abilities but, overall, reaches that expected nationally for children of their age. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 the majority of children achieve well and attain the early learning goals. Standards achieved in the national tests in English, mathematics and science in both key stages are below that expected nationally. This is in part due to the large number of pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. In addition, the school has been through a period of change since the last inspection, which caused disruption to the pupils' learning. The school now has a stable staff. The new headteacher and her deputy, who have been working as a team since January 2000, have introduced a large number of changes designed to raise attainment and ensure consistently good teaching. Signs of improvement were evident during the inspection, but these changes have yet to have a significant impact on standards. The school did not meet its targets for the year 2000.

2. In the 1999 national tests in English for pupils aged seven, the number reaching Level 2 or higher was well below the national average in reading and writing. In writing, the number reaching Level 3 was below average, while it was well below in reading. When compared with similar schools, the results were below average in writing and well below in reading. The unconfirmed results for 2000 show no improvement in reading. They were lower in writing and no pupil reached Level 3. Standards in reading and writing have been below average for the last four years. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirms that attainment is below average in speaking and listening and well below in reading and writing.

3. In the tests for 11 year olds, the proportion reaching Level 4 or higher was well below the average and below the average of similar schools. For the last four years, standards have been well below the average, but they are improving, particularly in reading. Unconfirmed results for 2000 show an improvement over 1999, but they still fall below the school's target. Three pupils in four reached Level 4 in reading and one in four reached Level 5. There was less improvement in writing, and the number reaching the higher level was very low. Evidence from the inspection shows that attainment is average in speaking and listening, but below average in reading and writing.

4. By the time they are seven, pupils generally have a satisfactory command of standard English, but many lack confidence in class discussions and their speech is quiet and indistinct. By the age of 11, pupils use of standard English is satisfactory.

5. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make unsatisfactory progress in reading because most reading materials are not graded for their language difficulty. By the age of seven, few pupils read fluently with understanding. Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 2 as they learn to recognise more words at sight and become more secure in sounding out new words. Whilst graded reading material is provided for lower-attaining pupils, there are still occasions when pupils choose books that do not match their level of attainment. By the time they leave school, most pupils read longer texts silently and their skills in reading non-fiction are satisfactory.

6. By the age of seven, few pupils achieve a joined, legible writing style. Poor letter formation and word spacing makes much of the writing of lower attainers difficult to read. The pace of writing is slow, so most achieve less than expected in lessons. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing in Key Stage 2. By the age of 11, the most significant weakness is the high level of inaccuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar in daily writing in all subjects.

7. Results in the 1999 national tests for mathematics for seven and 11 year olds are well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards are below average. The unconfirmed results for 2000 show a slight improvement in Key Stage 1, but there was a decline in Key Stage 2, after a significant improvement in 1998. Inspection evidence shows that pupils throughout the school now make satisfactory progress in using and applying mathematical skills and knowledge, particularly in problem-solving and in their number work. They do not make enough progress, however, in developing their knowledge and understanding of space, shape and measuring, and data handling. Despite the improvements observed, the attainment of pupils remains below what is expected nationally for children of their age.

8. In science, attainment for seven year olds was well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. The unconfirmed results of teacher assessment in 2000 show that standards remain below the national average. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that whilst standards are rising, they remain below the national average.

9. Results in the 1999 national science tests for 11 year olds were well below the national average, with the percentage achieving Level 5 below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the results were below the average. The unconfirmed results in the tests for 2000 were slightly lower than in 1999. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher grade was very low. Inspection evidence shows that although standards are rising, they remain below the national average but are improving.

10. Standards in information and communications technology are well below national expectations in both key stages. There have been some improvements since the last inspection, but information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements. The progress of pupils is severely limited by the lack of resources, both in computers and in suitable programs to run on them. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They have individual educational programmes. These are in the process of being revised by the new special educational needs co-ordinator. New targets are being set and this will involve teachers making sure that pupils make good progress by providing targets that are realistic and regularly reviewed. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. There are good systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have good and positive attitudes to the school and its activities. They are enthusiastic about what they do, both inside and outside the classroom, and eager to participate. During the inspection, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils were nearly always satisfactory and often better. On the few occasions where attitudes and behaviour were judged to be unsatisfactory, this was usually linked to shortcomings in the teaching. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils were satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of the lessons seen. They were satisfactory in 24 per cent, good in 53 per cent and very good in 15 per cent. They were unsatisfactory in 7 per cent (seven lessons).

13. Pupils have good attitudes to school and are enthusiastic about it. Nine out of ten parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire said that their children enjoyed coming to school. Pupils take part in the activities offered and most have good attitudes to their work, co-operating with their teachers and enjoying their learning. In a very good Year 1 religious education lesson, pupils responded very well to the teacher's own enthusiasm and were full of ideas about belonging.

14. Behaviour is good in classrooms, around the school and on trips, as was observed during a swimming lesson during the inspection. The very good behaviour seen throughout a Year 4 science lesson enabled the teacher to concentrate on teaching the whole class, groups and individuals. Pupils are aware of the unacceptability of all oppressive behaviour such as bullying, racism and sexism, and are able to consider their actions and how they affect others. In the lessons where the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were judged to be unsatisfactory, pupils were either not well managed by their teacher or were given work that was not matched to their prior attainment. As a result, they failed to focus on the task, showed little interest in their learning, and made unsatisfactory progress.

15. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. They enjoy taking responsibilities that are offered to them, for example as members of the school council, as classroom monitors, or helping younger children with reading and with games during playtimes. They do not, however, have enough opportunities to show their own initiative, for example in planning and researching independently.

16. Pupils generally listen carefully to each other and to the teacher, respecting the different views and feelings expressed. In a very good Year 5 literacy lesson, there was a lively discussion about the story of Cinderella, but pupils took their turn, putting their hands up and waiting to be invited to give their views. In a Year 5 religious education lesson, pupils were keen to learn about other religions and discussed them sensibly.

17. There are good relationships throughout the school which are used to encourage pupils to think for themselves and expand and explain their ideas. In a very good Year 6 numeracy lesson, the friendly atmosphere and positive relationship with pupils provoked an imaginative response and enabled them to make good progress in their learning. Pupils are courteous and show kindness and consideration to each other.

18. The latest published figures for attendance are below the national average and the most recent figures show a further decline, with increases in both authorised and unauthorised absence. Attendance is unsatisfactory and adversely affects the attainment of pupils. Pupils are also frequently late for school, as was observed during the inspection, with neither they nor their parents showing any sense of urgency to arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Examples of good teaching were seen throughout the school, which enabled pupils to make good progress in their lessons. Their progress over time, however, has been unsatisfactory due to disruptions in the teaching caused by a number of changes in the management and staffing of the school and to some shortcomings in the teaching. Staffing is now more settled and the new management team has introduced a new teaching and learning policy. These changes, however, are all recently introduced and have not yet had time to have a positive impact on standards over time.

20. During the inspection, 96 per cent of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better, with 28 per cent satisfactory, 51 per cent good, and 17 per cent very good. Four lessons were unsatisfactory. All the teaching for the under-fives was good or very good, with 75 per cent good and 25 per cent very good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. In Key Stage 1, 35 per cent of lessons were satisfactory, 48 per cent good and 10 per cent very good. There were two unsatisfactory lessons (6 per cent). In Key Stage 2, 27 per cent of lessons were satisfactory, 49 per cent good and 20 per cent very good. Two lessons were unsatisfactory (4 per cent). The teaching of literacy and numeracy during the inspection was good.

21. The good and very good teaching for the under-fives was characterised by very good planning, behaviour management and subject knowledge. Teachers use a wide range of well-organised activities and have high expectations of what the children can do. They make good very good use of the resources available to them. As a result, children in both the nursery and the reception class make good progress in their learning.

22. In both key stages, teachers had sound knowledge and understanding. Pupils made the best progress where the lesson was underpinned by very good subject knowledge, as was seen in a Year 1 art lesson. The teacher's own skills were used well to enable the pupils to develop their skills in using drawings for recording, investigating and developing ideas. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, for example in geography and music, teachers' effectiveness was limited by insecure subject knowledge.

23. Teachers planned their lessons carefully in both key stages and used a sound range of teaching methods. In a very good Year 4 numeracy lesson, the teacher's lively introduction captured the imagination of pupils, enabling them to extend their knowledge of numbers. In a number of otherwise satisfactory lessons, the planning did not always take into account what pupils had previously learnt.

24. Whilst most teachers had high expectations of behaviour which were made clear to pupils, their expectations of what their pupils could do, whilst satisfactory overall, were not always high

enough. In a very good, Year 4 religious education lesson, the pupils responded

very well to the teacher's calm, sensitive but demanding approach, in which he made his high expectations for that year group abundantly clear. There were, however, examples in most subjects where the work set was insufficiently challenging, which limited the progress made by pupils.

25. The management of pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was good in most cases, enabling teachers to teach and pupils to learn. In a Year 5 literacy lesson the pupils were kept on task by the teacher's lively, focused manner, making her high expectations of behaviour clear.

26. Whilst teachers throughout the school made satisfactory use of all the resources available to them, there were occasions, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, when support staff were not always well used. In many lessons, good use was made of time. In a very good Year 1 religious education lesson, for example, the brisk pace allowed a range of ideas to be discussed about belonging to different groups and ensured that the work planned for the lesson was completed.

27. Teachers in both key stages used questioning throughout the lessons to establish what pupils had learned and adjusted their teaching accordingly. In a very good, Year 6 numeracy lesson, the teacher used questions not only to check pupils' understanding, but to support their learning of how to round up, using a set of rules which they devised for themselves. In a number of otherwise satisfactory lessons, teachers did not always make good use of the final review session to check and reinforce what pupils had learned, or whether the learning objectives had been achieved.

28. The school has recently reviewed its homework policy and a structured programme has been introduced in Years 5 and 6. The policy has yet to be applied consistently and homework is not well used to support learning in the classroom, or to encourage pupils to undertake independent research.

29. The unsatisfactory teaching was characterised by a poor match of work to the pupils' prior attainment, tasks that failed to engage the pupils' interest, a lack of confidence in some subjects, particularly in teaching to the literacy and numeracy strategies, and unsatisfactory behaviour management. In these lessons, pupils became restless, showing little interest in their learning and, therefore, made unsatisfactory progress.

30. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. In most lessons the work is suitable and challenging. On occasions, tasks are not planned to meet the needs of all pupils with special educational needs. New arrangements, introduced in September, provide improved support for pupils with special educational needs.

31. Pupils with English as an additional language learn well within all lessons. The teacher with responsibility for these pupils works in partnership with class teachers during literacy and numeracy lessons, and this gives good support for pupils' learning. Bi-lingual support assistants provide good support for pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition.

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

32. The school offers a broad and generally balanced curriculum. The provision for information and communications technology, however, does not meet statutory requirements. There is a programme of study for the subject, but coverage is neither complete nor consistent. The use of information and communication technology is not regularly planned into other subjects. In other respects, there have been significant improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection. A very good programme has been developed for the Foundation Stage, with good attention paid to outdoor activities.

33. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are in place, and planning is guided by the official frameworks. Standards in reading continue to be affected by a lack of structure in the reading programme, and writing opportunities in other subjects are not fully co-ordinated with the provision made in English. There are also too few planned opportunities to apply numeracy in other subjects. The scheme of work for religious education is based on the locally Agreed Syllabus. Planning in all other subjects has been improved by the adoption of official recommendations and guidelines.

34. There is a good programme for pupils' personal, social and health education, including health education and drugs awareness. The programme has been well planned so that pupils' understanding is developed evenly throughout the school. There is a citizenship programme for pupils in Year 6.

35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' special needs are recognised at an early stage in their schooling. Pupils identified as having mild learning difficulties are catered for within the classroom. They are supported by the newly-appointed learning support assistants. These pupils are provided with good individual education plans, with specific targets to guide their development in language and mathematics. Their targets are regularly reviewed and updated so that the pupils make consistent progress. Those with statements of special educational needs receive additional support from outside agencies, as well as from the school.

36. The newly-appointed co-ordinator for equal opportunities has combined the good elements of the various policies which the school already had into a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. There are clear statements on anti-racism, anti-sexism and anti-bullying. Within each section is a statement on practice and how incidents should be dealt with. The school records any reported incident, together with the outcome, in a designated book. There are equal opportunities statements in all the schemes of work and planning sheets have a section for teachers to note areas where they can be promoted. During the inspection no incidents were seen which reflected a lack of awareness of equal opportunities in any form.

37. More than half the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that there were too few out-of-school activities. Evidence gathered during the inspection, however, showed that whilst extra-curricular activities are limited, they are satisfactory. Many pupils take an active part in these activities, which include singing, badminton and gardening. Pupils occasionally take part in sports competitions and arts events. They also benefit from sporting contacts with professional

football and Rugby League clubs.

38. The school carnival is a focal point for creative activities, with a multi-cultural dimension, involving the whole school and the local community. Out-of-school visits are used to stimulate pupils' interest and raise attainment in the subjects concerned. They include visits to local places of worship, cultural and study centres, with a residential visit for Year 6. Satisfactory use is made of the local community to support fieldwork in geography and history, and visitors from churches and other walks of life present role models of citizenship.

39. There are also established relations with other schools and colleges, including the main receiving high school, which provide opportunities for children to enjoy a wider curricular experience.

Personal Development

40. The provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Very good provision is made for pupils' cultural and social development. Good provision is made for their moral development. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.

41. Assemblies play a large part in pupils' spiritual development, which represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Despite the large numbers involved, assemblies, including collective acts of worship, are calm occasions. All teachers develop weekly themes, and time for reflection is provided. Opportunities for reflection within other areas of the curriculum are limited.

42. Very good relationships exist between adults and pupils. All adults set good examples to support pupils' moral development, which is underpinned by the school's aims. All classes have developed and display their own classroom rules. Teachers refer to these rules during lessons and they are known and understood by pupils. Work on display illustrates that pupils in Key Stage 2 have had the opportunity to express opinions on racism and bullying. Their knowledge and understanding have been increased by a visiting theatre group which undertakes workshops on responsibilities, particularly bullying.

43. The school actively encourages the development of very good social skills. Assemblies are well used to promote a feeling of community. Each week, pupils share their achievements, in and out of school, at a celebration assembly. All pupils have the opportunity to take on duties that support the day-to-day running of the class. Older pupils are given the opportunity to take on responsibilities outside their own classroom. For 30 minutes each week, pupils in Years 5 and 6 share reading activities with pupils in Years 1 and 2. During the lunch break, Year 6 pupils take turns to help care for younger pupils in the playground.

44. The School Council meets each week at lunch time. Classes from Year 1 to Year 6 elect two members each. Two teachers help to support the council. Pupils have talked about issues relating to play time and have been able to purchase additional playground equipment. They are currently examining the way lunch time is organised, in order to make it an even more sociable occasion.

45. Pupils are also offered opportunities to contribute to the wider community at home and abroad through donating to charities, such as Jeans for Genes, Red Nose Day and Water Aid. The school has links with the local environmental group, which has involved pupils in issues relating to graffiti. The school organises a citizenship programme for Year 6 pupils, in conjunction with the police.

46. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate and develop their knowledge of British culture and traditions. There is good coverage of western artists in the art curriculum and classical and popular music are well used at the beginning and end of assemblies. The school has made visits to the Millennium Dome. The school works hard to support all the cultures represented in the school. There is a very good range of dual language books and these are used in story telling sessions. The carnival organised by the school in the summer term included an African art workshop, Chinese dancing, Indian storytelling and African drumming. The school celebrates the major religious festivals of all faiths. Within the curriculum there are many opportunities for pupils to study art, music, dance and literature from other cultures as well as their own. Pupils' own languages and cultures are celebrated within the school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school continues to provide good care of its pupils and has good arrangements for child protection, which are well understood by all adults in the school, who have received appropriate training. The school has recently put substantial effort into developing its arrangements for gathering information on what pupils know and can do. These procedures are now good and a significant improvement since the last inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. Children's attainment is assessed on entry.

48. The information is used well to guide provision in the Foundation Stage, and children's progress towards the early learning goals is carefully monitored. The assessment co-ordinator has analysed the results of the most recent national tests for pupils aged seven and eleven, enabling subject co-ordinators to consider how teaching might be modified. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 take the optional official tests, and the school is now able to compare progress with national standards on a regular basis.

49. There are good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science, which give teachers clear information about current achievement. There are standardised record sheets through the school, which, once established, will allow pupils' progress to be tracked through the school. Samples of each pupil's work are collected at intervals to illustrate their progress. Staff have begun to meet formally to compare their standards of marking with official benchmarks to bring their judgements closer to those of national tests. Assessment procedures in other subjects are less well developed, but they are satisfactory in relating pupils' achievement to the expectations of the National Curriculum.

50. Satisfactory use is made of the information gathered on what pupils know and can do. Pupils are placed in groups in each class according to their attainment in English. Tasks generally match pupils' needs and the school has begun to set targets for each pupil. Learning support assistants

generally help pupils in lower-attaining groups. Assessment information is used to identify pupils who need additional literacy support, and teachers without class responsibility teach groups in Years 4 and 6. In mathematics, older pupils are taught in either the upper or lower set, according to their attainment, rather than in their usual class, and each set is further divided into groups, so that tasks match different levels of attainment. Work is not so closely targeted in other subjects, though pupils with lower attainment are generally given simpler versions of the same tasks as other pupils.

51. The monitoring of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The new arrangements, which were established in September 2000, provide the SENCO with adequate time to monitor the progress of pupils. The pupils' individual education plans are reviewed every term and new targets set. Parents or carers are invited to the termly review and are expected to play their part in supporting the pupils in achieving their targets. Specialist agencies keep good records of visits and record the progress of individual pupils. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive the daily or weekly provision that is set out in their statements. This includes working closely with the local special school.

52. The pastoral care of pupils is good. There are good arrangements for child protection and the pupils' general welfare and health and safety. Pupils are actively involved in the good procedures for monitoring and eliminating all types of harassment and bullying. Good behaviour is promoted through a variety of strategies, which are satisfactorily applied by teachers and support staff. Teachers and support staff know the pupils as individuals and are aware of their individual needs. The procedures for monitoring and supporting their personal development are good.

53. The school uses a wide range of measures to monitor and promote the attendance and punctuality of the minority of pupils who consistently cause concern. It also rewards those whose attendance is good. Nevertheless, the lack of a sense of urgency was noted in most pupils and parents who were late, together with a lack of immediate remedial action by the class teacher. Registers are not always accurately completed by the class teachers in accordance with the published guidance.

54. Regular inspections and assessments are carried out in the school to identify potential health and safety risks and appropriate action is taken. At the time of the inspection, however, the statutory testing of electrical equipment had not been fully implemented nor documented.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The school makes every effort to create a good partnership with parents and is, in most cases, successful. It is open to their concerns and questions and parents feel welcome in school. There are both formal and informal opportunities for parents to receive information regarding their children's education and the progress they are making. Curriculum workshops are also arranged to enable parents to become familiar with educational developments. Parents appreciate these arrangements. They are generally supportive of the school and are satisfied with the quality of education it provides for their children.

56. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning through the home-school

agreement and by helping in school and with their children's work at home. A number of parents give valuable help in the classroom, with school events and on trips. Nearly half the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire, and many who attended the parents' meeting, were, however, unhappy with the quantity and quality of homework that was set. Evidence gathered during the inspection supported these views, although improvements are now being made. The school is reviewing the setting of homework and a structured programme has been introduced into Years 5 and 6.

57. Arrangements for induction into the nursery and the reception class are very good. The parents of new children are visited at home prior to the child's entry into school. Visits and meetings are arranged where parents and children are welcomed and where the curriculum and routines are explained. Parents are encouraged to come into the nursery and reception class at any time and to play an active part in their children's learning by listening to their children read each night and commenting on progress on the children's reading cards. They are kept well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and their contribution to children's learning at home and at school is good. Parents of pupils with special educational needs, or having English as an additional language, are fully involved in their children's education.

58. Nearly a quarter of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire had concerns about the information they received on how their children were getting on at school. Inspection evidence, however, showed that there were many opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers and that the annual reports on their children were informative and useful, containing targets for improvement. Parents and children are encouraged to add their own written comments. Parents are kept well informed of events through newsletters, and about school developments and issues through an informative prospectus and letters.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The relatively new headteacher, who has developed a good working partnership with her deputy, has the active support of the governing body in setting a clear educational direction for the school. The clearly stated priority is to raise standards as a matter of urgency.

60. The headteacher has successfully, and sensitively, overseen a series of much-needed and sometimes difficult changes to address the key issues of the last inspection report, particularly in management, which was judged to be a serious weakness. This is no longer the case and the management and leadership provided by the head and her deputy are strengths of the school.

61. In a root and branch review of priorities, policies and strategies, the head and deputy have introduced a range of well-written policies to improve both the management and the quality of teaching and learning. The views of those involved in the school, all staff, governors, parents and children, were sought to guide the writing of the new policies. These important changes have not yet, however, had sufficient time to make a significant impact on standards. Whilst there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, standards in English remain low.

62. The school has clear aims designed to support the personal and academic development of all its pupils. It is particularly successful in promoting personal development and provides good pastoral care, but it still has much work to do to ensure pupils' consistent academic progress.

63. The senior management team has been re-formed and all members of it have specific areas of responsibilities. The roles of the co-ordinators have been strengthened and all levels of management are now better placed to influence the direction of the school. The subject co-ordinators' roles, however, are not yet fully developed in, for example, monitoring teaching and learning and in taking full responsibility for the running of their subjects.

64. With the exception of the curriculum for information and communications technology, the governors now fulfil all their statutory duties. They are developing a clear role in shaping the direction of the school. They had a particular responsibility in, for example, the appointment of a new headteacher and her deputy. The governing body now receives accurate information on which to make informed decisions concerning the financial running of the school and the quality of education it provides. The use of this information, however, is not yet fully effective.

65. Governors are kept well informed about the work of the school and the progress of pupils, and have a growing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through regular visits and reports from the headteacher and other senior staff. They have yet to develop ways of using this information to help them monitor and evaluate the quality of education the school is providing.

66. The governing body monitors the school against the post-Ofsted action plans and the draft School Improvement Plan. The curriculum committee meets regularly to monitor and review policies. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators feed back on the progress in each area at termly meetings. Other co-ordinators are invited on a rota basis to report on progress with their subject areas.

67. Medium and short-term plans are monitored by the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the head and deputy. Lesson observations have also been carried out by some subject co-ordinators and local authority inspectors. The findings are always discussed with teachers and used to inform future training requirements, both for the whole school and individual needs. The observations, however, do not yet take enough account of the quality of learning.

68. The headteacher has conducted professional development interviews with each teacher to address strengths, agree areas of development, short-term targets and a review date. As a result, an action plan has been written for each area of the curriculum. Plans are in hand for the introduction of Performance Management.

69. The draft school improvement plan is detailed for one year and is a useful working document, with clear priorities, time scales, costings and priorities, and the over-arching aim of raising standards. The school has strategies and appropriate policies in place to meet its

targets. It now has to ensure that these work in practice and that their effectiveness is monitored. The senior management team, subject co-ordinators and governors have a shared commitment to improvement, which is beginning to permeate all those involved in the school.

70. There is now good control of the school's finances. The governors are now provided with accurate information and have a good oversight of the budget, which is set to meet educational needs. The school reviews the cost-effectiveness of its spending decisions and is beginning to apply the principles of best value. There are procedures for ensuring value for money when purchases are made, and the recommendations of the 1998 auditor's report have been followed. Satisfactory use is made of accommodation, resources, and staff, although good use is not always made of support staff in lessons.

71. The school is well staffed with sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum, and good provision is made for their further training and professional development. The accommodation is adequate, although bad acoustics, lack of sufficient power points for computers and lack of a grassed area adversely affect pupils' learning. With the exception of information and communications technology, the school is adequately resourced to teach the National Curriculum and religious education.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

KEY ISSUES

72. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

- raise standards in attainment, in particular in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology by:
 - * increasing teachers' expectations for the quality and quantity of pupils' written work in all subjects;
 - * ensuring that tasks challenge the full range of attainment in each class;
 - * improving the consistency of teaching by identifying and sharing good practice;
 - * making pupils more responsible for the accuracy of their work;
 - * providing a more structured reading programme based on carefully graded reading materials;
 - * ensuring that all aspects of mathematics are taught, for example space, shape and measures and handling data;
 - * ensuring that all aspects of information and communications technology (ICT) are taught throughout the school;
 - * improving resources in information and communication technology;
 - * using information and communication technology in all subjects.
- improve levels of attendance by:
 - * raising the profile of regular attendance and punctuality to ensure that all staff, parents and pupils recognise their importance;
 - * ensuring that all procedures are used consistently;
 - * improve the provision of homework and use it consistently.

**All these areas have been recognised by the school as priorities for development.*

73. The governors might also like to review the use of support staff so that they can work more effectively with teachers, consider ways of improving the sound proofing between and within classrooms, so that pupils can work undisturbed, and extend the existing opportunities for pupils to become independent learners.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	94
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	102

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	51	28	4	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

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	489
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	157

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	153

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	47

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	41

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.6
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	40	34	74

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	32
	Girls	28	32	31
	Total	54	62	63
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	73 (76)	84 (81)	85 (93)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	27	26	32
	Girls	32	30	31
	Total	59	56	63
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	80 (86)	76 (83)	85 (82)
	National	82 (80)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	33	37	70

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	20	18	24
	Girls	20	17	22
	Total	40	35	46
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	57 (44)	50 (36)	66 (54)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	26
	Girls	22	19	27
	Total	42	40	53
Percentage of pupils At NC Level 4 or above	School	60 (42)	57 (42)	76 (54)
	National	68 (65)	69 (59)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	27
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	15
Indian	19
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	301
Any other minority ethnic group	28

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	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes:****Y N – Y 7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.0 :1
Average class size	25.8

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	57727.00
Total expenditure	57704.00
Expenditure per pupil	2004.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	10008.00
Balance carried forward to next year	18151.00

Education support staff:**Y N – Y 7**

Total number of education support staff	14.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	252

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carer

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	489
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	36	8	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	32	53	9	4	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	62	10	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	33	34	14	3
The teaching is good.	38	52	5	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	48	19	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	46	8	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	47	4	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	31	47	14	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	39	45	7	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	55	3	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5	25	34	18	18

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

74. There have been considerable improvements in the provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection. It is now very good. All the teaching observed in the foundation stage during the inspection was either good or very good. The overall good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning. The attainment of children on entry to the school matches that expected nationally for children of their age. By the time they start in Year 1 the majority of children achieve well and attain the early learning goals.

75. Children enter the nursery at the age of three. They attend part-time: 25 in both the morning and afternoon sessions. In line with the borough policy, the school has three reception intakes. There are currently 20 children in the reception class.

76. Children make a very positive start to their education in all areas of learning. They listen carefully to instructions and behave very well. They are engaged in activities which are carefully matched to their individual needs. They concentrate on the work set for them and, when they are given freedom of choice, remain on their chosen activity for some time.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. Pupils settle very quickly into the routines of the nursery and reception classes and enjoy coming to school. Despite the fact that 20 per cent of the pupils enter the nursery with poorly developed personal, social and emotional skills, by the time they enter the reception class, most pupils achieve the early learning goals in this area.

78. In both year groups, children work and play together well. They are considerate towards one another and respect the contributions that others make in discussions. They are helped to know the difference between right and wrong and between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

79. Adults provide positive encouragement and praise and are good role models in behaviour, speech, attitudes to others, enthusiasm and interaction with others. As a result, children grow in confidence as learners and feel proud of their achievements. Adults also promote pupils' personal development effectively by ensuring that the resources and equipment that the children use are readily accessible to them and that the children understand the need for care in using them, thus helping them to become independent learners in a secure and safe environment.

Communication, language and literacy

80. In both the nursery and the reception class, there are daily opportunities for children to speak and listen to each other and to adults. Children's efforts at communicating are supported and valued. Nearly all children achieve the early learning goal in communication, language and literacy and some children exceed it.

81. Daily story times provide children with stories that excite, interest and inform them. Children in the nursery and the reception class listen attentively to favourite nursery rhymes, stories and songs, join in repeated refrains and anticipate key events and important phrases. Children in the reception class can identify a number of rhyming words, such as 'bee', 'me' and 'tree', and make good progress in learning 25 key words.

82. In both the nursery and the reception class, children enjoy sounds and learning the meaning of new words. The listening area in each class, which is equipped with a tape recorder, tapes and books, is popular with the children. Elements of the literacy hour are used well by teachers in the reception class. The approach to literacy is explained to parents and receives their support. Most children can name sounds in words that they use frequently and make a good attempt at writing a story independently.

83. In both classes, pupils with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language receive additional support and make good progress. Classroom support includes dual language signs, multicultural resources, role play clothes and cooking equipment and recipes. Children with speech difficulties also receive regular additional support.

Mathematical development

84. By the end of the reception year, most children achieve or exceed the early learning goals. All children in the reception class can count to ten and many can count well beyond. Children use mathematical language with confidence. In a mathematics activity in the nursery, they match, count and develop vocabulary, such as 'enough', 'more', 'less' and 'how many' and count money and tickets in their bus role play. In the reception class, they know how many more they need to make ten and how many they need to take away.

85. From the nursery onwards, mathematics is made meaningful throughout the day and is part of real life situations. The emphasis in both classes, is on understanding and using numbers in practical contexts. Parents in the reception class are introduced to the National Numeracy Strategy and are encouraged to support their children at home.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. Children enter the nursery with a basic general knowledge. They build on this knowledge to help them to understand more about the world they live in and the people they encounter. In both the nursery and the reception class, children plant their own seeds and bulbs and use the school

garden and Plumstead Common to study habitats. These experiences are extended during indoor play by looking at plants and creatures with magnifiers or making a model of a building encountered on a journey. They match their findings to pictures in books and listen to tapes of animal sounds. They are encouraged to look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. They talk about the changes in ingredients as they mix them together to make cakes and are curious about how the cakes rise in the cooker.

87. Children are encouraged to raise questions and suggest solutions and answers. They build and construct with a wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources and modifying their ideas as they experiment. They are very interested in information and communications technology. They use the tape recorder and headphones, and programmable toys independently. In their role play in the shop, children in both classes use cash registers. In the nursery, they can complete a simple program on the computer independently. In the reception class, children use the animated alphabet program and word process their stories independently.

Physical development

88. In physical development, children meet and, in some cases, exceed the early learning goals. They are given plenty of time to explore, experiment and refine movements and skills in the safe, separate outdoor play areas for the nursery and the reception class. They gain in confidence as they develop control over their bodies and the way they move, such as when they ride wheeled toys, change direction to avoid obstacles and climb over, under, through and around apparatus. The extensive, well-planned and resourced outdoor areas which support and extend learning in every area of the curriculum are a major factor in helping children to make good progress in developing their physical skills.

89. The children in the nursery and the reception class have opportunities to use the school hall on a regular basis. In the reception class, children gain confidence in moving imaginatively with increasing control, co-ordination and awareness of space and others. Teachers make good use of the language of movement to encourage pupils in their physical responses. In the reception class, pupils recognise the importance of keeping healthy and the need for fresh air, exercise, food and water. They are beginning to understand which foods are healthy and why. They recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active, for example that their hearts are beating faster.

Creative development

90. Children meet and, in many cases, exceed the early learning goals. Their creativity is developed productively within a rich learning environment. Children are given time to explore and experiment with ideas, materials and activities. They confidently explore colour and texture through a range of resources and sensory experiences and talk about their observations. In both classes, children explore form and shape in two and three dimensions and produce interesting models and collages using a range of well-chosen resources.

91. They recognise and explore how musical instruments can be played in a variety of ways to produce different sounds. They respond to sound with body movements and enjoy dancing and games. They sing familiar nursery rhymes and songs with enthusiasm, tap out repeated rhythms and compose and tape music. They are particularly good at using their imagination in art and design, music, dance, role play and stories.

92. Adults give good support in developing the children's creative ability by taking on a role in many stories while the children pretend to be other characters. In the nursery, children play happily in the home corner, ironing, taking the baby to the shops, going on a bus ride, and listening and joining in taped music with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

93. The provision for children in the foundation stage is very good. Led by an experienced and skilled co-ordination, the children receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good. The nursery and reception staff work as a team to plan and assess pupils' progress in the early learning goals. The issues raised by the baseline assessment in the reception class are addressed effectively. The staff work very effectively together for the benefit of all the children in their care.

ENGLISH

94. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven, the number reaching Level 2 or higher was well below the national average in reading and writing. The number reaching Level 3 was below average in writing, and well below average in reading. Compared with schools whose pupils are from similar backgrounds, results were below average in writing and well below in reading. Unconfirmed results of the tests in 2000 show no improvement in reading, while results in writing are lower and no pupil reached the higher level. Standards in reading and writing have been below the national average over the last four years. Inspection evidence confirms that the attainment of the present Year 2 is below average in speaking and listening, and well below average in reading and writing.

95. In the 1999 national tests for pupils aged 11, the number reaching the expected Level 4 or higher was well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. Standards have been well below the national average for the last four years overall, but they are improving, particularly in reading. Unconfirmed results of the national tests in 2000 are better than those of 1999, but the improvement was much less than that needed to meet the school's agreed target. Three out of four pupils reached Level 4 in reading and one in four reached Level 5. There was less improvement in writing, and the number reaching the higher level was very low. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils in the present Year 6 is average in speaking and listening, but below average in reading and writing.

96. Many pupils in Key Stage 1 do not listen carefully enough during instruction. Teachers have to work hard to keep all pupils involved and at a pace that will hold the attention of all. When a pupil speaks hesitantly, others lose interest. A few choose not to join in activities such as choral reading, and speak only when directly questioned. By the age of seven, pupils

generally have a satisfactory command of standard English, but many lack confidence in class discussions and their speech is quiet and indistinct. Contributions are generally brief and hesitant. Pupils speak more readily when there is a competitive challenge and their interest is caught, or when their learning is secure and their answers are more likely to be correct.

97. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 as their experience of literacy hour routines develops. Collaboration in class discussions is good in most classes, and pupils respond well when teachers ask them to explain their ideas in more detail. Collaboration in group activities is generally successful in all subjects. By age 11, pupils' use of standard English is satisfactory in formal situations, and they use technical terms correctly. They become more confident in speaking to larger audiences for different purposes. Many read their work confidently in assembly, and those elected as school council members respond well to the challenge of discussing school issues. There are some opportunities to perform in end-of-term productions, but no regular programme of drama.

98. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in reading in Key Stage 1 because most reading materials are not graded for their language difficulty. Many pupils show interest in browsing through class collections of children's fiction to choose books for homework, but their choices do not always match their attainment and are often too difficult. Pupils with average attainment and below do not have the expected skills in sounding out new words to find their meaning, so they do not build confidence steadily through repeated success. By age seven, few pupils read fluently with understanding. The large number with low attainment recognise many frequent words and some simple sentences, but struggle to read stories independently. Those with higher attainment understand what they read, but are not confident enough to read aloud with expression.

99. The rate of progress increases in Key Stage 2, as pupils learn to recognise more words on sight and become more secure in sounding out new words. Those with the lowest attainment are given additional help, based on more carefully graded materials, so that they make satisfactory progress in line with that of other pupils. Nevertheless, there remain instances where pupils choose books which do not match their level of attainment because class reading resources are not graded for difficulty. Books named as favourites by older pupils tend to be easier than generally found for their age group. By the age of 11, most pupils read longer texts silently and with satisfactory concentration. Many have favourite authors and give sound reasons for their preferences. Most pupils understand what they have read, and read aloud accurately, though without expression. Skills in reading non-fiction are adequate for independent study in other subjects. Library skills are satisfactory, but independent research tasks are not regularly used to challenge higher-attaining pupils.

100. Pupils in Key Stage 1 write fewer longer pieces than is generally found. They attempt stories, books reviews and accounts of events such as sports day. Standards of accuracy are very low. Pupils generally do not develop a secure base of frequent words they can spell correctly. By age seven, few achieve a joined, legible style. Poor letter formation and word spacing makes much of the writing of lower attainers difficult to read. The pace of writing is slow, so most achieve less than expected in lessons.

101. Through Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in writing for an increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences, though they write fewer longer pieces than generally found. Handwriting develops well in Year 3 so that most pupils achieve a joined legible style, though standards of presentation are inconsistent and generally below average throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils produce some good work, such as the stories by Year 5, using dialogue for dramatic effect. Formal letters of thanks written by Year 6 after a school visit are corrected to a good standard and well presented.

102. By the age of 11, the most significant weakness is the high level of inaccuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar in daily writing in all subjects. Teachers' marking identifies some basic errors, but others become established over time and therefore difficult to correct. Pupils' lack of independent study skills is revealed very clearly when they write without adult support, and underachievement is evident at all levels, including pupils with special needs and those with higher attainment.

103. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. In the eight lessons seen in Key Stage 1, one was very good, four were good, two were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Additionally, a group of pupils was withdrawn for intensive instruction in two lessons; teaching was good in one and very good in the other. In the better lessons, basic skills are taught thoroughly then reinforced through practical tasks. Many pupils do not concentrate well unless their attention is held by compelling techniques. One very good example was the use of a puppet, *Percy the Pig*, who cannot spell and needed the help of the class. Percy's mistakes motivated pupils at all levels to tell him the spellings they had learned earlier in the lesson. Pupils' behaviour improves when they are set clear targets and a limited time to complete practical work, which makes them work hard to reach the goal. Weaknesses in other lessons include a slow pace in instruction, failure to involve all pupils, low expectations for achievement in independent tasks, and a lack of determination in ensuring that pupils learn the planned material.

104. In the 11 lessons seen in Key Stage 2, two were very good, seven were good and two were satisfactory. In the very good lessons, pupils were well motivated and a strong sense of purpose led to good quality writing of story openings. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge and their planning is securely based on the specific targets of the national literacy framework.

105. The format used for lesson plans in Key Stage 1 does not give enough detail on what groups of pupils at different levels of attainment are expected to achieve. Teachers generally read aloud well, helping pupils to understand and raising their interest in books. Pupils co-operate well in discussions of the shared text, particularly in the best lessons in Key Stage 2, where lively interactions challenged pupils to listen carefully, take an active part and give full answers. Independent tasks are generally well organised. Classroom assistants give good help to lower-attaining groups in this part of the lesson, though they generally play no active part in the first half.

106. Pupils know the routines, so they settle quickly but many do not work well independently, particularly in Key Stage 1. In the best lessons, tasks are well matched to the needs of different attainment groups, though they do not always build on the main points taught earlier in the lesson or on weaknesses identified when previous work was marked. The final whole class review is often

too brief to develop pupils' speaking skills and reinforce learning of the language target. More consistent use needs to be made of weekly rotas to ensure that each group regularly takes the lead in this review.

107. In spite of the good teaching in lessons seen, there are weaknesses that combine to affect pupils' progress over time. Language tasks are not always focused on improving the quality of writing for a real purpose. Pupils do not learn to take responsibility for checking the accuracy of their written work. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations for standards, and some over-praise spoken and written contributions. The marking of pupils' work is generally thorough, but much of its impact is lost because pupils do not routinely do corrections afterwards or further work to improve their standards. Writing opportunities in other subjects are not co-ordinated with those in English to give further practice.

108. Management of the subject is satisfactory, with good improvements made recently. Teaching has improved following monitoring of the National Literacy Strategy. Good practices developed by individual teachers now need to be identified and shared. Planning has improved since the last report and is regularly checked against the targets of the official framework. Valuable additional support is now given to targeted groups by learning support assistants and additional teachers.

109. A scheme of work for speaking and listening, including drama, is needed to draw together elements of present provision. Further work is needed on the programme for writing to give pupils regular practice in major forms such as letters, stories and factual accounts, in English and in other subjects. A key element of the reading programme has been improved, in that groups of similar attainment read with their teacher each week, and books for each group have been carefully chosen to match pupils' needs. Books for reading at other times, however, are not graded carefully enough to guide teachers or pupils in making the best choice. This weakness remains a significant factor in slowing pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. In other respects, there have been good developments in the reading programme. Parents are invited into school to read with their children each week, older pupils regularly read with younger pupils, and books and print of all kinds are well displayed to raise pupils' interest.

MATHEMATICS

110. Results from the national tests in 1999 show that standards in mathematics at the end of both key stages are well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards are below average. Standards at the last inspection were reported as being in line with national expectations. Unconfirmed results for 2000 show a slight improvement in Key Stage 1, reversing a downward trend in previous years. In Key Stage 2 there was a decline after a significant improvement in the previous year. Boys and girls, at the end of both key stages were achieving similar results. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed signs of improvement throughout the school.

111. There are a number of reasons for the low rate of progress over time. The school has been through a considerable number of staff changes, which has led to some disruption in the children's learning, and there are large numbers of pupils with special educational needs or

with English as an additional language. Assessment was not being used accurately to match work to pupils' prior attainment and there were also some shortcomings in the teaching. Both these aspects of the school's work have been reviewed and new policies put into effect.

112. Pupils now make satisfactory progress in the use and application of their mathematical skills and knowledge, particularly in problem solving, and in their number work. Where pupils do not develop so well is in their acquisition of skills in their space, shape and measuring, and data-handling tasks. As a result, the majority have only basic numeracy skills by the time they are 11. They can calculate numbers up to and beyond 1000, including decimals, using all four types of computation accurately and efficiently, both mentally and with pencil and paper.

113. They make sound progress in mental mathematics, through a range of activities. In Year 2, for example, pupils were seen successfully counting forwards and backwards to 20. In Year 4, they could count in hundreds. In Year 6, pupils can round up numbers, including decimals, to 1,000 and beyond.

114. Pupils are beginning to make gains in their learning during lessons because they are taught consistently well. Where the teaching is of good quality, pupils have a positive attitude, tasks set are demanding but achievable, and questions are sufficiently probing to develop understanding further. In a Year 4 class, pupils were recording additions of 10 or 100 to numbers up to 10,000, playing a counting game based on a relay race in the hall.

115. In the Year 6 top set, good teaching supported the pupils' investigation of short and long multiplication. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils made little progress as the work they were being asked to do did not match their prior attainment and the lesson proceeded slowly.

116. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Those pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Provision for these pupils is good. Many of these pupils cope well with the pace and demands of the introductory mental mathematics session.

117. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are gradually developing their own strategies for problem solving, and this continues in Key Stage 2. Pupils with average or above average ability can add and subtract confidently and show a developing knowledge of fractions. They do not, however, use standard units for measuring length, mass and time consistently to reinforce their learning. Neither do they have a satisfactory understanding of the properties of basic two- and three-dimensional shapes. They are uncertain when sorting objects using a variety of classifications. There is very little evidence of the use of computers in the subject and pupils do not consistently use their mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

118. The quality of teaching is good overall, and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Of the seven lessons seen in Key Stage 1, five were good and two were satisfactory. Of the eight lessons seen in Key stage 2, two were very good, three were good, two were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. All teachers have at least a satisfactory understanding and knowledge of the subject and, as a result, questioning is used effectively to check and extend pupils' understanding. This is an improvement since the last report.

119. Lessons are planned in accordance with the numeracy strategy, and objectives to be achieved in the lesson are invariably explained to the pupils. There is clear and consistent indication in the teachers' planning, which shows how tasks are to be assessed, but this is still being developed. It does not indicate how those pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are to be supported. In most lessons, the teaching is lively and the lessons are conducted at a good pace. Pupils are, in nearly all cases, well managed and as a result the teaching has a good impact on pupils' learning. In the majority of lessons, pupils are kept on task and they make satisfactory progress. There are some examples of constructive and informative marking to help pupils improve, but this is not used consistently across the school.

120. Teachers promote good attitudes towards mathematics. Nearly all pupils listen attentively, sustain concentration, and work hard to complete tasks. For example, in all but one of the numeracy lessons, a majority of pupils were clearly interested and involved; as a result they successfully applied their skills and made progress. When given the opportunity, pupils work well both on their own, and in pairs and small groups. The presentation of work, either on a worksheet or in their books, is generally satisfactory. The quality improves as the pupils progress through the school.

121. The school uses national and commercial tests to assess pupils' development from term to term and year to year. The results of these tests, plus assessments of pupils' work, are then effectively employed in the organisation of class attainment groupings. Literacy skills are developed in the subject with the reinforcement of terminology in lessons, and the prominent display of mathematical terms has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Learning is supported through adequate resources that are easily accessible. Computers are of varying quality and there are not enough programs to support learning in all areas of mathematics.

122. The reasons for the improvement identified during the inspection stem from the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the strategies for improvement introduced by the co-ordinator. Appointed just over a year ago, she has quickly reviewed the situation and has introduced elements of recognised good practice designed to halt the downward trend.

123. With the deputy headteacher, she has analysed test results to measure how pupils progress from year to year and to identify areas of the curriculum that need improvement. The main areas for development are in the teaching of space, shape and measures, and handling data. To ensure that the staff, in their teaching, develop these areas and that the National Numeracy Strategy is implemented successfully, she has been supportive and promoted staff training. Further to this she has reviewed staff planning and observed staff teaching mathematics in their classroom.

124. Pupils' attempts at completing areas of the curriculum are recorded on the weekly planning sheets and on newly introduced record sheets. In this way teachers can keep track of a pupil's progress. This term for the first time, pupils are being set individual targets to help them develop their knowledge and skills in the subject. Streaming in Years 5 and 6 has been introduced so that teachers can more efficiently set tasks that match pupils' levels of attainment. A more consistent approach to homework, has just been instigated. The positive impact of these new methods can already be seen.

125. The work undertaken by pupils last year shows that they were working at a level below rather than well below national average. In the lessons observed, pupils were achieving a similar level of work.

SCIENCE

126. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, based on teacher assessments, was well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. Unconfirmed assessment results for 2000 show that standards remain below the national average. This represents a decline since the last inspection when standards were broadly in line with the national average. The findings of the inspection confirm that standards remain below the national average but are improving.

127. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher grade was also below the national average. Unconfirmed results in the National Curriculum tests for 2000 were slightly lower than in 1999 and well below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher grade was very low. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below the average for all schools and in comparison with similar schools. There is no comparative data available for 2000 for schools in similar contexts. Standards in science declined in 1999 in relation to the national average.

128. When pupils enter the school their level of attainment is in line with that expected nationally. By the time they leave Key Stage 1 it is well below the average, as it is when they leave the school in Year 6. Consequently, pupils' level of achievement is unsatisfactory in both key stages over time. In the previous report progress was satisfactory.

129. Standards observed in lessons are beginning to improve. Important changes have been introduced over the past 18 months and the school is set on a clear path of improvement, with a new headteacher, senior management team and a more stable staffing structure. There has not yet, however, been sufficient time for the changes to have an impact on standards. Levels of attainment are affected by a number of factors. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well above the national average and almost 10 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language. There have also been a number of changes which have affected the consistency of teaching. As a result, pupils have not been achieving satisfactorily over time. A review of teaching and learning across the school has taken place recently and, in the lessons observed, pupils achieved well when teaching was good or very good.

130. Pupils in Year 2 can group foods according to whether they taste sweet, salty or sour and enter their findings on a chart. They know the advantages of being healthy and what sort of food and drink, together with exercise and rest, they need to stay alive, healthy and fit. Pupils know the main food groups and are able to assign food to each group. They successfully predict to which food group a variety of foods belong.

131. Pupils in Year 6 can carry out an investigation on dissolving. They discover that solids remain in the solution when they dissolve and can be recovered by evaporation. They recognise that there is a limit to how much solid will dissolve in a liquid. They identify the factors that affect the rate at which a solid dissolves and investigate how to separate salt, sugar and gravel from a liquid. They understand why it is important to repeat measurements. Most pupils make good progress in refining their investigative skills, but only satisfactory progress in recording their results.

132. Pupils attitudes to science are good. They are interested in their learning. They work well individually and collaboratively. Pupils in Year 4 work productively in groups as designers of a specific product and produce an advertisement based on its properties to persuade people to buy it. Good attitudes and behaviour enable the teacher to concentrate on giving guidance and support to pupils who need it. Pupils generally work harmoniously together, sharing ideas and resources well. They are attentive and respond well to questions. They generally remain on task and maintain concentration although there are isolated incidents of disruptive behaviour by a few pupils. Their relationships with one another and with teachers and other adults are good. They show respect for the contribution of others. They are willing to take responsibility and they treat resources with care.

133. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is improving. During the inspection, teaching in the one lesson seen at Key Stage 1 was good. In the seven lessons seen in Key Stage 2, teaching was good overall. It was satisfactory in three, good in three and very good in one. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and enables pupils to make progress in lessons. Their attainment over time, however, is still below national expectations. Teachers' planning and the teaching of scientific skills is satisfactory. Their expectations are not always high enough with the result that higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged. Teaching methods are satisfactory, as is the use of time and resources, but time is not used rigorously. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is satisfactory. Opportunities to consolidate and extend the learning in the lesson through homework are not utilised consistently.

134. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall and, good in some lessons where teaching is good or very good. Pupils' own knowledge of their learning is satisfactory but opportunities for pupils to analyse their own performance within a lesson are missed. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning.

135. All requirements of the National Curriculum are met. There is a science policy and the scheme of work is currently being revised. The subject is well led and has begun to improve since the school achieved greater stability. Science is a priority in the school development plan. An action plan has been drawn up and plans to raise achievement, particularly amongst higher-attaining pupils have been put into action this year and are beginning to show improved results.

136. There are no group or individual targets in science and pupils are not yet encouraged to devise their own tests. Assessment procedures are currently under review. There are plans to incorporate information and communications technology into the new scheme of work and to update resources by purchasing sensors and other resources needed to deliver the curriculum.

137. The curriculum is enriched through an annual residential visit by pupils in Year 6 and annual

visits by Years 1, 3 and 5 to an environmental centre. The school is taking part in a local initiative to use Plumstead Common as a scientific resource. The improved woodland area has already proved a useful source of learning. The school grounds are used to study root systems and habitats. Pupils in Year 6 visit a local centre to study animal and plant habitats and to learn through landscape. Most classes have sessions in the school garden and grow plants. A regular visitor to the school enthralled pupils of all ages with his birds, animals and reptiles.

138. The management of the subject is satisfactory and the work of teachers is beginning to be monitored and evaluated to build on the good practice that exists and raise standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

139. A key issue of the last inspection report was to raise standards in information and communications technology, to introduce a scheme of work, carry out assessment, and meet statutory requirements. Whilst there have been some improvements, standards are still well below national expectations and statutory requirements are not met.

140. Pupils' attainment varies in different aspects of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Attainment in word processing and use of graphics is well below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Attainment in other aspects, such as storage and analysis of information, controlling, monitoring and modelling, cannot be judged due to the lack of evidence.

141. The purchase of new equipment and programs, and the recently introduced class teaching, where teachers concentrate on one skill, are beginning to have an impact on pupils' attainment. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to develop sufficient mouse control to use some tools in a graphics program. Independently, some pupils in Key Stage 1 can produce images by choosing colours, effects, and brushes and manipulate shapes within the program. Invariably these are very basic in design. They use the keyboard and word processing to create simple text, but not spreadsheets. Pupils are not able to rearrange the text and change fonts. They handle equipment with a limited degree of confidence, and need help to open programs.

142. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils create texts with different fonts and colours. Pupils' progress in using information technology for research is limited as there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use CD-ROMs to retrieve information for their work in other areas of the curriculum. All pupils have access to some other aspects of information and communications technology including data, photographs, television and video. Pupils have limited access to the Internet, and as a result are unable to locate an appropriate search engine to retrieve information. There are insufficient materials to support learning for pupils with special educational needs.

143. The last inspection reported that pupils made unsatisfactory progress, and this remains so. Progress in word processing and graphics is developing at a basic level in both key stages, a slight improvement. In Key Stage 1, however, pupils make insufficient progress in using the technology to sort and classify information, control other devices or investigate simulations through lack of practice. In Key Stage 2, pupils make limited progress in the use of complex enquiries, controlling events through simple programming or using the computer to monitor external events. This is largely

due to the lack of hardware and an extensive range of programs and also a lack of confidence on the part of the teachers. Pupils are unable to develop the range of skills they need in order to use information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum.

144. In the five lessons observed the quality of teaching was good overall, with four good and one satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge and competence in these lessons was good and they used appropriate terminology well. Since the last report, teachers have put a lot of time and effort into improving their own knowledge and understanding of the subject.

145. The best features of teaching are good management and pace to ensure that pupils concentrate, and the use of good questioning to ensure that pupils understand and are not just following a procedure. From these lessons, and in discussion with pupils, it is clear that their attitudes to information and technology are good, an improvement since the last inspection.

146. Pupils are interested in the subject and are enthusiastic to gain first-hand experience with the equipment. Teachers do not, however, fully encourage pupils' independent use of information and communication technology. Pupils listen to the teacher or adult well and sustain their concentration. They are motivated despite very limited time on the computer. The approach to teaching one skill a week to the whole class is a relatively recent innovation and is beginning to be effective. Arrangements for assessment are unsatisfactory and work is not systematically planned from an assessment of what pupils already know, understand and can do. All these issues are currently under review by the school.

147. Management of the subject is improving. Despite the restrictions of finance and equipment, and the change of emphasis in the curriculum for the subject, the school is attempting to make progress and raise standards in some aspects of the subject. The school has adopted a national scheme of work to support teachers' medium and short-term planning, with clear guidance on assessment and expectations in each year group to enable knowledge, understanding and skills to be systematically taught.

148. Since the last report, there have been significant changes in staffing, school management and the national curriculum and, as a result, information and communication technology has not always been a priority in the school's development. A start, however, has been made. Whilst the number of computers in school is still well below the national average, there has been a significant purchase of equipment in the last two years. Parts of the school have been rewired and other areas have been connected to the Internet. Overall, however, accommodation and resources remain are unsatisfactory and are a significant factor in the low standards achieved.

149. The co-ordinator has enthusiastically tried to promote and develop the curriculum throughout the school with varying degrees of success. Statutory requirements, however, are not being met as pupils are not receiving coherent, continuous teaching in all the elements of the curriculum that will ensure that they develop their knowledge, skills, and understanding. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject is in the early stages of development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Standards in religious education match the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Throughout the school, pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils display basic knowledge of some features of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. They understand, for example, the importance of belonging to various groups and the ways people are accepted into a faith through birth rites and naming ceremonies. Pupils know that a major element in many faiths is caring for one another and for the environment. The major festivals, such as Christmas, Easter and Divali are celebrated by the school.

151. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can relate some of the concepts of different faiths to their own experiences and go beyond this to discover more about religious beliefs, ideas and structures. They build on their knowledge of Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism, as well as developing knowledge and understanding about Judaism and Buddhism. Pupils also know that each faith has a holy text, for example the Bible and the Torah, and that they contain rules for living. They know that the Torah is the Jewish holy text and that it tells the story of the Jewish people, as does the Old Testament. They apply lessons learnt in religious education to their own lives and the lives of others in their community. In a lesson on Buddhism, pupils in Year 6 discuss the implications of The Four Noble Truths with its emphasis on suffering. Pupils throughout the key stage consider basic religious concepts and ways in which they have been expressed in sacred books, daily living, and rituals.

152. The quality of learning is supported by good teaching and by the positive attitudes shown by most pupils. The quality of teaching seen was very good in three lessons, good in three, satisfactory in one and unsatisfactory in one. Teachers are confident in teaching the subject and when possible they draw on the knowledge of individual pupils. This was well illustrated in a lesson on Sikhism. In good and very good lessons lively discussions and activities motivate pupils. Year 1 pupils are taught what it means to belong to a group through the use of 'Timmy the Clown' who is joining the class. The teacher moves them on to consider the wider issues of joining a group. Moving from the known to the unknown is encapsulated in a simple idea. Year 3 pupils construct their own scroll containing the first four commandments reinforcing their understanding of the Torah. The unsatisfactory feature of one lesson involved low expectations and insufficient challenge to keep pupils interested and on task.

153. Teaching is used well to reinforce moral values and to provide recognition of pupils' own value as individuals. Learning is also well supported by the good behaviour and attitudes to learning which most pupils display. Most pupils in both key stages listen attentively to teachers and to each other. They work well together, and most are keen to answer questions and to take part in discussions.

154. The subject is well managed, and the school ensures that it contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers encourage respect and understanding for all faiths and cultures. Assemblies, visits to the local church and Gurdwara, support the teaching of religious education. There is a good range of stimulating artefacts, which are well used to support teaching and learning. Religious education makes a sound contribution to the development of pupils' writing skills. A start has been made in the monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

155. Opportunities to observe art being taught during the inspection were limited. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 2 and three in Key Stage 1. Additional evidence was obtained from pupils' past and present work, teachers' planning, discussions with teachers and displays around the school. This evidence shows that attainment at both key stages is satisfactory, with approximately 20 per cent of pupils attaining standards which are good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, but below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.

156. Teachers in Key Stage 1 build on the skills developed in the Foundation Stage. In Year 2, pupils study pictures by Van Gogh. They observe the different shades of green in a variety of vegetables, and investigate how the shades are achieved by adding black or white paint. They discover which primary colours make green lighter or darker and use a computer program to produce a shade card of greens.

157. Skills and knowledge are developed throughout Key Stage 2. In Year 6, pupils use artefacts of the ancient Greeks. They show awareness of the effects of light on form through tone and focus on a picture of a sculpture of a hand holding a discus, an ideal of physical perfection. They sketch their own hands and emulate the discus thrower in holding a discus or plate for modelling purposes. They are helped to notice different features of their hands and to put in shading. They are able to explain terms such as artefact and sculpture and discuss shading techniques.

158. Pupils enjoy art. They talk enthusiastically about their work, willingly contributing ideas and opinions, responding positively to each other's work. They try hard to emulate the work of great artists and are keen to learn new techniques. They use resources with great care and appreciate the help and guidance given to them by their teachers. Their behaviour is good and their relationships with adults and one another are good.

159. When account is taken of the work seen around the school, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The one lesson seen in Key Stage 2 was very good. Of the three seen in Key Stage 1, one was very good and two were good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good overall and enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Teachers' planning and the teaching of basic skills are satisfactory, with some good examples seen.

160. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall and is good in lessons where teaching is good or very good. In these lessons, pupils apply creative effort to their work and their productivity and pace of working is good. Pupils' own knowledge of their learning is satisfactory overall, but is good where they are encouraged to evaluate their work. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning.

161. All requirements of the National Curriculum are met and the subject is well led by an enthusiastic new co-ordinator, although her role does not yet include the monitoring of teaching and learning. An action plan has been drawn up to raise achievement among higher-attaining pupils by raising expectations and the profile of art in the school. These moves are beginning

to show improved results. Assessment procedures are being improved and art portfolios are to be further developed to provide a benchmark for good work. There are some very good displays of close observational drawings, environmental work and the carnival.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

162. Pupils throughout the school attain standards which are in line with national expectations. They all have the opportunity to design and make products. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when progress at Key Stage 2 was described as erratic with little continuity and progression. The subject now has a co-ordinator and the scheme of work provides a strong foundation.

163. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to make models based on designs they have created. As part of their preliminary designs, pupils have to list the materials they require. This was apparent from work undertaken last year, such as the design for a model of Canary Wharf. Pupils in Year 2, design and make cards for Easter. Work seen from last year shows that some pupils are able to describe how to make a chicken and egg card. This includes full instructions for requirements and a simple analysis of the making process. Other models included an 'insy winsy spider' that really climbs up a spout. Pupils in both key stages were involved in the summer term in the design and making of costumes, masks and garlands for the Millennium Carnival.

164. In Key Stage 2, pupils expand their range of design and technology activities and make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about packaging. They are able to disassemble a box and understand that it starts as a net. They create their own boxes and consider designing labels. They are able to use the computer to make labels in a range of fonts, sizes and colours. Pupils in Year 5 make a sandwich that has to be tasty, nutritious and healthy. Work seen in books and on display showed that over last year a number of activities took place, many of them linked to other areas of the curriculum. These included Tudor houses, models of a mosque, designing and making money containers and making musical instruments. Work in books from last year shows that at the end of a project pupils are expected to evaluate what they have done and suggest ways they could have improved their work.

165. During the inspection it was not possible to see any teaching in Key Stage 1. Five lessons were seen in Key Stage 2. Teaching was very good in two, good in two and satisfactory in one. Teachers show good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They support pupils' learning by using subject vocabulary and continually reinforcing the process of designing and making. Very good teaching creates and sustains pupils' concentration. It is purposeful, has clear objectives and makes good use of a range of teaching styles. Teachers have high expectations and pupils are expected to complete tasks in a given time. Good use is made of first hand experience, for example the opportunity to examine a range of different types of bread.

166. Pupils show good levels of concentration and are keen and enthusiastic about the subject. They work hard to complete tasks and in most cases they succeed. They use tools and materials sensibly and where required share resources with others. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership for the subject and is beginning to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY

167. Standards in geography are satisfactory at the ages of seven and 11, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. In Key Stage 1 pupils begin to make maps of their local area. After a walk round the area near the school they discuss what they have seen and locate well known features, such as schools and churches, on a map. They have a good understanding of what a map is and how it can be helpful. The excitement of going on the walk and the relevance of the work provided a good learning experience for the pupils. They worked together with enthusiasm and produced a local map of good quality.

168. By the age of seven, pupils compare Plumstead with the imaginary island of Struay. They glean geographical information about settlement and transport from the stories set on Struay. They then use their prior knowledge of Plumstead to talk about the reasons for the differences and similarities. Teachers plan the questions carefully, so that pupils are made to think rather than to guess the answers. There were interesting discussions as to whether a cow could be a form of transport and how Plumstead could be on an island if you couldn't see the sea.

169. The geographical skills and knowledge are developed through Key Stage 2. In Years 3 and 4 when pupils extend their data collection of churches, schools, shops and public houses to include services and recreational facilities, they are clearly taught to use a key and accurately mark all these features on their own map. Some of the more able pupils have an idea of scale and relate the size on the map to their knowledge of size in real life. In Years 5 and 6, pupils compare London with Grasmere in Cumbria. They know the climatic and geographical variations between the two areas. Teachers use maps of various scales as well as globes to help pupils learn about place and geographical features.

170. The teaching of geography is satisfactory. The two lessons seen in Key Stage 1 and the three seen in Key Stage 2 were satisfactory. Teachers are given good support by the co-ordinator but lack confidence in the subject. They are beginning to plan in line with the requirements for the new curriculum, to teach geographical enquiry and skills across two year groups.

171. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to geography. The unsatisfactory attitudes in one Key Stage 1 class stemmed from the inability of the teacher to keep the attention of the pupils during the initial discussion. Pupils were unsure of what they had to do and lost interest. Good attitudes were seen in a Year 4 class, where the relationship between teacher and pupils was good. The tasks were carefully explained and the pupils totally focused on doing the task as well as they could. Sound leadership of the subject is provided by the co-ordinator and a start is being made on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

HISTORY

172. Standards in history are satisfactory at the ages of seven and eleven, as there were at the time of the previous inspection. No history was being taught in Key Stage 1 during the inspection, therefore judgements have been made through looking at teachers' plans and pupils' past work. By the time they are seven, pupils understand that life was different in the past. They look at pictures to identify the differences and similarities between 'then' and 'now'. Scenes from a Victorian seaside give them opportunities to identify differences in clothes and transport. They hear stories about famous events and people such as the Great Fire of London and Florence Nightingale. They begin to understand that events change people's lives and that these changes affect people today. They can identify objects as being used 'now', 'long ago' and 'very long ago'.

173. By the time they are 11, pupils show a good knowledge of life in ancient Greece. They are able to recount some of the legends, understand the differences between life in Athens and life in Sparta, and identify the main geographical features of the country. Their written work shows that they research topics prior to lessons and share their findings with the class. To do this they use reference books and computer programs. They show a good knowledge of life in Victorian times, when they devise a questionnaire to ask a variety of Victorian people such as a rich man, a chimney sweep and a flower seller about their lives. Some higher-attaining pupils show good use of humour in their accounts of life in the past. They have built on their prior knowledge of chronology and make good attempts at putting events into the correct century.

174. The pupils' attitudes varied across the classes. Most were interested in the topic, but those who were keenest had been fired by the way the teacher delivered the lesson and made it relevant to them. The good teaching helped them make connections between the life and times in Ancient Greece and the impact the Greek civilisation had on other cultures. Pupils in one class were particularly interested by the number of words they knew which originally came from the Greek. They were entranced when told how the word 'alphabet' came into being and several wanted to learn to recite the whole Greek alphabet.

175. Of three lessons seen in Key stage 2, one was good and two were satisfactory. Teachers planned interesting lessons and made good use of atlases, travel brochures and information sheets they had prepared. Most pupils were interested in the topic and tried to answer the teacher's questions by using these resources. Teachers stressed the terms 'location', 'climate' and 'terrain' and the majority of pupils could use the terms correctly by the end of the lesson. Learning objectives were explained to pupils but not always discussed at the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils were not always sure of what they had learnt or were meant to have learnt.

176. In two of the lessons teaching was satisfactory and in the third it was good. Good teaching was characterised by a fast pace, good understanding of key skills and a good use of questions which encouraged the more able pupils return to their reference sources to search for reasons.

177. Teachers are beginning to plan in line with the requirements for the new curriculum. They are more used to planning with the emphasis on the content of the lesson, and are having to adjust to teaching the key skills of the subject such as chronology and using primary and secondary sources. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and supportive of the teachers. Teachers plan to teach the key

skills across two year groups and this lets them share ideas and supports those who feel less confident. Teachers enjoy teaching the subject. Resources are well organised and sufficient to deliver the curriculum. The co-ordinator is beginning to monitor teaching and learning.

MUSIC

178. In the previous inspection attainment in music was below national expectations. By the age of seven, pupils now achieve the standards expected for their age, but pupils aged 11 are still performing below the levels expected nationally for children of their age. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the standards of composing and throughout the school.

179. Previously the school had employed a music specialist to teach music to all classes and this is the first term that class teachers have had to teach the subject. The new co-ordinator is supporting teachers by writing an appropriate scheme of work, but generally they lack confidence. There is an adequate range of teachers' books, taped music and instruments from many countries.

180. Pupils enjoy singing. They have opportunities to sing in assemblies, lessons and concerts or special occasions. They sing tunefully in assemblies and in lessons but teachers lack the knowledge needed to improve the quality of the singing. They concentrate on pupils learning the words of the songs rather than the tune. Teachers use a range of recorded music for the pupils to sing along to, but the poor acoustics make it difficult for pupils to hear the music well enough for it to help them. Music is played as pupils enter and leave assemblies. The title and composer is displayed in the hall, but insufficient use is made of this experience to develop pupils' listening skills or their knowledge of styles and composers across time and place.

181. By the age of seven, pupils sing simple songs, mainly in tune and in time accompanied by the teacher. They sing in different voices such as a 'cross voice', a 'silly voice', a 'big voice' and hear and understand the difference in the pitch. Younger pupils use un-pitched percussion instruments to accompany their singing. They sometimes make instruments such as shakers, which they use in the lessons. They clap in time to music and can clap the rhythm of their names.

182. Older pupils use a wider range of instruments to accompany their singing at concerts and in class assemblies. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 are given the chance to learn the recorder. The standard of attainment for the Year 4 pupils who had been learning for a year was good. They correctly finger the notes from middle C to top D, including F sharp. They sight-read music reasonably accurately and have some knowledge of key and time signatures. Clarinet and flute lessons are available for Key Stage 2 pupils.

183. By the age of 11 pupils have a large repertoire of hymns and songs from around the world, which they sing with enjoyment. Pupils who attend the lunch time singing club are taught about correct breathing and stance, but do not have enough opportunity to practice. They are given the chance to sing alone or in small groups and they do so with confidence.

184. The two lessons seen in Key Stage 1 were satisfactory, but the unsatisfactory attitudes seen in one lesson led to them making slow progress. Of the three lessons seen in Key Stage 2, one was

good, one was satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Whilst teachers plan well, their lack of confidence prevents some of them using the activities to improve standards. In the good lesson seen the teacher used a well-known hymn as the starting point for composing lyrics.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

185. The school continues to provide a satisfactory curriculum in all areas of physical education. Most pupils achieve satisfactory standards in the development of dance, gymnastics and games skills. The standards achieved in swimming are satisfactory. Many pupils achieve the National Curriculum target of swimming at least 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2. The school also provides opportunities for pupils to undertake orienteering activities during visits to the local environmental centre.

186. Year 1 pupils are able to put together a sequence of movements including jumping using mats and a bench. Year 2 pupils are able to demonstrate that they can control their body movements well when moving from stretched to curled positions. They are capable of improving the quality of their movement during the lesson. Pupils show good proficiency in the ability to move around in a very confined space. They show good use of space when undertaking fast movements around the hall.

187. Year 3 pupils are able to dance with a degree of control. They use movement to express different moods, including the interpretation of happiness and anger. Year 5 pupils develop good games skills. They learn to attack and defend. Their learning develops from a one-to-one situation to a small team game involving passing and shooting. They practice throwing skills, learning to pass the ball to a partner and developing chest and shoulder passes.

188. Pupils respond well to their physical education lessons. They behave well, and are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils clearly understand the methods used by the teacher to regain control of the session, and respond immediately. When working with balls in a confined space, they concentrate hard in difficult circumstances. In a Year 3 dance lesson, they collaborated, followed instructions and supported each other. Behaviour observed at the swimming pool and on the bus was very good.

189. Seven lessons were observed during the inspection. Teaching in one lesson was very good; it was good in four and satisfactory in two. The good standard of teaching has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Teachers use demonstrations to illustrate good practice. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Each lesson starts with a short warm-up session and during this time teachers reinforce the importance of exercise to good health. Lessons have pace and the good relationships already established between teachers and pupils mean that little time is wasted on behaviour management.

190. Resources for physical education are satisfactory. Some of the large apparatus used in Key Stage 2 is rather dated and in need of replacement. The lack of a playing field hinders the full development of some areas of the curriculum. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership, but has yet to undertake formal, monitoring of teaching and learning.