

INSPECTION REPORT

FIRS FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Palmers Green, London

LEA area: Enfield

Unique reference number: 101989

Headteacher: Miss M Pattison

Reporting inspector: Mr R Crompton
7230

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th September 2000

Inspection number: 225358

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 category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rayleigh Road Palmers Green London
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Christou
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr R Crompton 12203	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The school's results and achievements</i> How well are pupils taught?
Ms M Davie 11096	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Ms D Cinamon 27635	Team inspector	English History Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	
Ms K Fleming 29959	Team inspector	The foundation stage Mathematics Geography	
Mr P Braide 8089	Team inspector	Art Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr P Way 27720	Team inspector	Science Physical education Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a community school for boys and girls, four to eleven years old. It has 396 full-time pupils, most of whom live in the immediate neighbourhood. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Three-quarters are white; over half of these are from European families and the remainder have a United Kingdom heritage. A quarter of pupils have African, Caribbean or Asian backgrounds. As they start school, children's attainment is below that typical of the age group, mainly because a large proportion have English as an additional language. About one-fifth of all pupils have special educational needs, which is around the national average. Most have learning difficulties with a small number having emotional and behavioural problems. An above average proportion receive support from outside specialists, including eight who have statements of special educational need. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is a little above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. It provides a secure learning environment for pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. Pupils get on well together in the harmonious school community, which is held in high regard by parents. It is successful in promoting pupils' personal development. From a low position three years ago, academic performance has risen considerably and is still improving. This is the result of hard work by the management and staff. Monitoring of teaching and further training have led to improvements, so that the overall quality is now good, with some highly effective practitioners. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Effective teaching through the school means that pupils make good progress
- A strong framework for personal development helps pupils to develop positive attitudes and to behave well
- Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language.
- There is a strong partnership with parents; they are supportive and appreciate the school's commitment to equal opportunities
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership and is well supported by senior staff

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough
- Assessment information needs to be used more frequently to decide what to teach next in subjects other than English and mathematics, where procedures are effective.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Standards have steadily improved each year in English and more noticeably in mathematics and science. The key issues identified by the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Expectations have been raised through setting specific targets for pupils and providing more challenging activities. Senior staff monitor pupils' work, observe lessons and provide more effective feedback for teachers. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved very significantly. Accommodation has been greatly enhanced by new buildings and modifications. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection has been very good and it no longer has a serious weakness. A lot has been accomplished in a relatively short time.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-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	D	C
mathematics	E	D	C	B
science	E	E	D	C

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

The above table illustrates the improvement in standards over the past three years. National Curriculum test results have risen steadily, especially in mathematics. The most recent results (2000) show an overall increase, with mathematics about average, science well above and English just below the average for similar schools¹. Current standards of work by the oldest pupils broadly match the level expected in English and is above that in mathematics and science, indicating a further improvement in standards.

Many children start school lacking confidence in English, as this is not their first language, and a significant proportion have under-developed social skills. Most children make good progress in reception. By the time they start Year 1, the majority attain the levels expected at the end of the foundation stage, except that many pupils lack fluency in speaking English. National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds have fluctuated during the last few years, but the most recent results are closer to the national average than in previous years. Current attainment in Year 2 indicates that most are on-course to meet national expectations at the end of the year in mathematics and science, and in English, except in speaking and listening.

Most pupils make good progress through the school; those who were in school when they were seven-years-old and remained until they were eleven last year made particularly good progress, improving their National Curriculum test results by around 16 per cent, more than is expected during this period. Given that many of these pupils had English as a second language, this was a commendable achievement.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are unsatisfactory. In other subjects, standards are generally sound, but there are some weaknesses in art.

The school has been more successful in meeting or exceeding its targets for eleven-year-olds than for seven-year-olds because the younger pupils are not as fluent in English. Writing skills have been given particular emphasis and are getting better, although there is still room for improvement.

¹ Comparisons are based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school are good. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and behave well. They work enthusiastically, are well motivated and co-operate well with each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: Children respect each other and are kind and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and pupils of all backgrounds work and play together well. The pupils show respect for one another's views, beliefs and cultures. They develop an increasing sense of responsibility toward their peers, as they get older.
Attendance	Attendance rates are satisfactory but remain slightly below the national average.

Pupils' positive attitudes, together with the good relationships across the school, are a positive factor in the successful drive towards improvement in standards. The school's commitment to equal opportunities helps pupils to develop an understanding and respect for one another's views and beliefs.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall 65	good	good	good

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

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, and this is the main factor contributing to the good learning and progress of the majority of pupils. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when the quality of teaching was described as satisfactory. Thirteen per cent were very good or excellent, 60 per cent were good and the remainder were satisfactory (23 per cent) with the exception of three lessons (5 per cent). Every teacher was observed teaching at least one good lesson, indicating effective teaching across the age groups.

Teachers in the foundation stage² are very successful in helping children to settle in to school routines. They establish a purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms and have very good relationships with the children. Support assistants work closely with teachers and make a full contribution to children's learning.

In Years 1 and 2, literacy and numeracy are taught well. Lessons are planned very carefully; teachers explain things clearly and provide practical tasks to help pupils develop their understanding and practise skills. Learning assistants are well briefed and provide good support for individuals and groups. Teaching in the juniors is also good in almost all subjects. Literacy and numeracy teaching is consistently effective.

The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) lacks a clear structure through the school. Teachers have a reasonable level of confidence in the subject but lack the necessary skills to

² The Foundation Stage runs from the child's third birthday to the end of the academic year in which s/he will be five, i.e. the end of the reception year.

ensure pupils are sufficiently challenged as they move through the school. There are also some weaknesses in the teaching of art.

Class teachers and those with particular responsibilities for teaching pupils with special educational needs are very effective in helping pupils reach their individual targets. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good and enables most pupils to overcome initial difficulties so they can take a full part in lessons and reach their potential.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a balanced and broad curriculum for pupils. A good range of out of school clubs has a sound balance of sporting, cultural and academic themes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Support for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. Their needs are quickly identified and regularly assessed ensuring they get the help they need.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development is good. The school successfully helps pupils to develop socially and instils appropriate moral values. Cultural awareness is nurtured through art, music and drama. Provision for spiritual development is weaker, with opportunities missed for promoting this aspect of pupils' experience.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Support for pupils' welfare makes a good contribution to improving educational standards and remains a strength of the school.

The school does all it can to involve parents as partners in their children's education. Parents support the work of the school by helping their own children and some help out in lessons. The school's commitment to equal opportunities is evident in all it does. Extra-curricular activities enable pupils to pursue their interests and develop individual talents, particularly in sport and music.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The leadership of the school is set on improving standards for all pupils. The headteacher effectively drives the school forward and is well supported by the deputy and subject managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They keep well informed and work closely with the headteacher to set priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a detailed set of data which is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress, to set targets and to compare performance with that of other schools.
The strategic use of resources	The school is making good use of resources to provide a measure of stability in staffing and has worked hard to get funding for the new building extension to address the key issue from the previous inspection. Specific grants are focused where need is identified

The school's strategy for monitoring and support has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. Teachers are mutually supportive and teamwork is strong. Learning assistants provide good support. There is a good range of play areas but more equipment is needed to help the physical development of the youngest children. The new accommodation offers excellent facilities for ICT, music, dance and drama, group teaching and library skills.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school, behave well and make good progress • The quality of teaching is good • The school is open and welcoming • Pupils are more motivated since the previous inspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like to be better informed about their children's progress • A few parents are concerned about inconsistencies in the amount of homework set and the quality of feedback from teachers. • A few parents were concerned about supervision at lunch times.

The inspection supported the parents' positive views. The concern expressed about playground supervision due to the size of the grounds is unfounded as meals supervisors are highly attentive. Homework expectations are very clear. Although some parents feel that the amount and quality of feedback about homework varies between teachers, school guidelines clearly state that tasks will sometimes be followed up in whole group sessions and therefore not always individually marked.

Annual written reports on pupils' progress are generally of good quality because they give parents a clear idea of how well their children are doing, although some of them are hand-written and difficult to read. Target sheets will be shared with parents this term so that they can be clear about how to help their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Standards achieved by the oldest pupils in English are broadly in line with those expected of eleven-year-olds. Attainment in mathematics and science is above average. There has been considerable improvement over the last few years. The school has worked very hard to improve standards, and has successfully overcome the serious weakness identified by the previous inspection.

2 Eleven-year-olds have done well in recent National Curriculum reading tests but results in writing have been much lower, which meant that the overall results in English were below average. The current attention given to writing, including teaching in ability groups, is having a very positive influence. The level of writing in the current Year 6 classes indicates that a much larger proportion of pupils are on course to achieve average levels by the end of the school year. However, speaking and listening skills are generally below average.

3 Results in mathematics in 2000 improved by about 15 per cent on the previous year, rising above the national average for the first time. An above average number of pupils achieved the higher levels in both years showing that the school provides well for higher attaining pupils. Standards of work in the current Year 6 classes are above average, suggesting that the good results achieved in the most recent tests will be sustained.

4 Science results have risen steeply recently, with the proportion of pupils attaining average levels increasing from 63 per cent in 1999 to 85 per cent in 2000, with twice the national average reaching the higher level. Again, the work seen in Year 6 reflects this above average attainment.

5 When the 2000 results in English, mathematics and science are compared with those of similar schools³ it is expected that they will be above average, including very good comparative performance by higher attaining pupils.

6 Standards achieved by seven-year-old pupils are also rising. Improvement has not been as rapid as in Key Stage 2, mainly because limitations in the use and understanding in English affects their attainment. Test results rose by around ten per cent between 1999 and 2000 except in writing, where performance was lower. In mathematics, there was a very significant increase in the proportion of higher-level scores. Overall results in English, mathematics and science in 2000 were a little below the national average, but current work in Year 2 in these subjects is broadly as expected for the age group.

7 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected of seven and eleven-year-olds. Most pupils are reasonably confident in using computers, but ICT skills are not taught systematically through the school. A shortage of suitable resources has held back the subject, but a new ICT suite was nearing completion during the inspection week, which will enable the school to address this weakness.

8 Attainment in religious education at seven and eleven is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in other subjects are also sound, but there are some weaknesses in art. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. As their skills in literacy and numeracy increase, pupils can use these with confidence in other subjects such as geography and science.

³ Comparative figures for 2000 are not available at the time of writing.

9 As they start school, many children have not acquired a level of literacy or numeracy that is typical of the age group and several have under-developed social skills. They are well supported by the local home-school liaison officer who works closely with the reception teachers at the beginning of the year. The reception teachers successfully help most children to develop personal and social skills. By the end of the foundation stage, although many children are not yet fluent in English, most are well on the way to achieving early numeracy. They acquire a sound understanding of the world outside school and develop appropriate physical and creative skills.

10 Teachers in the infants successfully build on this secure foundation, taking learning forward at a good rate. The quality of learning further improves through the juniors. Pupils' fluency in English increases and academic progress is at least as good as could be reasonably expected and sometimes better. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, making good progress towards their individual targets. The 'unit' times, where pupils are taught in ability groups successfully help pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties.

11 The school sets challenging targets for pupils. Through effective teaching and their own hard work, most pupils rise to these expectations and reach their potential. Most achieve as well as they should. This is more obvious in the achievement of the higher attainers, but the school's increased focus on providing appropriately challenging work for all ability groups is raising achievement across the board. The trend over the last four years has been upwards and there has been very good improvement in attainment since the previous inspection

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 The pupils' attitudes to school are good and have a positive impact on their learning. Most listen carefully to their teachers and behave well. They work enthusiastically, are well motivated and co-operate well with each other and the adults in the classroom. This makes a positive contribution to the standards they achieve. The new children in the two reception classes have settled in well despite only having been in school for a very short time because of the good support and guidance they receive.

13 Pupils show a high level of interest in school life. They respond confidently to teachers' questions and enjoy their work. Their enthusiasm was shown in a Year 6 music lesson by how well they remembered what had been taught in the previous session and how keen they were to take their learning a step further. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson, pupils remained keenly focused on their tasks and achieved positive results, because of the high level of adult support which meant that any misunderstandings were picked up and dealt with quickly. Pupils with special needs working in a Year 5 numeracy group also demonstrated positive attitudes toward their work and achieved well because the good level of adult support allowed for quick and ongoing help when it was needed.

14 Inspection findings agree with parents' views that behaviour is good and children respect each other. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. Parents are especially impressed by the good behaviour of pupils on trips and visits, and feel that the behaviour book is used well to help nip things in the bud. Pupils are kind and courteous, often reminding one another to say please and thank you if one of them forgets. They happily comply with the school's *Golden Rules*. Children in reception are quickly becoming familiar with school routines, sit quietly during discussions and take turns and share beautifully. They are interested in all activities and very motivated to learn.

15 Occasionally pupils become restless and noisy, for example when moving to group work or handing out resources and also when the pace of their lesson is too slow, but they respond well to teachers' strategies to gain their attention and generally focus on their tasks again quickly. Year 1 children respond very quickly when their teacher starts to clap her hands loudly, as they know it's time to stop and listen carefully. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes and work hard. They are effectively helped by class teachers, support staff and the special needs co-ordinator. There are just a few pupils whose behaviour sometimes disrupts lessons but effective strategies are

positively addressing the difficulties of this small minority. There were no exclusions in the last school year, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

16 Relationships are good and pupils of all backgrounds work and play together well. The pupils show respect for one another's views, beliefs and cultures because their tolerance is encouraged through religious education, personal and social education, and circle time activities, where even the youngest are able to sit in a circle with their peers and share their feelings and ideas sensibly. In a very appropriate Year 1 circle time the children thought very carefully about what advice to give their teacher's *Squirrel Puppet* because he was finding it difficult to make friends.

17 Most pupils are keen to work collaboratively and are very supportive of each other while completing assigned tasks. In Year 4, pupils are encouraged to use their own *brain* in the first instance if they get stuck, but also to seek help from their neighbour or *buddy* before asking their teacher for help. Pupils are developing an increasing sense of responsibility toward their peers, as they get older, through programmes like the *playground squad*. This gives Year 6 children a degree of responsibility for ensuring that the lunch time break is orderly. Care is taken of anyone sitting on *the friendship bench*, because they are lonely or without a playmate.

18 Attendance rates are satisfactory but remain slightly below the national average. This is roughly the same as at the time of the last inspection. Below average attendance is mostly attributable to a few families who take their children on extended holidays abroad, and a very small number with personal problems. As a result of consistent follow up of all absences, there has been a small reduction in the rate of unauthorised absence, but this is still slightly above the national average. Most pupils are punctual in the morning, but a small minority continue to arrive a few minutes late on a regular basis and therefore make a poor start to their day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, and this is the main factor contributing to the good learning and progress of the majority of pupils. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when the quality of teaching was described as satisfactory. Every teacher was observed teaching at least one good lesson, indicating effective teaching across the age groups.

20 Teachers in the foundation stage⁴ are very successful in helping children⁴ to settle in to school routines. They encourage an appropriate level of independence and ensure that children behave well, increasingly being able to share and take turns without squabbling. Both teachers establish a purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms and have very good relationships with the children. They provide a good variety of activities, which are designed to promote learning in the key areas of literacy and numeracy and to stimulate children's interest in the world around them. Support assistants work closely with teachers and make a full contribution to children's learning. Although children had only been in the school for a very short time, the effectiveness of the provision was clear to see; in a secure and happy atmosphere, they were enjoying and benefiting from this careful introduction to school life.

21 In Years 1 and 2, teachers have a good understanding of what they are teaching, and they teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. Good teaching was also seen in science, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, and music. Lessons are generally planned very well and teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. They explain things clearly and provide practical tasks to help pupils develop their understanding and practise skills. Group work is structured carefully to enable pupils to work at the right level; less confident pupils are supported and the higher attainers are challenged. Learning assistants are well briefed and provide good support for individuals and groups.

⁴ The Foundation Stage runs from the child's third birthday to the end of the academic year in which s/he will be five, i.e. the end of the reception year.

22 Teaching in the juniors is also good. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teachers use the national strategies effectively, and take other opportunities to reinforce these areas across the curriculum; for instance, during a geography lesson, Year 3 pupils developed their understanding of collecting information by tallying and presenting it in a graph. In a Year 4 science lesson, pupils were introduced to the correct vocabulary and used words such as 'variable' and 'insulator' in their discussion and subsequent writing. Although some opportunities are taken to teach ICT through other subjects, this lacks a clear structure. Teachers have a reasonable level of confidence but lack the necessary skills to ensure pupils are sufficiently challenged as they move through the school.

23 In the lessons observed in design and technology, geography, history, music, religious education, and personal and social education, the teaching was consistently good. In science, the teaching is stronger in the infants than the juniors. Teachers subject knowledge is sometimes not sufficient to fully explain things to the older pupils. Teaching in art and physical education varies in quality. One lesson in each of these subjects was unsatisfactory because, although their classroom skills were sound, the teachers lacked the expertise to ensure that pupils made enough progress.

24 Setting by previous attainment in 'unit time' has a very good impact on the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Well-focused teaching relevant to pupil's targets ensures that their needs are met and they make good progress. Exemplary teaching by the special needs co-ordinator was evident in the planning and teaching of a mathematics lesson where pupils in a lower attainment group sustained their concentration, increased their understanding of what they are doing and made excellent progress. In the majority of mixed ability lessons pupils' needs are well provided for but occasionally, in the planning of tasks, there is insufficient attention given to the different needs of both lower and higher attaining pupils. Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils on the special needs register and are well briefed to make sure that pupils' learning needs are met. Teachers manage pupils with behaviour problems well, making good use of the school's behaviour guidance.

25 The quality of teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good overall which is reflected in their progress. The inclusive aspect is strong; all work is firmly placed within the National Curriculum and the overall learning targets of the lessons. In most lessons, work is at an appropriate level and tasks adjusted to match the needs of less fluent pupils. Occasionally texts are too difficult so that these pupils are over-reliant on support and unable to work independently. In general, there is good teaching of literacy and teachers provide effective models for reading and writing. However, there is tendency for teachers to move too quickly to the literacy aspects of lessons without first giving pupils effective models of spoken language, particularly necessary for the language development of less fluent pupils. In some lessons, such as ICT, there is good visual support for pupils. For example, a Year 1 teacher had written out key words on card when introducing a new computer activity.

26 Because of their positive attitudes and behaviour, and the good relationships that permeate the school, pupils respond well to teaching. As pupils gain a greater insight into their own learning – for example, by knowing their individual targets - the pace of learning increases and they are challenged more fully. Most pupils make a good effort. They take a keen interest in lessons and concentrate. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in the older classes. Teachers could make fuller use of the information they gain from marking pupils' work and assessing it during lessons to help pupils learn even more effectively.

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

27 The school provides a sound balance and breadth of curriculum opportunities for pupils. Recent effective planning has focused on the new National Curriculum programmes to ensure that learning objectives are clear and skills are matched in all subjects. At present, there is an emphasis on English and mathematics to ensure that pupils receive a solid grounding in these subjects. This is entirely consistent with the school's planning and reflects the commitment to establishing the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Teachers have a good grasp of the importance of this work and show good knowledge and understanding when teaching these subjects. Science has also been given a priority to ensure that pupils gain a better understanding of scientific processes and experiments. The other subjects in the curriculum are taught appropriately although there is currently

a lack of opportunity in ICT and focus in art. The school has an effective homework policy and teachers regularly set and mark homework in support of their day-to-day classwork.

28 There are a significant number of children with special educational needs as well as those with English as an additional language. The school works well with both these groups to ensure that their needs are met. For some lessons in English and mathematics, the school arranges pupils into particular groups. This allows teachers to target work more effectively and extend the opportunities for pupils to learn. In one lesson the concentration and commitment of a group of less confident pupils was extremely high and sustained for the whole hour. The work with children with special educational needs is a strength of the school.

29 The school has a good range of out of school clubs, which have a sound balance of sporting, cultural and academic themes. Children like to attend these clubs and work – for example in music and football - contributes positively to their development.

30 Good provision is made for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The school has adopted inclusive principles and values in line with its equal opportunities policy. Pupils' first languages are valued and drawn upon when appropriate. Behaviour is generally well managed and pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. Pupils in Year 6 are given opportunities to show initiative through the school's 'better playtimes' scheme, an activity they enjoy. Cultural aspects of the curriculum are developed in art and music. Time in lessons has been found to let pupils speak about personal, school and social issues in a supportive way. The school also has effective policies and statements on health, sex education and drug misuse.

31 There is less opportunity in the curriculum for the development of spiritual issues, which deal with special moments in pupils' lives. This needs further attention. The daily acts of collective worship do not provide sufficient time or opportunity for reflection nor do they recognise the existence of a deity. Currently the school does not meet statutory requirements in this area.

32 Good initiatives to develop pupils understanding of their community have been encouraged through links with the education business partnership. The choir has sung in local care homes and the school has entertained visits from agencies such as the Salvation Army. A strong relationship to secondary school has been established where Firs Farm pupils make personal links to older pupils before they transfer. Good liaison work has also been done with local feeder groups.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33 Support for pupils' welfare makes a good contribution to improving the educational standards they achieve and remains a strength of the school. The school has a strong ethos of partnership in learning to help to raise standards in an atmosphere where all children are treated as equals. Each child is individually known and the good relationships between teachers and support staff ensure that needs are fully met. Parents feel very positive about the way the school helps their children to learn and make progress and feel they are instilled with a strong sense of right and wrong.

34 Support for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good because of the skilful way in which their needs are quickly identified and regularly assessed ensuring that they get the help that they need. The procedures comply with the Code of Practice, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Regular monitoring by the special needs co-ordinator of individual education plans ensures that targets are updated as necessary and pupils make good progress as a result. Pupils with medical needs are cared for well.

35 There are good procedures for encouraging discipline and good behaviour. Pupils are very aware of what is expected of them because there is a consistent approach to behaviour management in all aspects of school life. This is reinforced in lessons and assemblies and by the good example set by all adults who work in the school. Rewards and sanctions are fairly administered and parents feel that the school's reward system for effort works well. Children are proud of the team points they earn for good achievement in all areas of school life, and enjoy the

privilege of *Golden time* during which they are able to choose an activity for a short time each week as a reward for good behaviour. Pupils are well supervised at work and play. Meal supervisors manage the lunch time very efficiently and reinforce the school's friendly atmosphere by involving themselves with children's playground games.

36 A range of strategies is in place for dealing with the very few pupils who do not respond to these procedures. *Time out* is often used to allow them to reflect on their behaviour and the impact it is having on their friends, and although lessons are sometimes mildly disrupted, the other children are very tolerant and generally get back to work quickly. There is very little bullying or harassment and any incidents that occur are dealt with quickly and effectively.

37 There are a high proportion of pupils in the school who speak English as an additional language and twenty-three languages are represented. Since the previous inspection, there has been a greater emphasis on tracking and targeting such pupils who are formally assessed twice a year. This has revealed that although there are many pupils with high attainment a significant proportion lack the fluency and literacy skills to achieve their full potential by the time they leave at age eleven. Overall provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. They are included in every aspect of the curriculum and all staff support their needs. Additional help is provided by a specialist teacher and other staff funded by the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant who target pupils most in need. The bilingual support assistant uses her home language very effectively, for example, in comforting a distressed pupil. There is a homework club presently targeted at specific pupils.

38 Assessment procedures remain satisfactory although there are weaknesses. Initial assessment of the children entering reception classes is carried out quickly and used to plan lessons to address their needs. Good procedures are in place in English and Mathematics that measure the progress pupils make as they move through school. Teachers are well informed about the results of formal and optional tests and use this information well to clearly identify where improvement in learning is needed. The pupils' work is usually marked and comments are supportive but do not always offer advice on how work might be improved and corrections are not always followed up to ensure that they are made. Assessment in other areas of the curriculum is inconsistent and there is insufficient guidance about assessing work against National Curriculum levels. Each class teacher monitors pupils' attainment and progress in personal development during the school year and sets targets for future learning. There are, however, few formal records kept to ensure continuity if there is a change of class teacher. Teachers do know their pupils well however, and use both formal and informal assessment information to help to plan their lessons to meet pupils' needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39 Parents' views about the school are positive. They are happy with the standards their children achieve, and feel that they are more motivated than at the time of the last inspection. They say that Year 6 work is now more structured and that their children are well prepared for secondary school. They rightly feel that special needs of all kinds are supported well. Parents are positive about their children's personal development and the attitudes and values that the school promotes.

40 There is a very comprehensive induction program including home visits, which helps new children and their parents become comfortable with the school, staff and routines. Because of this, children and parents new to the reception classes this year are managing the day-to-day conventions of school life with confidence. The children already enter their classrooms happily and eager to get going with their busy days.

41 The quality of information for parents is good overall, although there are some weaknesses. Information is translated into community languages at parents' requests. Newsletters are frequent and informative, and parents new to the school are well informed by the prospectus and meetings. The governors' annual report to parents also provides carers with information about the school, but

neither it nor the prospectus contain all of the required information. School absence rates are omitted, as is the date of the next parent governor elections.

42 Parents appreciate the school's 'open door' policy and are happy with the three consultations they are offered to discuss their children's achievements. The school makes every effort to ensure that interpreters are on hand for these occasions to help parents who need assistance. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly involved in formal reviews of their children's progress which is a significant improvement since the last inspection where this was a key issue.

43 Many parents are committed to their children's learning. A small number help regularly in school by assisting teachers in practical sessions, as well as hearing readers and helping to prepare resources. There is a dedicated Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which organises social functions such as the annual fete and they have paid for extra resources as well as an artist to work with children in school. PTA class representatives also provide a useful means for parents to express their opinions about the school. The Literacy Club which encourages parents to drop in after school and share a book with their children is well attended and is used as a means of helping parents to gain confidence in supporting their children's work at home. Home-school liaison booklets are used as an effective way for parents and teachers to communicate.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44 The headteacher provides strong leadership and, with the full support of the governing body is rightly set on improving standards for all pupils. The concentration on English, mathematics and science is having a positive effect on standards and the school recognises the importance of the analysis of pupil performance now undertaken. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in national tests has reached 25 per cent, which is a strong improvement. A new focus, now established, on improving the number of pupils reaching Level 4 is entirely logical. There have been sound improvements in mathematics and good improvements in science over the past year.

45 The school has established a database which is used to monitor pupil performance. The headteacher has developed effective data analysis procedures and staff have received training focusing on target setting and the use of performance data. Effective use is made of ICT for the purposes of managing the school.

46 Governors receive regular updates on the school's position with regard to priorities. The governors are able to contribute to the priorities for the school development plan. They also take a hands-on approach to determine responsibilities, costings and deadlines. The governors' sub committees support the full governing body well. Although much improved since the previous inspection, the school plan does not contain sufficiently measurable targets for each action identified. This does not allow progress in key initiatives to be tracked efficiently.

47 Monitoring of teaching has been established and occurs regularly for all teachers. The headteacher and senior colleagues observe lessons and feedback comments to staff about the quality of their work. Where necessary, action is taken to ensure that improvements are made and strengths are celebrated. There is also a further effective level of monitoring where teachers can observe the work of the classes below and above their own year group. The monitoring of teaching has a positive effect on the professional development of staff and will serve the school as it introduces performance management. A regular termly examination of pupils' work is undertaken which enables the headteacher to gain an impression of standards achieved and moderate the quality of work.

48 Management of special needs by the co-ordinator is very good. Funds allocated are well used and teaching and support staff deployed where needed. The co-ordinator has a clear view of provision and of good teaching methods. She has introduced a computerised system to generate targets for individual education plans that is easier for all, including parents, to understand. The senior management team is involved in ensuring that targets are measurable and the governor with responsibility for special education needs has good knowledge of this aspect.

49 The school is making good use of resources to provide a measure of stability in staffing. Despite the large number of staff changes, there is a strong sense of shared commitment. This is achieved by a streamlined induction system for new teachers and supportive mentoring from experienced staff. There are currently a number of temporary teachers on staff, but they are on termly contracts so become familiar with the pupils and their needs. Support staff are included in the life of the school through close involvement in the planning of work with teachers. Consequently, support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of learning across the school.

50 The school community has worked hard to get funding for the new building extension to address a key issue from the previous inspection. There is already a new focal point for main entry to the school as well as much needed administrative offices where there is now space for parents to meet staff members in privacy. Imminent completion of the extension will provide the school with new areas for small group teaching, a small hall for drama, dance and assemblies, a library and ICT suite large enough to take a whole class. While the rest of the accommodation is old, it and the grounds are spacious, well maintained and used well to support learning.

51 The priorities set for the school are appropriately financed and a recent audit report raised no significant issues. Specific grants are focused where need is identified. For example, additional literacy support has been targeted at Years 3 and 4 to ensure pupils' needs are met at an early stage. Extra classroom assistance has been provided to support English and mathematics, increasing the level of challenge and support for specific groups of children. An after school booster club helps children perform better when preparing for their standardised attainment tests. The Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant is targeted effectively and used well.

52 The school has adopted the local authority's principles of best value and governors have opportunities to compare their work with that of other schools. This means that they are able to make informed contributions to the target-setting process.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (i) Improve attainment in information and communication technology at both key stages by:
- fully utilising the new computer suite
 - providing further training for teachers
 - ensuring that the National Curriculum for ICT is fully covered
 - systematically tracking pupils' progress across the school.

(paragraph 32)

- (ii) Refine assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics so that teachers:
- are clear about what is to be assessed and when
 - have more guidance about assessing work against level descriptions, for example, by providing examples of work at different levels
 - can use assessment records to decide what to teach next.

(paragraphs 38, 100, 105, 110, 114 and 116)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Providing a wide range of purposes for speaking and listening, particularly in the older classes. *(paragraph 76)*
- Extending the good provision for personal development by providing more opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. *(paragraph 30)*
- Providing more outdoor equipment for children in the foundation stage, including wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. *(paragraph 68)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	8	60	23	5		

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	R to Year 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	396
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	78
Special educational needs	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	81
English as an additional language	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	222
Pupil mobility in the last school year	
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	45
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	49

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	20	36	56
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	19	15	
	Girls	23	31	27	
	Total	36	50	42	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (71)	89 (81)	75 (89)	
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)	

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	18
	Girls	25	28	22
	Total	38	43	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (79)	77 (79)	71 (98)
	National	82 (81)	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	35	24	59
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	23	21	
	Girls	16	16	16	
	Total	34	39	37	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (52)	66 (55)	63 (43)	
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)	

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	23	20
	Girls	13	16	15
	Total	28	39	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (45)	66 (55)	59 (53)
	National	65 (63)	65 (62)	72 (69)

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	13
Black – African heritage	12
Black – other	13
Indian	8
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	7
Chinese	1
White	260
Any other minority ethnic group	24

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: R – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff: R – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	851720
Total expenditure	885618
Expenditure per pupil	2170
Balance brought forward from previous year	42714
Balance carried forward to next year	8816

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

300

Number of questionnaires returned

44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	37	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	32	5	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	41	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	49	15	7	0
The teaching is good.	39	54	12	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	52	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	37	2	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	56	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	49	15	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	56	2	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	49	5	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	39	12	2	10

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

53 Many children enter the reception classes with underdeveloped skills in language, literacy and mathematics. This is confirmed by the initial assessments that are conducted during the first two weeks of the school year. By the time they start Year 1, the majority of the children achieve well and attain the early learning goals in all areas of the foundation stage except that many pupils lack fluency in speaking English. Teachers successfully target children with special educational needs and English as a second language who then make good progress.

54 The success of the children at this stage is greatly helped by the skill of the teachers in providing a well-planned induction into school life. The children are visited throughout the year prior to coming to school by the local home-school liaison worker who also runs play sessions once a week in school during the summer term. This ensures that the children are familiar with school and have established relationships amongst their class. The class teachers also visit the children and display drawings completed during the visit around the classroom. Successful links have been made with the local nursery through joint training and planning for the children's transfer to school.

55 The curriculum is well planned in half term topics. These cover all areas of learning for the foundation stage and have clear learning objectives. Parents are kept well informed of the plans for their children's learning through a detailed newsletter. During the inspection the children were being introduced to the routines and areas of the class through an extensive range of free choice activities particularly set up to provide opportunities for assessment, but they have already begun this term's topic *Myself* by making posters at home showing all the things they like.

Personal, social and emotional development

56 The teachers have good relationships with the children who show that they feel confident and secure and are making excellent progress in learning to work and play co-operatively. The children understand the routines of the classes and enjoy having simple responsibilities such as taking the register to the office and helping tidy up. The children are encouraged to be independent and are well able to select activities from the large range on offer, for example, a table set up with a variety of materials to encourage them to produce interesting collages. The children respond well to their teachers and are generally enthusiastic about their learning but are also able to sit quietly at the appropriate times.

57 The behaviour of the children is usually good with all members of staff providing good role models for the children. Children are beginning to work well together, for example, when using the sand tray and taking turns to use the mouse when working with a computer program.

Communication, language and literacy

58 Skills in this area are developed in all activities in the reception classes. The children listen attentively to the teachers and talk with increasing confidence during the opportunities provided for discussion. They take part in role-play activities in the home corner becoming very involved especially when the teacher takes part. The children initiate their own situations by starting a shop and organising themselves into the roles of customer and shopkeeper.

59 The children enjoy listening to stories and are encouraged to select and handle books correctly. Careful questioning by the teacher was enabling them to begin learning the skill of prediction as seen during the story of *Not Now Bernard*.

60 Supplies of paper, pens, crayons and pencils are readily available in the *writing* and *office* areas; the children were keen to make their own books and were beginning to use letters to convey meaning. Some children were able to identify letters in their names and were making good attempts to write them.

61 Samples of work from last year included writing in simple sentences with full stops and capital letters, indicating good achievement at the end of the foundation stage, particularly in letter sounds

Mathematics

62 The children are given opportunities to learn mathematics from the earliest stage with children forming numbers when playing with plasticine and developing their mathematical vocabulary whilst playing with sand and water. Daily routines involve counting activities, such as helping teachers to count the number present. Number games and rhymes are a regular feature of lessons and practical activities enable children to develop a knowledge of regular shapes and use the correct mathematical names when identifying them. Mathematics is usually related to children's everyday experiences. For example, simple graphs were being used to show the age of each child and the month in which they were born; the children were able to find themselves on these charts and talk about how old they were. By the age of five most children are able to recognise, match and order numbers to ten, with higher attaining children showing an understanding of simple addition.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

63 The children increase their knowledge and understanding of the world outside school through the planned topics, which include studies of minibeasts, colour and shape, the weather, and clothes. A scrutiny of work from the previous year showed the children investigating life in the pond and in the sea and investigating how ice melts.

64 Children use tools well when cutting and shaping and are able to select materials to create pictures. They are aware of some of the functions of the computer and can use the mouse to move and re-locate images on the screen as seen when they could match objects to the correct letter name.

Physical Development

65 Planned activities ensure that the children progress in developing skills of control and co-ordination. Teachers encourage them to move safely around the hall and to use their imaginations to extend their movements. This was evident during a movement lesson, when the teacher supported the children well and intervened to help those who were a little hesitant.

66 In the outdoor play area, opportunities are planned for the children to be active using big balls, bats, and skipping ropes. Assault courses are constructed to increase opportunities for climbing, running, crawling and jumping and each day the children use the adventure playground on the school field. Provision for this area of learning has improved since the previous inspection but more could be done to enhance the outside play space through large wheeled toys and climbing apparatus.

Creative Development

67 Displays of work indicate that the children handle equipment and materials well and can represent their ideas and observations using different techniques. Children enjoy painting and some are becoming aware that colours can be mixed to create new ones. The outside area is used well for the children to experiment with shape and colour using the floor and different mediums.

68 In role-play situations, children use props and other resources imaginatively and are able to sustain aspects of characters for long periods of time and to talk about that character. The resources for creative development are good and well organised to ensure that the children have independent

access to them. Curriculum plans show that the children will be given opportunities to explore sounds using their voices, hands and feet during this term.

ENGLISH

69 Standards in English are continuing to improve and by the end of both key stages pupils are expected to reach national averages in reading and writing. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is less good and is an area for improvement.

70 The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school is using this strategy particularly well by teaching some lessons in 'units' which enables staff to focus on the different needs of groups of pupils. This arrangement contributes significantly to pupils' learning and achievement. The requirements of pupils with special educational needs are well met in unit groups and in the majority of class lessons.

71 Although near the beginning of the school year, pupils in Year 1 classes have already established good routines and the majority work well in groups independently of their teachers. Most pupils write simple words and phrases, know the shape of letters and leave spaces between words. They are beginning to grasp the use of capitals and full stops. A few write simple sentences without any assistance and can read what they have written. They are all learning to identify sounds and know how some are grouped together. Pupils in Year 2 build on this good start and are able to make lists of words, which include various sounds such as *ie*. They have their interest in 'igh' words stimulated through the poem 'Star light, star bright' and make good progress in learning these sounds and incorporating them in their own sentences.

72 Pupils are on target to read at average levels by the end of Year 2 and a good proportion will achieve at a higher level. These pupils read confidently although are sometimes hampered by unfamiliar vocabulary. They know what a library is for and chose their own books from a designated set but seem unused to talking about books. Most pupils are reasonably confident readers but those with lower attainment have a limited range of strategies for approaching a text. Home-school liaison books are used to record books read in Years 1 and 2 but not teacher or parent comments. This is a missed opportunity for motivating pupils and for extending the partnership with parents. However, pupils are encouraged to write about the books they read and are beginning to express opinions.

73 Pupils usually listen well to their teachers and are beginning to listen to what other pupils have to say. Speaking is weaker because many pupils with English as an additional language lack fluency. Most are keen to answer questions and to join in activities but do not have enough opportunity to develop their spoken language through more sustained talk such as explaining what they done to the class.

74 As they get older, pupils continue to listen well to their teachers. Pair work is effective in getting pupils to focus on tasks and share thoughts. However, in larger groups they are less able to engage in exploratory talk or to pool ideas and many Year 6 pupils find it difficult to take account of what other pupils have to say or to modify or justify what they think in the light of what they have heard. They answer questions and can describe a process such as a scanning technique, but despite good understanding, many struggle to explain more complex ideas. Teachers work hard to help pupils to clarify their thoughts but in general opportunities are missed to develop pupils' spoken language by 'modelling' appropriate oral use in a similar way to that used for modelling reading and writing. Planning for a wide range of purposes for speaking and listening needs extending to benefit all pupils; it is essential if the school is to realise its objective of improving the language of those pupils whose speech is not fully fluent.

75 Pupils in Key Stage 2 make steady progress in writing and in grammar. Year 3 pupils begin to understand how the vocabulary in a poem affects the meaning. They find rhyming words, recognise and suggest alternative adjectives and make lists of their own to describe places such as space. Year 4 know the difference between past and present tenses using these in a writing exercise. By Year 5, pupils can use a text such as *The Borrowers* to transform tenses and many write sentences that make clear the distinction between the present and past participle. The higher attainers in Year 6 are already well on track to reach a good level by the end of the year. They use interesting story starters that capture the reader's attention; they describe settings well and have a good control of style, moving from colloquial dialogue to a formal narrative. Punctuation is accurate, spelling good and handwriting joined and legible. Year 6 pupils increase their understanding of the different forms of writing, comparing book and screen versions of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. As a result of lively teaching and guidance in referring to the text, video and script, they become aware of the differences in approach. They see how dialogue is used and ways in which a narrator's comments and feelings are expressed on film; some express their own views in writing, giving reasons for their opinions.

76 Higher attaining readers in the oldest classes are fluent and able to use inference and deduction to explain meanings and messages in the text. They offer opinions about books and authors and give reasons for their preferences. They have good library skills and use skills such as scanning very effectively to find information. There are quite a number of pupils who read fairly fluently but have difficulty in using the context to find out what something means. Some weaker readers have reached a plateau in their reading due to poor vocabulary and language development. They find it difficult to talk about books and are not able to make any predictions.

77 The quality of teaching is mostly good and some is outstanding. Relationships with pupils are very good. Clear targets ensure that pupils know what they are to learn. Lessons are well planned to achieve their objectives and to capture pupils' interest. In one Year 6 lesson, the teacher sustained interest by use of voice, praise and pace so that pupils were involved and co-operative and keen to volunteer to read aloud. Lively teaching and good subject knowledge enabled them to make good use of a challenging text so they became able to make helpful, critical remarks about others' work.

78 Unit teaching is well matched to the needs of the pupils. There is plenty of encouragement for pupils who have lower attainment and some very challenging teaching of more advanced pupils. Teaching is very purposeful; there are high expectations and excellent attitudes. However, in some mixed ability English lessons there is insufficient difference in the group tasks so that lower attaining pupils are over-reliant on assistants and cannot work independently, while for others the work lacks challenge. Sometimes pupils do not have the opportunity to use what they have learned in a lesson in their own writing.

79 Teachers are effective in developing literacy skills in other curriculum subjects. For instance, in a Year 2 science lesson, a word bank was provided with samples of materials attached so that pupils could identify them easily. Year 4 pupils learn how to write instructions for a science experiment and Year 6 pupils improve their skills in reading for information in history lessons.

80 Pupils are regularly assessed and the data is used to organise the curriculum. Pupils have appropriate learning targets and parents are about to have more detailed information about these so they can further support their children. Teachers use resources such as overhead projectors effectively but are reliant on photocopied material in many lessons. Resources are sufficient but original materials would be more motivating.

MATHEMATICS

81 Standards in mathematics have improved greatly since the last inspection with results in National Curriculum tests at age eleven above the national average for the first time. A much larger proportion of pupils achieved above average levels than before. This is a significant achievement for the school and work in Year 6 indicates that this good standard will be maintained. Pupils enter the

school with few skills in mathematics but make rapid progress. By the age of seven, standards are close to average.

82 At Key Stage 1, work in class and in pupils' books shows good progress during the year and from year to year. Work was seen on place value and addition and subtraction up to 100 and counting in 2s, 3s, 5s, and 10s. Pupils were learning to multiply and divide and some were able to give good explanations of how they arrived at their answers. Pupils knew about odd and even numbers and were able to add coins to the value of 20p. They have a good grasp of mathematical vocabulary and use it effectively; they know the names of common two and three-dimensional shapes with some pupils being successfully challenged to learn the properties of triangular and hexagonal prisms.

83 At the age of eleven, the majority of pupils are competent in the four operations using and applying mental strategies. They calculate fractions of whole numbers and use percentages; they can use and apply the principle of equivalence in fractions in their work. Pupils use their knowledge in data handling to collect and interpret information. A Year 6 class worked on finding the mode and range of a data set of numbers and, in a geography lesson, a Year 3 pupils worked with the data they had collected to construct bar charts.

84 The teaching of mathematics is generally good throughout the school. The quality and range of work demonstrates the good subject knowledge of the teachers. Lessons are well planned and resourced with teachers giving clear explanations and good demonstrations of methods to be used. They have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond by working enthusiastically at tasks. A successful feature throughout the school in promoting high quality learning is the setting of clear targets for each lesson. The teachers constantly remind pupils of them and are then able to assess progress throughout the lesson. The strategy of setting pupils for some of their mathematics lessons provides work that is specific to their needs and this has been effective in raising standards across the ability range. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. Very effective teaching of a low attaining group was seen where the carefully planned work enabled pupils to make significant gains in their learning.

85 Teaching and learning is benefiting from the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been effectively introduced by the subject co-ordinator who provides strong leadership. Teachers have received good training and this is reflected in the good teaching and implementation of the numeracy strategy. The introduction of new published scheme of work has enhanced the mathematics curriculum. The subject is monitored by the headteacher and the co-ordinator who provide helpful individual feedback to teachers.

SCIENCE

86 Science is currently a focus for development within the school. There has been much improvement in the teaching of science in both the infants and the juniors and the recent results achieved by the pupils in the national tests have improved considerably. The science co-ordinator provides good leadership and has a clear strategy for continuing to raise attainment.

87 Pupils in the infants achieve standards which are close to the national average. Improvement in the juniors during the last four years has seen the percentage of pupils achieving the standards expected of eleven year olds reaching the national average, increasing from 32 per cent to 85 per cent. During the same period the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 has risen steeply from four per cent to 51 per cent which is now well above the national average and an indication of the improvements in the standard of science teaching at the school.

88 There have been several improvements since the last inspection. The school has undertaken a close scrutiny of pupils' work in conjunction with the local education authority adviser, to provide a basis for ensuring consistency in standards throughout the school. The school's introduction of the nationally recommended scheme of work has given teachers a clear understanding of what to expect from all year groups. Planning is now more closely monitored by the subject co-ordinator to ensure

that curriculum coverage is adequate. Guidance has been given to the co-ordinator on ways in which the quality of pupils' work throughout the school can be checked. The outcomes of the national tests are closely analysed to ensure that curriculum coverage and pupil progress are being carefully monitored.

89 Current work by infant and junior pupils shows that the quality of their scientific work is enabling them to acquire new ideas and knowledge in the subject. Good teaching is encouraging the pupils to think about the reasons behind the observations they are making and enabling the oldest pupils to generalise their findings into scientific concepts. They have good understanding of key ideas and are learning to apply their knowledge to new situations.

90 Good support is given to pupils in the correct use of scientific vocabulary. In all lessons, essential terminology is written on the board or on support materials at the pupils' tables. Appropriate support is given to pupils for whom English is not their first language and these pupils generally make satisfactory progress. Resources are adequate for most parts of the programme of study and the science co-ordinator has a sensible plan to improve the resources to support the specific areas of study in each year group.

91 The school recognises there is a need to improve the amount of scientific investigation which is undertaken and to encourage the pupils to be systematic and accurate in their collection of data. There is a need to improve the pupils' ability to phrase questions for investigation. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations on their own and the science co-ordinator recognises that both the infant and junior pupils need to have more practice at devising their own experiments. The very close control on the methods that they use does not allow pupils to develop a scientific approach to asking questions and planning experiments. Teachers in both infant and junior departments could give pupils more scope to design their own experiments and their own methods for gathering and recording data.

92 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. Methods used by the teachers throughout the school are contributing to the improved attainment of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in both key stages and many pupils make good progress in the juniors. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and they enjoy the work. They work well together and use resources with care. Work is carefully presented. Marking of the pupils' work is regularly carried out but the quality of written feedback to pupils could be improved as it rarely indicates what it is that they need to do in order to make improvements.

93 The co-ordinator is beginning to bring together samples of pupils' work to create a school portfolio of science, indicating levels of attainment in the National Curriculum. Clearer guidance is being developed to help ensure that opportunities for assessing pupils' work are carefully noted at the same time that science activities are planned. Assessment is to be more closely linked to planning to ensure that there is progress as well as continuity across the year groups, particularly in experimental and investigative work.

ART AND DESIGN

94 Art is not particularly well taught in the school and has deteriorated since the last inspection. Currently there is no specific co-ordinator to organise and manage the development of the subject. Drawing is not taught in a consistent way and many pupils rely upon their own experiences to create pictures when asked to draw from real life objects. This is a basic weakness in the teaching of art across the school. In one lesson, the skills of layout and proportion were not taught even though high quality drawing subjects were given to the pupils. There is a need for greater emphasis on teaching drawing skills to improve pupils' confidence and increase their knowledge. Where direct teaching of drawing was seen in Year 3, pupils were challenged, gaining new knowledge and making good progress in developing their skills.

95 Painting is taught with more care and pupils have a sound grasp of colour mixing. Their work shows vibrancy of colour and reasonable control in the early years up to age seven. There is little evidence that this continues in the years up to eleven. Much of the work seen was low in standard and showed minimal skill improvement as children got older. Work on display is at best adequate, often being simple in construction and only mildly thought provoking.

96 Other cultures and historical art sources do make a positive difference to children's work. Good quality work on skies has been inspired by eighteenth century English art and other work in the early years is based on the artist Monet. Children have understood the themes and ideas behind these artists' work and have carried this through in their own attempts to create pictures. This is a stronger response and an area on which the school could capitalise to raise standards and ensure pupils make better progress. Designs inspired by Ghanaian textiles and ethnic sources is of a satisfactory or better standard. This stimulus for design work could be developed further to ensure that pupils make the most of their cultural heritage.

97 Overall, the subject needs direction and focus. The school needs to address the teaching of skills in drawing and develop suitable and relevant themes for children to work through. Opportunities for children to work in a larger scale are rarely created and this is a contributing factor to lack of confidence when drawing. The school does not currently have a collection of moderated work to provide examples for teachers of what to look for when assessing pupils' attainment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98 The school has maintained a sound approach to design and technology since the last inspection. There is a range of tried and tested projects which all pupils study as they go through the school.

99 Pupils make sound progress up to the age of seven. They enjoy making things. For example, previously made puppets inspired pupils to be creative and they were keen to design their own. Young children learn and practise skills through sewing and cutting fabric. They use design sheets to develop their ideas and are encouraged to think through the processes for making toys. In two lessons, the quality of practical support provided by parent volunteers was excellent, enabling pupils to receive individual help at the very time they needed it. In some cases however, pupils are not yet secure with the technical language their teachers are asking them to use in the subject.

100 For pupils in Year 3, there are good opportunities for experimentation with different types of materials to understand pneumatic systems. They were seen creating seals to maintain an airtight system and this experimental work aided their understanding of pneumatics. In addition, they were developing making skills which require a precise fit between different materials. By the age of eleven, pupils know and understand about the design process and can make informed decisions about how materials are measured and formed into products. Achievement overall is in line with what is expected nationally.

101 Teachers have sound subject knowledge and create enthusiasm for design and technology in their pupils. There is a good range of materials and equipment available to enable pupils to try things out. Pupils enjoy their lessons and become very involved in practical work. They work well together and help each other with their experimental work. They show enthusiasm, try hard and are keen and eager to do well.

102 Monitoring of the subject is not carried out regularly at present, however the co-ordinator is aware of the strengths of the topics currently being studied. The school does not have a portfolio of moderated work, making it hard for teachers to be consistent when assessing pupils' work. The school is working towards the introduction of the new national programmes for design and technology. As such, planning is still at an early stage of trial and testing and the school has yet to decide which projects are to be finally included. The co-ordinator has sufficient expertise and good ideas to ensure that design and technology can be an interesting part of every pupil's experience.

GEOGRAPHY

103 In each year group, geography is taught in sequence with other subjects at different times of the year. This meant that lessons were seen in only one year group; further evidence was drawn from pupils' previous work and from discussion with the headteacher.

104 Attainment is broadly satisfactory at both key stages. By the age of seven, pupils draw maps of how to get to school, and conduct traffic surveys. In a Year 2 class, good use was made of topical events, for example, the Olympics, to positions countries on a world map. Pupils had studied flags of different countries and used a world map to locate them.

105 At Key Stage 2, the geography curriculum has been well covered with work seen on weather where comparisons were made of climates around the world. This showed pupils acquiring a broad understanding in the subject. Older pupils study contrasting localities of a city and a village, they use map symbols correctly and the work is well presented. Work has been carried out on issues of conservation, for example, saving the rainforests and the preservation of wildlife, particularly the whale.

106 The standard of teaching in the two lessons seen was good. This good teaching was characterised by good planning, good subject understanding and enthusiasm which generated a high level of interest in the pupils. The pupils worked well in pairs in one lesson taking turns and listening to each other respectfully. Both lessons involved the collection of data from questionnaires; in one how they spent their time and where during the holiday and in the other how they spend their time during the day and where. A good demonstration of constructing a bar chart ensured the pupils were successful in the completion of the task.

107 Very good guidance has recently been produced to ensure the geography curriculum matches the requirements of the revised National Curriculum and the subject is well resourced. At present, there is no system for assessment of the subject but this is to be addressed upon the appointment of a new co-ordinator.

HISTORY

108 Standards in history are generally as expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. Evidence from work in previous years shows that, by the age of seven, pupils have developing sense of chronology and of differences in past and present. By the time pupils leave the school, they have covered a reasonable range of topics and in Year 6 show sound knowledge of the aspects they study. For example, they write about events in the 1930's, children's experiences in schools, evacuation advice for parents and the Jarrow march of the unemployed. Pupils take care with individual pieces of work but putting sheets in a folder with other curriculum areas does not help the presentation or give any sense of continuity in the subject.

109 The quality of teaching is satisfactory but there are some weaknesses, particularly in the range of resources used to support teaching and learning. Year 2 pupils find some of the similarities and differences between the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece and today, using photocopied pictures and videos as a sources of information. They work in pairs to look for changes in events, clothing worn and buildings, each pair having a competent writer, which enables most of them to make brief notes about the changes they find. A display in Year 3 class of artefacts from the second world war looks promising as a resource but in general there is a high dependency on worksheets and little evidence of pupils using first-hand material as sources of information.

110 Year 4 pupils showed a great deal of interest in how the Ancient Egyptians preserved their dead especially when their teacher dressed up as *Fahri the Embalmer* and demonstrated the process with the help of a pupil! Good progress was made as a result of clear expectations, pertinent information about the task and paired work that enabled less confident pupils to be supported by

reading partners. Good support for literacy was evident in the exercise given to Year 6 pupils who used scanning techniques to locate different types of information in a text about Victorian schools. Pupils worked well in pairs on the text and concentrated on writing what they found but many found it difficult to assemble their thoughts and to précis information quickly, so their output was less than expected for their age. Some pupils were helped to express their ideas orally to the teacher before writing, a good technique that could be extended by asking pupils to discuss things in pairs. There was good feedback on the scanning process but less reinforcement of what had been learned about the historical events.

111 In the absence of a co-ordinator, the headteacher has reorganised the curriculum to take account of national guidance and the new curriculum requirements. The subject is well-planned and teachers' guidelines are easy to follow but do not yet contain guidance for assessment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

112 Standards are not satisfactory. Most pupils have reasonable computer skills but seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds do not have the breadth of understanding and the range of specific skills expected at these ages. The subject has been in a state of flux recently. The school has been replacing old systems with new ones and a fully equipped ICT suite was being installed during the inspection week.

113 Existing facilities would be sufficient to cover most of the National Curriculum for ICT but, as the subject has lacked direction, teachers have been unsure about how to use the classroom computers to maximum effect. In most classrooms, the computers are used from time-to-time during the day. For example, Year 1 pupils were using an early modelling program to select and move objects around the screen to reinforce letter sounds. This is a good example of ICT being used to support literacy. There are further examples of this through the school, such as the introduction of spreadsheets in Year 5 in connection with a science topic. However, there is no systematic plan to ensure that pupils are taught skills progressively in line with the National Curriculum requirements. This means that learning is very patchy. Most pupils enter and edit text using a word-processor but older pupils cannot mix text and pictures; they use an early painting program but have not used a multi-media package to create their own presentations. Similarly, although some graphs are produced across the school, pupils' data handling skills are weak; some recall using a programmable floor robot but this is not developed to the required level as pupils progress through the school.

114 A new co-ordinator has been appointed this year who has the background and expertise to move the subject forward. Staff are looking forward to being able to use the new facilities, which will include a good range of software and access to the Internet. Further resources will be needed to teach pupils about using sensors to monitor changes, such as differences in light, temperature and sound; equipment for control technology is also needed.

115 The school is well placed to improve teaching and learning. Pupils are keen and teachers have enough confidence in the subject to harness this enthusiasm. The school has identified ICT as a major priority and has developed a five-year plan. The new facilities should reduce some of the previous frustrations and have already given the subject a renewed impetus.

MUSIC

116 Pupils sing well with great enthusiasm. They enjoy opportunities for singing in assemblies, where they join in with great gusto. Pupils also listen well. Year 4 pupils demonstrated this when listening to *A Walk on a Bare Mountain* by Mussorgski; they sustained their attention for the whole of the twelve-minute piece. The teacher had generated a good atmosphere for listening and skilfully questioned the pupils in the follow-up discussion. Most were fully absorbed, using words such as *shocking*, *strict*, *exciting* and *booming* to describe their feelings. Some offered highly imaginative scenarios when the teacher suggested that the music might be a soundtrack to a sequence of events. Older pupils recalled very well the music they had listened to the previous week. They used musical

vocabulary such as *pitch*, *pace*, *texture* and *dynamics* when describing *The Planet Suite* by Holst and used words such as *timeless*, *floating*, *menacing* and *tragic* when interpreting the moods provoked by the music.

117 Most pupils have a sound sense of rhythm. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson taken by the music co-ordinator when pupils very quickly learned new rhythms and followed simple musical notation well. During whole school assemblies and year-group singing, a good sense of rhythm was evident. Although an introduction to composition was observed in Year 6, it was not possible to see more evidence of this aspect of the curriculum. Teachers' plans, however, indicate that all elements of the music curriculum are covered.

118 Teaching in the three lessons observed was good. Although not specialists, most teachers take their own classes for music. They are very well supported by the co-ordinator who provides very practical help, for example, suggestions about how pupils might record sounds in graphical form using various signs and squiggles to signify different instruments.

119 Music plays an important part in the life of the school. It makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Spiritual development is enhanced when pupils are asked to reflect on the beauty of musical pieces and to think how it makes them feel. Moral and social development are encouraged when pupils are trusted to take care of instruments; some have to make decisions about practising instruments or attending the choir when other interests beckon. The range of recordings available provides experience of music from different cultures.

120 The school choir performs very well. Under the effective direction of the music co-ordinator, pupils sing tuneful with good diction and interpret the mood of the songs using dynamics. They provide an example to which other pupils can aspire. Music is further enhanced by visiting performers such as *Batanai Marimba* and *Mujenko*, who give pupils a taste a different cultural heritage. Pupils attend performances outside the school, such as the *World Music Day* at the local secondary school and the film *Fantasia* at the IMAX cinema. During the inspection week, a visiting pianist drew a very positive response as he led pupils from each year group in rehearsing songs for the autumn fete.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

121 Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities for physical education both during school time and as extra-curricular activities. The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and provides good support to other members of staff. Pupils in all age groups achieve well and the school has good facilities for teaching all parts of the National Curriculum. Swimming tuition is provided for pupils in Year 5 by the local education authority.

122 Pupils throughout the school are meeting the standards which are expected of them and there are many junior pupils who exceed these standards. Teaching and learning are generally good, except occasionally when time is not well used. Good opportunities are provided within the lessons for pupils to demonstrate their achievements and to refine and improve their performance. Teachers also provide good examples of skills and techniques and are actively involved in the lessons. From an early age, the pupils are taught to handle equipment safely and their independence is encouraged when moving gymnastic equipment under the teacher's careful guidance. Older pupils generally handle equipment safely, but there is some variation from class to class; guidelines need to ensure that there is consistency in the instructions to both staff and pupils on the safe handling of all PE equipment.

123 The recently completed building works have provided the pupils with an extra space for dance and drama. With this additional small hall space it has been possible for the school to allocate more time to physical education. Dance is currently the focus for development in physical education and the co-ordinator is allocating a large part of this year's resource budget to this area of study. Resources for physical education are generally adequate and have been improved by the school's participation in the *Top Play* and *Top Sport* schemes. Plans are in hand for the purchase of further resources to provide class sets of basic equipment.

124 The co-ordinator is a *Top Sport* trainer and enthusiastically supports other staff in the teaching of physical education as well as carefully monitoring the teaching plans throughout the school. Lessons are also monitored and pupils are consulted about their experiences of PE.

125 Extra-curricular opportunities exist for pupils to become involved in sport. An after-school hockey club was very well attended by sixteen boys and girls who enjoyed a good quality lesson led by a teacher who was well supported by the PE co-ordinator. Other clubs take place for netball and football, and the school participates in the local inter-school leagues for football and netball. Pupils also take part in the inter-school cross-country and athletics events. Tottenham Hotspur football club and the Brazilian School's Soccer Club provide pupils at the school with further opportunities for extra-curricular involvement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

126 Good leadership by an enthusiastic co-ordinator is having a positive effect on the teaching of religious education in the school. The school is following the Enfield Agreed Syllabus which sets out the topics which are to be studied within the six major faiths – Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. The syllabus adequately reflects the multi-faith and multi-racial nature of the school and has been well planned by the co-ordinator to provide a good balance of skills and knowledge in each year group.

127 The co-ordinator supports colleagues by modelling lessons and assisting with planning and resources. The local authority adviser for RE helped in planning the scheme and will be involved in in-service training with the staff during this year. The school has begun to build up a folder of work to indicate attainment at the different levels and help to secure consistent judgements about standards across the school.

128 Some very good teaching was seen in RE. Pupils are ready to discuss thoughts, feelings and perceptions without self-consciousness. A top junior class discussed one of the Old Testament psalms in a very mature manner and pupils in Year 3 were seen actively discussing issues of right and wrong during their study of the Hindu story of *Rama and Sita*. The pupils generally work well together and show respect for each other's beliefs. The work seen and discussions with pupils indicates that the majority of pupils are likely to achieve the expected standards by the end of the infant and junior stages.

129 The quality of teaching and learning is improving. Support is available to the teachers from the well-qualified subject co-ordinator and improvements to the planning have taken place. Resources are adequate and there is a good plan to improve the stock of religious artefacts to support the curriculum.