

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CARPENTERS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stratford, London

LEA area: London Borough of Newham

Unique reference number: 102712

Acting Headteacher: Sheryll Alexander

Reporting inspector: John William Paull  
Rgl's OIN: 22028

Dates of inspection: 10 to 13 December 2001

Inspection number: 230175

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary with nursery  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: Three to 11-year-olds  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Carpenters Road  
Stratford  
London

Postcode: E15 2JQ

Telephone number: 020-8534 4759

Fax number: 020-8534 0791

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Philip Crisp

Date of previous inspection: 23 March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22028	John William Paull	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Design and technology Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9275	Candy Kalms	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20324	Vera Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	
32002	Annette Quelch	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art	
20063	Gerard Slamon	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
28200	Paul Stevens	Team inspector	Science History Special educational needs	
28320	Robert Willey	Team inspector	Physical educational Religious education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Carpenters Primary has 374 three to 11-year-olds on its roll. Currently 65 of these are in the foundation stage (the stage of education before young children begin the National Curriculum). Of these, 52 are in the nursery class and attend for either mornings or afternoons. Another 13 are in the reception class and attend full-time. The school is bigger than most others of its type. It is a community school, situated in Stratford, in the London Borough of Newham. Nearly all of its pupils live fairly close to the school in rented accommodation. A particularly wide range of ethnic groups is represented. The largest of these groups has a black-African heritage. Other sizeable groups originated in the Indian sub-continent, are white or black-Caribbean. Around 70 per cent speak English as an additional language, which is very high compared with other schools, and about half of these are at an early stage of learning English. Currently over 40 per cent of pupils are known to qualify for free school meals, which is above average. A little over 20 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is average. Most of these pupils experience learning difficulties. A few experience severe difficulties. Another significant group has emotional or behavioural difficulty. Eight have a statement of special educational need maintained by the local authority, which is above average. The overall attainment of pupils entering the school is well below average. Assessments that are carried out when pupils enter the school support this judgement. These assessments identify language and literacy as an area of particular need. Many families in the area live in socio-economically deprived circumstances.

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

The school provides a good education and is improving rapidly. The overall attainment of pupils when they leave the school has risen steadily over the past few years, and in 2001, its Year 6 National Curriculum test results leapt sharply. Based on this rise, the school is amongst the year's hundred most improved schools in the country. Behaviour is good and a large majority of pupils are keen to do well. Good teaching supports pupils' learning and makes a major contribution to overall attainment. Bearing in mind that starting points for many pupils are very low when they begin in the nursery, their achievement is good. The school is well managed, and very strongly led by its acting headteacher. Taking all these judgements into account, value for money is good.

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

- Compared with similar schools, its 2001 National Curriculum test results for pupils in Year 6 are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, including the nursery and reception, and consequently pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are good.
- Personal, social and emotional development is very well planned and taught in the nursery and reception, and spiritual, moral and social development is strong through the school.
- The school is well led and managed and its acting headteacher provides a very clear direction for future development.
- The school cares for its pupils' wellbeing and safety very well.

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

- In work that was seen during the inspection, attainment was a little below average in writing in Year 6. Attainments in information and communication technology and history are below national expectations.
- The use of assessment to raise standards is inconsistent in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Attendance is well below the national average for primary schools.

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

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

The school has improved very well since its inspection of March 1998. Improvement is evident in nearly all subjects and aspects of the school's work, with the exception of raising levels of attendance and punctuality. In 1998, several key weaknesses were found. English, mathematics and science are now

co-ordinated well, with good procedures for supporting the quality of teaching and what is taught. The training of staff is now linked to the development of knowledge and skills to improve overall performance. This development is planned systematically and is beginning to have a considerable impact on raising pupils' achievements. The overall quality of teaching is now good at all stages of education. As a result, pupils' learning has improved and by the time they leave the school, overall attainment in National Curriculum tests is well above the average of similar schools. Other improvements include a stronger approach to planning the curriculum, so that what is taught matches more closely to the National Curriculum and meets statutory requirements.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

*The above table compares results at Carpenters School both with national results and with those of similar schools. 'Similar' means similar percentages of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. 'Average point scores' is a method of comparison that takes attainment levels at higher than, normal and lower than expected into account.*

Before 2001, results at the school were well below average. In English in 1999 and 2000, and in mathematics and science in 1999, they were in the bottom five per cent nationally. Targets were exceeded in 2001, and the school achieved its best ever results. Compared with similar schools, these results are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The school's trend is now above the national trend and standards in the inspection confirmed the pattern. Good teaching is leading to attainment that matches overall standards in all three subjects, although it remains slightly below in writing. During the inspection, for example, attainment in mathematics was also close to the national average. Scores in Year 2 National Curriculum tests are low, however, because a large proportion of pupils is at an early stage of learning English. This factor understandably reduces pupils' overall performance in tests. However, in the inspection, attainment was better than in the 2001 results. In the tests, attainment in writing and mathematics was well below national averages, and in the bottom five per cent in reading. Teachers' assessments of science were also well below average. However, pupils' work was below, rather than well below, the averages, except in English, which remained well below. These standards represent good achievement. Many pupils start from a low level, but make good progress owing to good teaching. As those pupils with little English develop better understanding, their progress in all subjects speeds up. By Year 6, attainment matches national expectations. Attainment in all other subjects is around what is expected, except in history, and information and communication technology, in which it is below expectations; and in religious education, where it is above expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good – when asked, pupils say that they like school. They believe that their teachers work hard to help them learn, and co-operate well with them.
Behaviour, in and out of	Good – pupils are polite and behave sensibly in classrooms and around



classrooms	the school. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are supported well and do not interfere significantly with others' learning.
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Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils respect each other; collaborating well on tasks whenever required. Older pupils are very responsible and look after the wellbeing of younger ones. All ages enjoy taking initiatives.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory – attendance is well below the national average and several pupils arrive late in the morning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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 overall quality of teaching through the school is good. It contributes strongly to pupils' learning and to their achievements by the time they leave. Teachers and classroom assistants are sufficiently skilled to support the school's wide range of different ethnic groups and backgrounds, helping them to make good progress from the nursery onwards. Planning, teaching of basic skills, control of pupils, classroom management and teachers' methods are nearly always good, leading to hard work and good concentration amongst pupils so that learning and progress are good. Teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well, leading to good teaching of English and mathematics. Opportunities to emphasise standard forms of written English and to broaden general vocabulary are, however, sometimes missed in other subjects. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is good and they make progress at similar rates to other pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory – what is taught meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and it is relevant to pupils at the school. All areas of learning are taught in the nursery and reception.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good – planning is adapted well for pupils with special needs, so what is taught meets their targets. Knowledgeable learning support assistants are used to support them and they learn successfully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good – the needs of pupils with English as an additional language are well known to teachers, who ensure that they understand what to do to learn successfully. Specialist teachers advise the staff well and are effective. As a result, pupils' progress is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good – spiritual, moral and social provision is taken very seriously. Teachers take opportunities to encourage discussion and reflection about their beliefs and ideas, and to respond thoughtfully to others. Cultural development is planned soundly in, for example, music and art but could make more effective use of pupils' different ethnic backgrounds.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good – ways of looking after pupils and ensuring their wellbeing are very good. Assessment is used well in the planning of literacy, numeracy and science. Monitoring of attendance lacks sufficient rigour.

Responses to questionnaires and comments in the meeting indicate that parents think well of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good – the deputy head very ably supports the acting headteacher, who has excellent plans for the school's future development. The co-ordination of literacy, numeracy and science is strong and policies and aims are reflected well in the school's improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory – governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well, but do not gather sufficient information for themselves to ensure that recent changes, which they support, have the expected outcomes.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good – the acting headteacher, deputy head and key co-ordinators have monitored and improved teaching and what is taught, contributing to improvements in standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good – priorities and targets are appropriate and backed with appropriate funding. The school's money is spent well and accounted efficiently.

Accommodation and learning resources are generally satisfactory. Staffing is good, with plenty of skilful classroom assistants to support the school's high percentage of pupils with English as an additional language or those with special needs.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching is good – their children make good progress and behave well at school.</li> <li>Children work hard and do their best and they grow in maturity and responsibility.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed and they feel comfortable about approaching it.</li> <li>An interesting range of activities is provided outside lessons.</li> <li>Most feel that the school works closely with them and that they get sufficient information about their children's progress.</li> <li>Most feel that amounts of homework are about right.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few feel that the school does not work closely with them and that they do not get sufficient information about progress.</li> </ul>

A high percentage of parents made positive responses to the questionnaires. Overall, inspectors support these positive views wholeheartedly. A few parents queried the amounts of homework that are set. During the inspection, what was set was around what is expected for the age groups. Many parents with English as an additional language suggested that not enough is translated for them, which makes it hard for them to make a contribution to their children's learning. Inspectors found evidence to support this view and the school itself does not disagree and is attempting to find solutions.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of the last inspection, in English, mathematics and science, attainment in National Curriculum tests at the ages of seven and 11 was well below national averages. Furthermore, it was usually below, sometimes well below, the averages of similar schools. In this inspection, attainment was considerably higher and pupils' achievements were good. This good achievement by pupils is particularly impressive, when it is born in mind that many start from low levels of speaking and understanding English.
2. On entry to the nursery, many pupils speak little English, such that overall attainment in communication, language and literacy (which is judged in terms of English) is very low. At first, this lack of English restricts other areas of learning in *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a national document that lays down what children must be taught in nursery and reception classes). Attainment is therefore very low, compared with what is usually found. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very good throughout the Foundation Stage and, as a result, children soon learn that adults in the school care strongly about their wellbeing and progress. Consequently, nearly all settle well and begin to try very hard. Good progress occurs through the nursery and reception classes. By the time, children start the National Curriculum, attainment has risen closer to what is usually found. In personal, social and emotional development, some elements of creative development and physical development, children are close to meeting the early learning goals (statements in *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* that describe what children are usually expected to attain when they leave reception classes). However, despite good teaching, in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world, many children remain well short of reaching the early learning goals. The findings of tests when they start school support these judgements, although some results are close to local averages for the borough. These local averages represent a lower attainment than that usually found nationally.
3. As pupils move on through the school, overall command of English of those who speak it as an additional language improves. Good teaching ensures that they make progress in basic skills. However, the benefit of their improving English is not fully apparent until around Years 4 or 5. As a result, attainment in National Curriculum tests is still low in Year 2.
4. 2001 National Curriculum tests of pupils in Year 2 were well below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. No tests are carried out in science at this age, but the results of Statutory Teachers' Assessments in the subject indicated attainment well below average. Results in Year 2 have been fairly erratic over the past few years, especially in mathematics. Nevertheless, in writing, mathematics and science, more pupils attained the expected levels in both 2000 and 2001 than were reported as doing so in 1998, when the school was last inspected. Results dropped back a little in all subjects in 2001, and in reading, they dropped a little below those of 1998. These variations from year to year occur largely because of the different ranges of ability that occur in each year group. For example, percentages of pupils with special educational needs differ and the proportions of pupils with English at an early stage of learning also vary, causing slightly different effects from one year to the next. Over three years, girls have attained higher results than boys. However, more boys have been identified with special needs, which accounts for the difference. Compared with similar schools, results are below, rather than well below, the relevant averages, except in reading, in which they remain well below. The results of similar schools are grouped on the basis of numbers of pupils who are known to qualify for free school meals. The effect on results of a high percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is therefore not taken into account, reducing the significance of the comparison.
5. As pupils move through the school, good teaching of pupils with English as an additional language continues. Ethnic groups at an early stage of speaking and understanding the language, several of whom are refugee families, are well served by this feature. Good teaching is also consistent in nearly all lessons. This strong teaching has had a big impact on the school's standards. It produces secure learning of basic skills and progress at a good rate. In turn, the

results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests in Year 6 were the school's best ever. These results were amongst the hundred most improved sets of results in the country. In English and science, they were in line with the average of all schools up and down the country, and below average in mathematics. However, in comparison with similar schools, these results were above average in science and mathematics, and well above average in English. The biggest improvement occurred in the number of pupils who attained Level 4 (the level in the National Curriculum that is normally expected at the end of Year 6) in the three tested subjects. However, the proportion of pupils that reached the higher than expected Level 5 was lower than in most other schools. This factor is the main reason that the school's results were not even better. Trends of results in Year 6 have risen in mathematics and science since 1997. In English, they dropped very slightly each year until 2000. In all three subjects, a very sharp rise occurred in 2001. This rise put the school's trend above the national trend for the three subjects taken together. Differences in results between boys and girls and in the results of different ethnic groups are not significant.

6. Teachers are well aware of the specific linguistic needs of pupils, and speak very clearly in lessons, giving patient explanations. Furthermore, relevant assistants are used well to ensure pupils' understanding of English and what is said to them. As a result, attainment in speaking and listening improves well through Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the attainment of many pupils in Year 2 remains understandably well below those normally expected in these aspects of English. Although several pupils are confident in replying to questions and offer experiences and relevant anecdotes in a range of situations, the vocabulary of others is limited and restricts their responses. Good teaching and good provision for groups with English as an additional language ensure that good progress in speaking and listening continues in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, most pupils listen with concentration, questioning each other's ideas and opinions respectfully. They are now skilful listeners and speakers in a group, taking turns well, considering and absorbing others' views when they speak themselves. Higher attaining pupils develop variations of expression and vocabulary to engage the listener's interest.
7. In reading and writing, work is close to the results of the school's 2001 National Curriculum tests. This finding is consistent with the judgement that achievement, by the time pupils leave in Year 6, is good and better than at the time of the last inspection.
8. In Year 2, most pupils read simple words and phrases, employing expression to help listeners understand the meaning. They recognise familiar words in simple texts and express opinions about stories and poems that they hear. However, many are not yet reading fluently by themselves, needing the support of an adult. Higher attaining pupils read with more confidence and understand how to use punctuation to help make sense of what they read. Teaching, however, is good and texts that use an increasingly complex vocabulary are used as pupils move through the school. Pupils learn basic skills thoroughly and enthusiastically. As a result, by the time they are in Year 6, standards are close to average. Most pupils read lengthy and sometimes difficult texts silently, with good concentration and understanding. They identify crucial features, themes and characters, pointing out phrases and sentences to justify their views. Pupils with special educational needs and those at early stages of learning English are similarly well supported by carefully graded material that meets their needs. Little difference is evident in the attainment of pupils from different ethnic groups and backgrounds.
9. By the end of Year 2, attainment in writing is well below average. Most pupils communicate meaning through simple words and phrases, finding the quality of lengthy work difficult to sustain. Only a few higher attainers use a rich and wide vocabulary to grip the interest of an audience. Nevertheless, pupils' handwriting is often good, demonstrating accuracy of shape, consistency of size and joined letters. Pupils also develop awareness of capital letters and full stops. By Year 6, many of the school's pupils with English as an additional language have learnt well enough to reach normally expected levels. Overall attainment is now only a little below average, which again demonstrates that achievement compared with pupils' starting points is good. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and audiences in literacy hours, and examples of good creative writing are evident.
10. Literacy is used well. Pupils write factually and creatively for different purposes; many read both for leisure and to gather factual information, and several have membership of the local public library.



11. In mathematics, during the inspection, standards were below average in Year 2, but close to average by Year 6. These standards are a little higher than those suggested in the 2001 National Curriculum tests. A likely reason for this is that good teaching is continuing to improve standards as pupils move up the school, building further on previous improvement.
12. In Year 2, pupils understand simple calculation, adding and subtracting units from tens and units and they count forwards and backwards in tens. Most pupils are beginning to use and identify mental methods to find answers to simple problems in their heads, such as by adding ten and then adding or taking one away for sums involving 11 and nine respectively. They are beginning to know multiplication facts, involving the two, five and ten tables. They name regular two- and three-dimensional shapes, although they find it difficult to explain differences in the properties of these shapes. However, only a few higher attaining pupils add numbers up to three digits and use the tables successfully to solve problems with money.
13. By Year 6, continued good teaching has resulted in a larger proportion of higher attaining pupils who reach the expected level for their age. Pupils understand and use a variety of mental strategies for calculations in multiplication, division, addition and subtraction. They explain their reasoning successfully with appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Many have quick recall of multiplication tables. Pupils' measurement is generally accurate, and pupils in Year 5 already understood how to find the perimeters of regular shapes. They also read and plot co-ordinates in the first quadrant. Year 6 pupils can recognise and extend number sequences, predicting what future numbers in the sequence might be. They understand and use simple formulae, using brackets. Higher attaining pupils go further. For example, they are beginning to make generalisations in order to develop formulae of their own, and understand and use decimal fractions confidently. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by learning assistants. Their work progresses in smaller steps than that of other pupils, and this method works well. As a result, they learn at a similar rate to other pupils, albeit at a lower level.
14. Numeracy skills, by the time pupils leave for secondary education, are good. For example, older pupils quickly sense the relative sizes of numbers, considering place value as well as the digits. They interpret information from simple charts and graphs and make use of this skill in other subjects, such as science and geography.
15. The results of assessments in English and mathematics are used to set realistic targets that are agreed with the local authority. The school exceeded its 2001 targets and the current work of pupils in Year 6 is on course at least to meet them in 2002.
16. In science, the overall attainment of pupils in Year 2 is below average, although they have a sound awareness of facts about living things. For example, they compare the characteristics of plants and animals in order to put them into simple categories. Their knowledge in other areas of the subject, however, is not as advanced. For example, many of them do not easily explain the effects of heating or cooling on water. In physical processes, although pupils know that electricity is needed to light up bulbs, they find it difficult to explain the significance of "complete circuits". By the age of 11, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding have advanced closely to average, with a significant proportion working at an above average level. Knowledge of living things remains better than other elements of the subject and is good for their age. For example, nearly all pupils know many of the important organs of the human body. Higher attainers explain very clearly and in considerable detail how several of these organs work. Many pupils can explain some of the properties of materials and physical processes. For example, they know when sieving or filtering is appropriate to separate materials, and explain different types of electrical circuits, including their advantages and disadvantages. Pupils with special needs and with English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress through the school. Overall achievement is good.
17. At seven and 11 years old, standards in information and communication technology are below those expected in the National Curriculum. At seven, basic skills are sound, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to refine and apply them across a broad range of situations. By 11 also, attainment is below expected levels and for similar reasons. Although basic skills are sound, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers to control other devices.

Presentation of information does not employ a broad enough range of applications of software, such as combinations of sound, graphics and text.

18. In religious education, seven-year-olds match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus closely. They acquire a sound knowledge of Christianity and several other world religions. The attainment of 11-year-olds is above what is expected in the syllabus. For example, pupils in Year 6 were involved in a very thoughtful discussion on the role of mosques. They listened to each other respectfully and demonstrated considerable knowledge. Pupils of faiths other than Islam contributed their experiences, adding much to what was learnt.
19. Standards in all other subjects are around what is expected, except in history, in which they are below national expectations. At seven years old, the main reason is that many pupils lack the language to compare the past and present convincingly. At 11, pupils do not have sufficient understanding of what constitutes historical evidence, although their factual knowledge of different eras often matches what is normally expected in the National Curriculum.

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

20. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development were positive aspects. Attendance, however, was below average. Attitudes to the school and to learning were generally very good. Pupils demonstrated values that supported good, often very good, behaviour. These strong features have been maintained, although absence remains high compared with national figures. The school's attendance figures are about the same as at the last inspection, so the national improvement has left it well below average now.
21. Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are based on mutual respect and trust. This combination contributes strongly to the school's positive climate for learning.
22. Children settle well into the daily routines of the nursery and reception classes. When they start in the nursery, many children are unused to English as the main language. However, the strong emphasis that is placed on welcoming and settling them overcomes any difficulty. They soon begin to play and work happily with other children, sharing toys and resources and growing in confidence. In the reception class, pupils continue to develop the attitudes that they acquired in the nursery. They enjoy what is provided for them, listen well and make good progress. Throughout the school, these positive attitudes continue. As they grow older, pupils are keen to learn. Nearly all of them are enthusiastic, well motivated and show interest in their lessons. They follow instructions well and as overall confidence in English increases, many demonstrate maturity and confidence, answering teachers' questions and joining in discussions. A good example was when pupils in Year 6 explained their views of some of Charles Dickens's writing.
23. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the building is a strength of the school. It is nearly always good and sometimes it is very good. Pupils respond well to their teachers' frequent uses of praise, helping them to learn securely. They play well together in the playground. Sometimes play is boisterous, but nothing that was nasty or inappropriately aggressive was observed during the inspection. Documentary evidence, however, indicates that occasional incidents of poor behaviour occur. A small number of exclusions for a fixed period of time have been used recently, and these have followed proper consultation.
24. Pupils of both sexes and of different ethnicity and backgrounds mix very well and respect each other's cultural heritage. As a result, pupils co-operate and collaborate well together on joint activities, taking turns sensibly. For example, all pupils in a Year 5 class contributed to an assembly in celebration of Eid.
25. Pupils' personal development is very good. They are friendly and polite to each other and to adults. They respond well to opportunities to carry out tasks in their classrooms and around the school. Older pupils conscientiously look after younger ones. They act as monitors in the library and corridors, supervising around busy or common areas at lunchtime. Many volunteered recently



to become play leaders, helping to organise activities in the playground. The school has a Head Boy and Head Girl, who responsibly carry out duties around the school.

26. Levels of attendance are well below the national average for primary schools and current data shows that it has declined a little further recently. Absence has a negative effect on the learning of those pupils who are often away. If they are not present, gaps in their knowledge occur and it is not easy to make these gaps up. Parents give many different reasons for their children's absences. Some are genuinely caused by pupils' illnesses. However, documentary evidence exists that other absence is due to the relaxed attitudes of a few parents to regular attendance. Data also shows that a very small core of pupils causes the school's poor attendance record, owing to their high rates of absence and unauthorised absences are well above the national average. Poor punctuality is also a problem. A significant number of pupils arrive late.

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

27. The overall quality of teaching is good, which supports the views of nearly all parents who returned questionnaires. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good in all stages of education, with little difference between age groups. This strong overall quality of teaching reflects the expectations of the acting headteacher, the deputy head and senior managers. It represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when a high percentage of the teaching was found to be unsatisfactory, and considerably lower amounts were good or very good.
28. About eight lessons out of every ten during the inspection consisted of teaching that was good or better, including several lessons in which it was very good. The remainder was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was found. The pattern was very similar in the Foundation Stage. Weaknesses in the last inspection, which related to low expectations of pupils' work and unimaginative teaching of younger age groups, have been successfully addressed.
29. Examples of very good or excellent teaching were seen in several classes, spread through the school. During these lessons, pupils benefited significantly from challenging tasks that captured attention and moved on well from previous learning. An example of this was observed in science in Year 5. Pupils were actively involved in researching and discussing the effects of drugs on the body. The lesson was very well planned, allowing choice from different sources and opportunities for pupils to explain findings. As a result, a lively discussion occurred, containing pupils' information about beneficial uses of drugs as medicines compared with harmful abuses. This imaginative teaching is what separated the very good and excellent from what was, nonetheless, satisfactory. The lack of opportunity for pupils to use and combine information from a variety of sources sometimes limited the development of independent learning skills in history.
30. A feature common to the school's good and better teaching is the effective management of pupils. As a result, pupils are secure, motivated and confident. Classroom routines are well established and have a positive effect on learning, as so little time is lost having to tell pupils how to behave. In these lessons, very good relationships contribute to the standards of work that are achieved. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson, pupils' trust of each other and their teacher gave them the confidence to voice their opinions about places of worship and prayer. Similarly, a lesson on personal, social and emotional development in the reception class focused strongly on raising self-esteem. The class teacher's high expectations, after reading *Amazing Grace*, resulted in applying the story's central theme to children in the class. Many understood the idea that they could achieve anything by working hard and setting their mind to it.
31. The overall quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons is good. The school has successfully implemented the recommendations of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are making a strong contribution to the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. Lessons are well planned with tasks that are closely matched to pupils' needs. As a direct result, learning occurs at a good pace. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of these subjects are strong. They know what pupils need to learn, having used assessment of prior learning in their planning. The closing stages of lessons are used to consolidate learning well, providing opportunities for pupils to express their understanding of the lesson and for teachers to assess how well pupils have understood. The teaching of science is also good. Lessons included

a high proportion that was of this quality, many that were very good, a few satisfactory, and none that were unsatisfactory. This teaching was characterised by high expectations, good uses of time and good control and management of pupils. As a result, pupils were attentive, enjoyed the subject and acquired knowledge effectively. In very good lessons and a few that were good, teachers took a lot of care to ensure that pupils used good spoken English. However, enrichment of language and vocabulary was not taught consistently well in subjects across the curriculum. Sometimes pupils were not corrected when they replied in short colloquial sentences or one-word answers. On a few occasions, this was also the case in written work. On other occasions, opportunities to broaden general vocabulary were missed.

32. All other subjects, except information and communication technology, design and technology and history, are taught at least well. In these subjects, teaching is satisfactory although, in information and communication technology, it was often good, sometimes very good, during lessons in the inspection. The main reason for the discrepancy is that, over time, insufficient resources restrict teaching, preventing pupils from receiving sufficient time to consolidate skills enough. In religious education and art, teaching is very good. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching in most subjects was closely linked to teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum and their high levels of expectation of what pupils can achieve. For example, pupils in Year 2 made excellent progress in extended writing, mainly owing to the interesting nature of the work, and the class teacher's high expectations of pupils' concentration. In a small number of otherwise satisfactory lessons, teachers do not have such high expectancy, and do not involve less confident or passive pupils enough. These pupils lose interest and cause minor distractions, interrupting learning, because the teacher has to stop to restore their attention. There was no hint of this happening in a very good Year 5 lesson, where pupils' own experiences were very effectively used to teach pupils about the purpose and symbolism of the Hajj. Pupils were all highly motivated and built well on their prior learning about traditions and beliefs across a wide variety of world religions. Their very good progress was the result of the pace of activities, and carefully planned tasks matched to the needs of pupils who learn at different rates.
33. Teachers make very effective use of support staff and resources. They ensure that teaching assistants and other helpers are aware of the aims of lessons. The consistent and hard-working approach of the support staff effectively helps pupils' learning throughout the school.
34. Support for pupils at the early stages of English and for those with special educational needs is good and is based on good assessments of their requirements for making progress. Consequently, these pupils are well taught, which gives them access to the full curriculum. It ensures progress at rates similar to those of other pupils. Specialist teachers and learning support assistants are involved fully in planning, and they play a valuable role in giving appropriate help and support. Class teachers are aware of the needs of higher attaining pupils and often direct questions to particular individuals in order to deepen and broaden their thinking, especially in literacy and numeracy hours.
35. Teachers' assessment of pupils is strong, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Staff know how to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding through timely observations, conversations and questioning. During written work, most teachers move around the class effectively to monitor progress, correct misunderstandings, present new challenges and draw ideas together. The information and insights that are gained help teachers to adapt their planning of future lessons and to remedy misunderstandings or to extend what has been learnt. As a result, teaching of basic skills is nearly always good. Pupils in a Year 6 lesson made very good gains in explaining their personal responses to literature, because the teaching contained lucid explanations based on very good information about what they needed to know to make progress.
36. Good methods and teaching strategies help pupils to understand what is taught. For example, a learning mentor advises pupils who experience social or emotional difficulties that might stand in the way of learning, helping them to take advantage of what is taught. Her role also brings insights to the teaching staff about these pupils' particular difficulties and needs. Teachers use this information to help these pupils to concentrate and to continue with their education so that their progress is not needlessly interrupted. In nearly all lessons, nearly all pupils apply themselves well, listen attentively and are keen to learn and make progress.

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

37. At the time of the last inspection, what was taught at the school met the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. However, weaknesses in planning were identified. The school's curriculum continues to contain what it should, and with its emphasis on meeting individual needs, it is also relevant to pupils. The school's newly drafted scheme for religious education is very good. It matches the locally agreed syllabus well, but has the flexibility to allow teachers to draw upon the religious experiences of its pupils and the local community. The acting headteacher is planning to use this scheme as a model for further refining the relevance of what is taught in other subjects. The school's former weaknesses have largely been corrected. This improvement is based on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the adoption of many of the recommended schemes of work of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (a government agency that recommends what should be taught and how). Children in the nursery and reception classes are taught the areas of learning that are required in *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a national publication that explains what children should be taught before they begin the National Curriculum).
38. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are planned well to meet the needs of pupils with different prior attainments. In Year 6, booster classes (lessons designed to help pupils catch up when they have fallen behind) operate in English and mathematics from January until May.
39. The time allocated to subjects is similar to that in most schools with the exception of English in Years 1 and 2, which receives more time than is usually the case. This extra allocation is appropriate, given the school's context. In literacy hours, in Years 3 to 6, pupils are often re-grouped into different classes based on their prior attainment in English.
40. The previous report stated that the curriculum was taught in "integrated studies" and that science was not given sufficient emphasis to match its importance. This weakness has clearly been rectified. However, links between subjects are not at present strongly evident in planning, although they were observed in practice in art, design and technology and science. Computers were sometimes used to support learning in other subjects. Nevertheless, senior staff are aware that more could be done to ensure that relevant links are planned and made more explicitly.
41. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. It enables them to participate in all activities. Individual targets are concise and relevant to individuals' needs. Class teachers and learning support assistants, who are well deployed, know the pupils well and support them fully, preparing special resources if necessary to help them understand what is taught. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also very good.
42. Health education and drugs awareness are incorporated within science well, and the school's policy for sex education meets statutory requirements. The governing body reviews provision for sex education and drugs awareness regularly. A well planned personal, health and social education programme, incorporating ideas of citizenship, has been introduced recently. The school uses a number of external agencies and links with the community to support this work, including theatre groups, police liaison officers and the school nurse. A whole school "Health Week" is being planned for the spring.
43. A very good range of activities outside lessons is provided for pupils over the age of seven and girls can join a football club at six. Sports activities are well provided for, as well as clubs for science, design and technology, art and craft and three different dance groups. Most clubs are open to boys and girls or, alternatively, parallel groups exist for each sex. These activities contribute strongly to pupils' personal and social development, especially spiritual and cultural learning. Parents are appreciative of this provision, with 84 per cent of those returning questionnaires making a positive response to the relevant statement, over half agreeing with it strongly.
44. The curriculum is enriched by visits to related places of interest. Recently, for example, these have included The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the Central Mosque and Bethnal Green

Toy Museum. A residential visit for pupils in Year 6 provides a very good focus for learning and makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Plans exist to expand the school's programme further, in order to maximise learning opportunities for all pupils.

45. The school has very good links with the community. These include, for example, the Worshipful Company of Carpenters, local artists and musicians from the local academy and the Discover Centre. The school works closely with a local church and is supported by clergy at harvest and Christmas. Visitors contribute to many aspects of the curriculum. The fire brigade and charity workers are amongst others who have visited during the past year. Good links with other schools and educational institutions have also been established, which include joint training days with local high schools. Lesson observations are regular features of this link and secondary physical education teachers are soon to help with a training session. These links extend to induction arrangements for pupils undertaking secondary transfer at the end of Year 6. Visits to secondary schools and curriculum days help pupils to prepare for the change. A local authority scheme supports links with colleges for student-teachers, which is of benefit both to them and the school. As a result of placements of these students, the school has contact with new ideas and educational research that it can use in its curricular planning. Trainee nursery nurses are also placed at the school. A new link with a school in Cumbria is being mutually developed to provide information about and access to a contrasting geographical location for both schools.
46. Provision for personal development was a strength of the school at the time of the last inspection. The school continues to promote spiritual, moral and social development very well. Cultural development is satisfactory. These aspects influence the school's climate for learning strongly. Daily, well-planned assemblies include opportunities for pupils to reflect on important themes and to pray. Lessons in religious education promote discussions about what can be learnt from world faiths and how such ideas might be applied to pupils' own lives and situations. Time to express thoughts and ideas of wonder about the world is taken in many subjects and situations and pupils are reminded to be thoughtful and sympathetic towards the beliefs and needs of others. They respond to this well, often making supportive comments to each other that in turn add further to the overall quality of provision.
47. Provision for moral development is very good. The school's system of rewards supports good actions and behaviour, as well as academic success. Teachers recommend pupils to receive certificates in a weekly achievement assembly, which promotes self-esteem and respect for the efforts of others. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and older pupils set a very good example. Opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for the wellbeing of younger ones are provided by the school's "play leader" scheme, which also contributes to their social development. Children in the nursery and reception classes are taught to share and to play well together. Moral issues are often the focus of discussions and pupils listen well and show respect for the views of others on such occasions. Pupils demonstrate support for charitable organisations and those in Year 6 attend *Junior Citizens Day*, which is run by the local police.
48. Provision for social development is very good. Pupils in Year 6, assist in many routines that help the school to run smoothly. For example: they assist in the school library; distribute fruit to younger pupils at playtime; tend the school's potted plants; distribute registers, and assist teachers by setting up games equipment. Pupils enjoy these and similar responsibilities and learn to discharge them commendably. As a result, pupils in Year 6 become very good role models for younger pupils. Pupils at all stages of their education are taught to care about their social environment and to value other people's contributions to it. Planned opportunities to collaborate and co-operate in pairs and larger groups occur in, for example, subjects such as music, physical education, science, drama and design and technology. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and take a full and active role in the social life of the school.
49. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Visits and visitors enhance what the school provides. Religious education, art and geography also make good contributions. Younger pupils learn about their school environment, whilst older pupils study the geographical significance of contrasting locations through a residential visit. They learn about different life-styles, other faiths, beliefs, traditions and heritage in religious education, human geography and history. Pupils experience a variety artistic media and learn of famous artists. For example, work in the styles of Van Gogh, Matisse and Picasso was seen during the inspection. The previous report stated that

the diversity of cultures within the school was not used as effectively as it might be. To some extent, this remains the case. Pupils themselves are encouraged to be proud of their cultural backgrounds and heritage, and to share relevant information with each other in lessons. However, opportunities to involve parents in such cultural provision and exchanges of information are not planned as frequently as they might be. While the school has a sound policy document for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, guidance to show how pupils might learn from the richness of their multi-cultural community is limited.

50. The school's climate for learning is very good. It consists of a warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere that engenders a strong sense of loyalty and belonging amongst its pupils. All adults contribute well to this.

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

51. At the time of the last inspection, procedures to ensure pupils' welfare were strong. This aspect remains good. Systems for monitoring attendance, however, have not prevented absences at levels higher than those found nationally. Nevertheless, the school succeeds in its aim to provide a caring and supportive climate of learning for pupils. It works hard to meet their wide variety of personal and educational requirements, including special educational needs and the needs of those for whom English is an additional language.
52. Teachers and other staff are very aware of child protection procedures. The acting headteacher, as the person designated to take responsibility for these matters, has recently arranged training for teaching staff. This training ensures clear understanding of what to do in the event of concerns. These procedures are also expressed clearly in the school's staff handbook. Day to day care is very apparent at the school. First aid arrangements are in place. Minor playground injuries are dealt with appropriately and carefully recorded. Parents are routinely notified if an accident or incident involves a blow to the head. Class lists ensure that members of staff know about pupils with medical conditions. Health and safety are taken seriously, although the school's present policy is out of date and does not match the good practice that occurs. The local authority has recently carried out a formal risk assessment. In addition, frequent checks of the site and premises are carried out informally within the school. However, issues and action taken as a result of these checks are not being recorded systematically enough. Equipment and apparatus undergo regular safety reviews.
53. The school has procedures to monitor attendance and follow up unexplained absences and poor punctuality. This monitoring shows that a few parents take their children on holiday at times when the school is in session. Attendance registers are checked, and telephone calls and letters go to parents who do not explain their children's absences. Pupils with unsatisfactory attendance are identified and monitored. However, although the school works closely with the education welfare officer, these systems are not applied sufficiently rigorously to improve matters. A good feature is that each week attendance certificates are awarded to the class with the best record. Pupils with poor punctuality are being identified and, although parents are notified when their children are frequently late, many parents brought their children to school after the correct time, during the inspection.
54. Pupils' personal development is nurtured well in the caring atmosphere that the school provides. It leads to very good relations between teachers and their pupils. The school's learning mentor provides valuable individual support to pupils whenever necessary. Class teachers, supported by their teacher assistants, know pupils well. They understand individual needs and difficulties and use this knowledge to monitor personal development informally. Any issues that arise are discussed with the acting headteacher. A high value is placed on recognising and rewarding pupils' successes. Achievements, good work and acts of kindness are acknowledged in the weekly *Celebration Assembly*. Records of awards are kept.
55. The school has clear procedures for promoting good behaviour that are not wholly dependent on rewards. The acting headteacher, with very good support from her deputy head, has a commitment to promoting high standards of behaviour and good attitudes amongst pupils. The staff shares this commitment and puts these high expectations into effect. They work hard and

successfully, meeting a range of needs, including those of pupils with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Pupils know the standards of behaviour expected and are fully aware of the consequences of inappropriate actions. When occasional lapses occur, they are brought to the attention of the deputy head or acting headteacher and a note of such incidents is kept. Bullying rarely occurs but pupils agree that the school deals well with the few incidents that do occur. On the whole, pupils work in an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour, and where bullying and harassment are rare.

56. Assessment procedures are good. Effective use is made of information to support future planning. The key issues from the last inspection have been dealt with. Assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are thorough. Pupils' levels of attainment and progress are carefully recorded and used to monitor academic achievements. Achievable targets are set, based on this information, and are shared with pupils and explained to their parents. Systems are, however, less formal in other subjects, especially in cases where changes of co-ordinator have occurred. Teachers' marking of work is good and many examples were found of them writing short-term targets alongside pupils' work to show them how to improve it next time. Teachers are making careful and challenging predictions about pupils' attainment. Standardised national tests are carefully analysed to identify any weaknesses in what is taught. Specific assessments to establish what might help pupils with special educational needs are also carried out. The information is used to write precise targets in their individual plans and to suggest suitable methods of teaching them. Discussions between the co-ordinator for special educational needs and class teachers and assistants ensure that such information is conveyed accurately and acted upon. Similar arrangements are in place for pupils at early stages of learning English.

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

57. Parents' opinions of the school are good. Those who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned questionnaires expressed largely positive views about it. Nearly 90 per cent of all responses to the questionnaire were favourable, including a high proportion who strongly agreed with the statements. Very high proportions agreed that their children like school; that behaviour is good, and the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views. A few parents expressed concerns about amounts of homework. In the main, inspection evidence found homework to be broadly satisfactory.
58. At the time of the last inspection, the school's partnership with parents was sound. Information about the school was appropriate and annual reports on pupils' progress met requirements, although they were sometimes short on details. In general, findings in this inspection are similar.
59. The school has established satisfactory links with parents. Induction procedures are satisfactory and parents are invited to class assemblies. However, the rich variety of ethnicity represented amongst parents is not used as resourcefully as it might be to enhance multi-cultural learning. The school does not systematically translate documents into community languages or provide interpreters for parents whose first language is not English. However, it has encouraged a number of informal arrangements. Although several parents have little involvement in the life of the school, a few were observed during the inspection in some classes. A small parents' group entitled *Helping Hands* organises fund-raising events.
60. From the nursery onwards, pupils are expected to take reading books home regularly. Many parents are involved with their children at home. They share books and listen to them read. For many reasons, however, other parents find it hard to support their children's education, sometimes because lack of English is a barrier. Home and school reading records are in place, although their use by parents and teachers is inconsistent. Other homework such as mathematics and spellings are also set.
61. The information that the school provides for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters and letters about particular matters keep parents informed about school routines, diary dates and events. The prospectus contains basic information about school routines but, together with the governors' annual report, does not include all information required statutorily. Each term, the school provides parents with information about what is to be taught in lessons, and meetings about new initiatives

are occasionally held. For example, a recent meeting was arranged to encourage parents of pupils in Year 1 to help with reading at home. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss their child's progress at a meeting each term. These meetings are well attended. Annual written reports are sound. They set targets for future learning but vary in style and amounts of detail provided.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management were sound and promoted a climate for learning that was based on care for all pupils and ensured good behaviour. The headteacher appreciated members of staff for their work and commitment. The governing body provided support for the headteacher and the school. Weaknesses were found in strategic planning. For example, too few targets in the school's development plan were directly related to raising what were low standards of attainment, although the number of targets that it did contain was over-ambitious. The school's headteacher began to rectify these weaknesses before her absence owing to ill health. For example, attainment began to rise in English, mathematics and science and results in National Curriculum tests improved.
63. In a short time, the acting headteacher has introduced several improvements of her own, building on what had already been begun. She communicates a very strong vision for the school's future and this has contributed much to a strengthening morale. This vision embraces the school's strong climate of care for its pupils' wellbeing and adds to it a commitment to raise attainment as high as it can be. Her excellent leadership with the very able support of her deputy head is providing very good educational direction. Other senior staff and co-ordinators are also effective and knowledgeable in managing what is delegated to them, including budgets for each subject. Provision for special educational needs is co-ordinated well. Records are kept up to date carefully and liaison with local agencies such as educational psychologists is good. Information about pupils' progress towards their targets is communicated to parents at regular review meetings. Similar good management of provision is in place to ensure the progress of pupils with English as an additional language. The school is becoming increasingly successful in achieving its aims and values. For example, its strong performance in the 2001 National Curriculum tests in Year 6 addresses the aim of achieving its best for all pupils.
64. The school's governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. Governors are generally clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and understand that standards can be raised further. They are very supportive of the acting headteacher, sharing her vision of further improvement. Governors have recently been more successful in attracting and appointing permanent teachers to vacant posts. They are highly supportive of the efforts of members of staff and encourage training and professional development that is based on the needs of the school and its pupils. Governors monitor the school's spending carefully and are very clear about its financial position. However, there is less certainty about how to check whether decisions have the effects that are expected. In this respect, they are too dependent on the school's senior staff for information, rather than seeking it for themselves.
65. Systems for monitoring and improving standards, teaching and what is taught are very effective and have improved rapidly. The acting headteacher, deputy head, key co-ordinators and officers of the local authority have all been involved in observing lessons. Feedback and advice on what might be improved is given to teachers after observations have taken place. This approach has clearly been effective, as the overall quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school's strategy for performance management is developing well, and action to set and meet targets for improvement has also been very good. For example, systems for the assessment of pupils' knowledge and progress are used to adapt planning in English, mathematics and science. Use of assessment in this way was a key issue in the last inspection. Furthermore, the school has identified information and communication technology as a subject in need of development. Inspection findings agree with this and the school has been successful in attracting the support of *Wired-up Communities* (a project to improve access to information and communication technology in local communities). Staff training with the help of finance from the New Opportunities Fund is also part of the overall strategy. The whole staff is very committed to improvement and because expectations are realistically high, the school's capacity to improve is

also very strong. Induction arrangements are good. All types of staff in the school are welcoming to newcomers and provide support and information. Formal arrangements to support newly qualified teachers include a mentoring system and support from the local authority. A staff handbook is available for new arrivals. The school is part of a local authority scheme that links it with colleges and university institutes with responsibilities for training new teachers.

66. The school's management of resources, including its funding, is good. Decisions are made based on the use of information about the school's future needs and governors are involved in such decisions. For example, much of the wood in the school's windows was rotten and money had been set aside for replacements. This work has been carried out during the last year and largely accounts for the high carry-forward figures in the budget. Administrative staff are efficient and contribute much to the smooth running of the school. They keep thorough electronic records of what is ordered, and of deliveries and payments. They provide relevant, up to date financial information to staff and governors. Best value is sought by comparing prices in different catalogues; seeking quotations for repairs or maintenance works, and taking relevant professional advice about the quality of proposed purchases. Computerised systems for checking pupils' attendance are also in place. Improvements in academic uses of new technology are planned and the school is ready for the introduction of a new computer suite. Funds provided for specific purposes are recorded under separate budget headings and are spent legitimately, including what is provided for pupils with statements of special need.
67. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are generally adequate. The school has a full complement of teaching staff and co-ordinators take responsibility for subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Learning support staff match pupils' learning needs particularly well. Owing to the high percentage of pupils with English as an additional language, specialist teachers and classroom assistants are employed to support and advise in this area. These members of staff are knowledgeable and effective. Other ancillary assistants are available to support pupils with special educational needs and are similarly effective. Accommodation inside and outside the building is adequate for teaching the school's curriculum and plans for further improvement have been made. However, the nursery contains no space for the staff to keep records or to interview parents and no separate quiet area is available when needed. The caretaker works very well with the teaching staff and helps to ensure that buildings are clean and well maintained. Availability and general quality of learning resources are at least at sound levels in all subjects, except information and communication technology. However, this deficiency is on the point of being rectified. Resources are generally well kept, and stored in classrooms, or central cupboards where they are available to all staff.

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

68. Although standards at the school have risen considerably, its improvement plan identifies attainment as a focus for further development. The school has correctly identified information and communication technology as a subject for development. Members of staff are soon to begin a training programme funded by *The New Opportunities Fund* (money provided from the National Lottery), and the school is part of *Wired-up Communities*. These initiatives have both been set up to support improvements in the subject. The headteacher and governors are also aware that pupils' attendance is not good enough, and that the results of assessment are used inconsistently in some subjects to help with planning work.

The headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) raise attainment, especially in English, information and communication technology and history, by:
- a) broadening pupils' general vocabulary in literacy hours and in other subjects (see paragraphs 6, 9, 31, 73, 129 and 134);
  - b) placing more emphasis on standard forms of spoken and written English in all subjects (paragraphs 31, 90, 93, 129 and 134);
  - c) improving spelling, particularly in younger age groups (see paragraph 93);



- d) providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to acquire and use advanced skills in information and communication technology (see paragraphs 17, 125, 137 and 143);
  - e) setting up the new computer suite as quickly as possible (see paragraphs 17 and 136);
  - f) developing a specific vocabulary to help compare the past with the present (see paragraphs 19 and 132);
  - g) increasing pupils' knowledge of what constitutes historical evidence and how to use it (see paragraphs 19, 29 and 133);
- (2) In those subjects where it is not used consistently, improve the use of monitoring and assessment to plan for higher standards (see paragraphs 56, 125, 130, 135 and 145).
- (3) Raise attendance closer to the national average for primary schools and improve pupils' punctuality, by:
- a) ensuring that all parents understand the consequences of poor attendance on their children's learning (see paragraphs 20 and 53);
  - b) following up absences more quickly and rigorously (see paragraph 53);
  - c) bringing to parents' notice that authorised absences for holidays are entirely at the school's discretion, not the parents' (see paragraphs 26 and 53);
  - d) introducing more rigorous systems at the start of the day to promote arrival on time (see paragraphs 26 and 53).

**Other less important issues that governors might wish to include in an action plan**

1. Improve younger pupils' grasp of shape and space (see paragraphs 12 and 104).
2. Improve younger pupils' scientific understanding (see paragraphs 16 and 111).
3. Introduce formal arrangements to translate documents into languages that pupils speak at home (see paragraph 59).
4. Improve accommodation in the nursery (see paragraphs 67 and 73).
5. Invite parents to contribute to the school's provision for multi-cultural education whenever possible and appropriate (see paragraphs 49, 59, 120, and 157).
6. Ensure that governors have formalised systems of their own for gathering information about the school and its performance (see paragraph 64).



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	27	29	16	0	0	0
Percentage	6	35	38	21	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	322
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	168

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	77

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	272

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	58
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	46

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	28	28	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	22
	Girls	19	18	24
	Total	34	34	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (78)	61 (72)	82 (85)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	12
	Girls	19	17	14
	Total	32	30	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (65)	54 (72)	46 (74)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	27	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	11	17
	Girls	27	18	26
	Total	41	29	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (47)	64 (63)	96 (72)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	10	14
	Girls	14	19	19
	Total	19	29	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (28)	64 (27)	73 (56)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	28
Black – African heritage	90
Black – other	14
Indian	10
Pakistani	8
Bangladeshi	71
Chinese	4
White	53
Any other minority ethnic group	31

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.6
Average class size	24.8

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

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	488

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	13*

*\*This figure includes teachers appointed to new posts.*

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2
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	£
Total income	831,919
Total expenditure	885,876
Expenditure per pupil	2,546
Balance brought forward from previous year	111,567
Balance carried forward to next year	57,610*

*\*The carry-forward figure has largely paid for the replacement of windows.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	374
Number of questionnaires returned	107

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	16	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	56	34	3	4	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	31	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	33	13	8	1
The teaching is good.	64	29	2	3	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	35	10	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	33	7	1	9
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	27	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	50	35	8	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	52	37	2	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	31	3	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	32	5	3	8

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

A high percentage of parents made positive responses to the questionnaires, including over half who indicated strong agreement with the questions. Overall, inspectors support these positive views wholeheartedly. A few parents queried the amounts of homework that are set. During the inspection, what was set was around what is expected for the age groups. Some parents with English as an additional language suggested that not enough is translated for them, which makes it hard to make a contribution to their children's learning. Inspectors found evidence to support this view and the school itself does not disagree and is attempting to find solutions.

## **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**

69. Currently, 52 children attend for either a morning or an afternoon session in the nursery. Another 13 are in a full-time reception class. The number of children in reception is due to rise in January.
70. Since the last inspection, several improvements of provision for children before they begin the National Curriculum have been introduced. The most important of these concerns the quality of teaching. Planning and what was expected of children were not always appropriate and some sessions were taught unsatisfactorily. This is no longer the case and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection. In fact, the overall quality of teaching was good in both the nursery and reception classes. It included some very good teaching in the reception. Features that were criticised in the last report are now good. For example, planning is firmly based on *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage*. Teachers demonstrate good understanding of both these documents and of the age group. As a result, the quality of learning has improved. Many children begin the school with particular personal, social and linguistic needs. For example, many are at an early stage of acquiring English. Adults in the nursery and reception are very aware of this. They employ a wide range of strategies to ensure that children feel cared for, as it could otherwise be daunting for them to find that the main language of conversation is different from that at home. Time is taken to make sure that they understand daily routines and requirements. This level of care helps children to grow in confidence and security, and nearly all settle well and become eager to learn.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

71. Overall, children's personal and social development, compared with what is usually found, is undeveloped when they enter the nursery. Children come from many different backgrounds and ethnic groups. Their experiences and expectations, prior to entering, are wide ranging. For example, while several children respond in ways that are normally expected, some are very quiet and speak little, others do not understand English, and still others find it hard to sit still and listen for any extended time. Adults in the nursery work hard to ensure that all children understand what is required of them at school. Good teaching including appropriate praise and encouragement results in good progress and sensible social routines are established. For example, story time in the nursery is usually at the end of sessions. Pupils with little English quickly understand that these occasions are times when they should co-operate by sitting together with other children and listening. Consequently, they also pick up the teacher's English when she says, "Story time is listening time". In this way, they learn the required social behaviour, where to sit and what to do. Good teaching continues in the reception. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all children are likely to be close to the early learning goals (descriptions of what is expected nationally of children of this age) in this important area of learning. For example, in a very good lesson in the reception class, children discussed the story, *Amazing Grace*. They responded confidently, giving their own views and showing interest in what others said. They co-operated well, taking turns with each other. Children in the nursery and reception enjoy carrying out helpful acts for their teachers. They come to the front and hold up resources and show kindness in similar ways.
72. Teachers, nursery nurses and teacher assistants in both classes provide good examples. They co-operate with each other, and consistently speak with respect to the children. This good provision sets the tone for personal development. The children learn well from it. In the nursery, they acquire good habits. In reception, they begin to listen and concentrate well for their age.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

73. For varied reasons, many children enter the nursery with low communication skills, often using one-word answers to questions or short, colloquial statements. Other children, for whom English



is not the language spoken at home, have a very limited vocabulary. Overall attainment on entry to the nursery is therefore very low. Children make good progress in relation to these low starting points. Teaching and support are good, and children with English as an additional language make progress at rates similar to others. Confidence to speak in front of the class grows steadily. During part of a lesson that focused on sounds, the teacher used a range of methods and approaches. However, sometimes opportunities were missed to extend children's vocabulary by questioning them about particular words and teaching them more precise alternatives to enrich their vocabulary. Children are beginning to show an interest in books and stories and listen well when their teacher or nursery nurse reads to them. A few children were seen making labels, writing their own names. Work of this kind is hampered because the nursery lacks a separate quiet area, where children can concentrate without the distraction of others involved in livelier activities around the room.

74. Good teaching continues in the reception class and builds well on what has been learnt previously. Nevertheless, by the time children begin the National Curriculum in Year 1, attainment remains low. Children have had insufficient time in school to reach the standards described in the early learning goals. Tests when children start school support this judgement, showing that many children score at low levels in elements related to language and literacy. However, adapted literacy hours are employed to focus on reading and writing skills. For example, in a good lesson that used *Billy Goats Gruff* as a text, pupils were shown how to form the word "can", and practised writing it. Single consonants such as 'c', 't' and 'b' and their sounds were also taught effectively. Several children are beginning to understand that print conveys meaning, and that in English it goes from left to right, and top to bottom. Higher attaining children demonstrated that they could remember stories that they hear and re-tell them in the correct sequence.
75. When they write, children are beginning to show awareness of letters and a few higher attainers write simple sentences. Others make marks successfully on paper when prompted to do so. Despite good teaching, many remain at an earlier stage of development, and writing consequently requires strong adult support.
76. Teaching is good in both nursery and reception. It is sometimes very good in reception. In both classes, it is based on good knowledge of what each child can do and should do next and good individual support for those at an early stage of learning English. Teachers introduce the sounds of letters systematically. Children with special needs are also taught well. Planning is adapted to meet individual's learning requirements.

### **Mathematical development**

77. Children's attainment in mathematical development is well below what is normally found in nursery and reception classes. In the nursery, for example, when using balls and plates to count, several pupils were accurate only as far as three and others missed numbers out. Nevertheless, the teacher's methods were good. She assessed the situation quickly and taught the pupils in very small groups. As a result, they were able to concentrate very carefully for the short periods of time involved. They made good progress in understanding how to use numbers up to five. A computer was used well to teach the idea of "more than" by comparing fish on the screen with a number up to five. Good teaching continues in the reception class, where mathematical development is taught using methods adapted from the National Numeracy Project. This teaching helps to familiarise pupils with what will follow when they begin the National Curriculum. Nonetheless, overall attainment is likely to be well below what is described in the early learning goals when children enter Year 1. For example, in a very good lesson, they were beginning to understand simple bonds, such as four and one, or three and two. However, very few were able to go beyond five, and several struggled unless supported by an adult. Very good teaching continued in the area outside. Children used wet brushes and sponges to consolidate their learning, writing numbers and bonds on a part of the wall reserved for this purpose. A large carpet, with numbers woven into it, was available for them to check that what they wrote was correct. In another lesson, of similar very good quality, children demonstrated recognition of numbers up to ten. However, they did not use the higher numbers to count, and a few struggled after about six. Children know the names of simple regular shapes and sort objects according to colour, size and similar features.

78. Teaching of mathematical development is good in the nursery and reception. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the age group is good and resources are used well to help children learn and to acquire skills. Planning is thorough and information gained from assessments is used to adapt work to individuals' needs. Nursery nurses and other assistants also know the children well and support the learning of groups. These groups include children who need more help and explanation, especially those with restricted English.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

79. Most children enter the nursery class with a very basic general knowledge. However, good teaching helps them to build on it well. They learn about the area and community around the school. On entering reception, most children are beginning to understand ideas such as "this country" and "other places a long way away." They use toys that help them to understand different means of transport, such as roads and rail, and they build layouts and move vehicles along them. In the reception, simple ideas about plans and pictures of places are introduced. In both the nursery and reception, a lot of good planning goes into developing children's interest in plants and animals. Opportunities are provided for them to plant seeds and to watch them grow.
80. Information and communication technology was seen in use in both classes. Children are developing skills in using a mouse and keyboard. However, in the nursery, an unsupervised pair found it difficult to click accurately on the required area of the screen, needing a lot of practice to indicate their choices correctly. When a parent sat with children, understanding of the program, which supported mathematics, was clearly better.
81. Teaching is good in nursery and reception classes. It supports children's needs well. Planning is good in both classes and adults are generally used well to ensure that children know what to do to learn effectively. This support extends to those with English as an additional language, and to those who find their work difficult. In both classes, opportunities were occasionally missed to develop children's general vocabulary as situations arose: for example, by talking about different types of vehicle, their uses and what goods they might carry. However, children are encouraged fully to choose relevant tools, resources, equipment and materials to extend their knowledge of the world and how things work.

### **Physical development**

82. Children in the nursery have access to a good number of wheeled toys, as well as apparatus for climbing and crawling through. This apparatus is mounted invitingly on 'safer-surfacing', which makes it appear exciting and interesting to use. When they exercise on this equipment the teacher, nursery nurse or another adult supervises well, encouraging them to use it creatively. The children in reception have access to a good range of small games equipment, including bats and balls, as well as further space outside.
83. Children use a range of small hand-tools, such as scissors, pencils, crayons, rollers and brushes, which help them to refine movements of their fingers and hands when they make models or create pictures. By the time children begin the National Curriculum, nearly all are close to the learning goals for physical development.
84. Teaching is good. Attention is drawn to awareness of others and the need for safety and good use of space. For this reason, such skills develop well.

### **Creative development**

85. In creative development, by the time they enter Year 1, most children reach what is expected in the early learning goals. In both classes, good teaching, supported well by a nursery nurse and other assistants, provides a range of opportunities to paint, draw and explore texture and shade. Children also have opportunities for three-dimensional art, using, for example, malleable materials, recycled materials and card. Some of the children in the nursery were observed making Christmas cards to take home, which they decorated themselves. This work supported skills in literacy, when children attempted to copy the words "Merry Christmas" on to their cards. In nursery and reception, teachers employ a range of rhymes, rhythms, songs and chants, helping

children to acquire early musical skills. These songs and chants often support work in number. In the reception class, children also use a range of artistic techniques successfully, drawing and colouring from still-life, making simple patterns and using a variety of papers for collage.

86. Teaching of creative development is good in both nursery and reception. It is based on careful planning and uses of resources and materials that encourage children's efforts to learn. Praise is used consistently and other adults are deployed well to ensure that children are pleased with their results. In this way, their self-esteem is supported and maintained. Teachers and assistants plan well together and ensure that children with English at an early stage know what to do and how to do it.

## **ENGLISH**

87. Standards are well below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing for pupils currently in Year 2, and are as expected nationally for pupils in Year 6. This represents good progress and achievement. Good teaching and learning occur throughout the school. Attainment in the younger classes does not match the quality of teaching because many pupils begin the National Curriculum with only a little understanding of English. They have not had sufficient time to acquire enough understanding by the end of Year 2. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven, the percentage reaching the expected level was well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. In the 2001 tests of 11-year-olds, attainment was in line with the national average, and well above the average of similar schools. In fact, 92 per cent of pupils attained Level 4 (the level for their age in the National Curriculum), compared with only 74 per cent in the country as a whole. However, only 16 per cent of pupils reached the higher Level 5 at the school, whereas 28 per cent did so nationally. This discrepancy between performances at the normal and higher levels is the reason that the school's overall standard was not even higher.
88. Test results and inspection findings indicate considerable improvements in teaching, overall attainment and pupils' achievements since the last inspection. At that time, many pupils left the school in Year 6 below the expected levels in reading and writing. The quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Standards have improved because the quality of teaching has improved throughout the school and, as a result, pupils are now learning a lot more effectively. This has been brought about with the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and its effective use to ensure that basic skills are securely acquired. Other factors contributing to improvements are thorough monitoring of teaching and use of the information that has been gathered to target any weaknesses with support and training. The school is also now better at analysing its test results to identify weaknesses in pupils' work and to correct them. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are taught English in classes that have been re-grouped according to prior attainment. In consequence, teaching of basic skills of reading and writing has been intensified, tailoring it to the needs of these different groups. As a result, pupils are making better progress in reading and writing than they were. In Year 2, in an excellent writing lesson, pupils were shown how to prepare a report on Scotland. The teacher made very effective links with work in geography to demonstrate factual writing for a purpose. As a result, pupils made very clear progress in sentence construction and in considering the use of precise adjectives that were referred to as "super adjectives". However, such enrichment of language was not always taught as well as this and opportunities to broaden general vocabulary were sometimes missed in subjects across the curriculum.
89. The overall quality of teaching was good in the literacy lessons that were observed. A high proportion was also very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Other English lessons that did not closely follow the pattern of literacy hours were also observed. The quality of teaching in these was similarly good. As a result, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Although they make good progress in the nursery and reception in communication, language and literacy, overall standards in speaking, reading and writing are very low when pupils begin Year 1. Despite further good progress in Years 1 and 2, pupils' attainment remains well below average at around the age of seven.
90. Most pupils speak their mother tongue at home and in the local community, and so have much less contact with spoken English than generally found. Across the school, pupils learn to listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Teachers are largely successful in engaging the interest of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds during whole class sessions. They are very aware of the specific needs of pupils. As a result, they speak very clearly in lessons, and give

patient explanations. In nearly all lessons, teachers hold pupils' attention well and challenge their understanding through questions that are directed to individuals. This good method ensures that pupils join in when reading or discussing a shared text. Teachers demonstrate their care and respect for their pupils' efforts, listening carefully to them and appreciating their answers. In the very good and most good lessons, teachers are aware of the constant need to extend pupils linguistically. In these lessons, teachers insist routinely that pupils' ideas be expressed in complete sentences rather than colloquial phrases or one-word answers. This feature is conversely the case in otherwise satisfactory lessons and occasionally even in good ones. A very good example, however, was seen in a Year 6 lesson on the works of Charles Dickens. Pupils were expected to use their "classroom voice", which required them to give extended and reasoned answers to questions about Pip's character and to say whether they would have liked him. A feature of many good lessons was to allow pupils the time to discuss in pairs what they already knew. For example, in a lesson on direct speech, pupils shared their prior knowledge in this way. It should be born in mind that a majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, and pupils' growing confidence in speaking English is, in no small part, a result of very good relationships established between teachers and pupils. Because pupils trust their teachers and each other, they are willing to attempt speech even when their command of the words is limited. By the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils speak and listen thoughtfully, questioning others' ideas and opinions responsively and sensitively and thus reach nationally expected standards. A few higher attaining pupils develop variation of expression and vocabulary to engage the listener's interest.

91. Throughout the school, the growing enthusiasm that pupils show for reading is a strength and supports their learning. Reading development is supported by progressively graded reading materials and by careful monitoring of pupils' progress through regular reading tests. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are systematically taught the relationship between letters and sounds, so that they make good progress. By the age of seven, most read simple words and phrases, employing this skill to enhance meaning. They recognise familiar words in simple reading matter and express opinions about aspects of stories and poems. Higher attaining pupils read with more expression and understand how to use punctuation, such as speech marks, as a guide to phrasing. Teachers employ an interesting range of strategies to motivate pupils' interest in books and reading. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 1 literacy lesson. Pupils were asked to discuss the feelings of characters in *Owl Babies*. They were highly motivated and their answers showed how much they had enjoyed the story and how well they had listened. Good management of pupils and their resulting good behaviour allow teachers and support staff to focus effectively on individual groups of readers. Visits to the local library help to increase pupils' interest in books.
92. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read longer texts silently, with good concentration and understanding. Higher attaining pupils show good interest in and understanding of a variety of texts, identifying crucial features, themes and characters. They select phrases and sentences in the text to justify their views about novels such as *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*. In addition to Charles Dickens, they are introduced to the works of other well-known authors and playwrights, such as Shakespeare, and to classic novels such as *Jane Eyre*, *Treasure Island* and *Robinson Crusoe*. This provision widens pupils' reading experiences and increases their interest in books. Pupils have good attitudes to reading and many in the older age groups are members of their local library and borrow regularly. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are at early stages of acquiring English are well supported by carefully graded texts that match their reading levels. Sets of good quality children's novels are available in classrooms and pupils are happy with this range. Pupils' library skills, however, are not as well advanced as they might be. Opportunities are missed to develop research skills by showing pupils how to find non-fiction for independent study across the curriculum.
93. A strong feature of what is taught has been the increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences that are found for writing. Good examples of reasons to write are found in all year groups. This feature is a good improvement since the last inspection when the range of pupils' writing was too narrow. Now, pupils produce poetry, plays, stories, letters, instructions and reports. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils can explain differences between factual writing and how meaning is expressed creatively. Nevertheless, writing of pupils of this age is characterised by simple words and phrases, while only those of higher attainment employ a rich vocabulary. Handwriting of most pupils demonstrates accurate form, consistent size and it is usually joined. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the use of punctuation and most

know that a sentence begins with a capital letter, ends with a full stop and that it must make sense. Spelling is not as advanced as other aspects. Short familiar words are usually phonetically correct, but words that do not follow normal patterns are often inaccurate.

94. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to learn the craft of writing. They use the quality texts that they read to model what they write themselves. As pupils' spoken English gets better, so their written work grows in imagination and use of language. By Year 4 or 5, work on display and in exercise books is imaginative. As they grow older, pupils begin to use words for effect. For example, a Year 5 pupil wrote, "...Jim and Jareth walked cautiously into the creepy house. A dark shadow was lurking inside". Teachers encourage pupils to consider characterisation and to use adjectives with nouns, and adverbs with verbs so that writing is more interesting. They teach pupils to plan their writing, to evaluate what is written and to make suggestions to improve it. These good methods give pupils a good knowledge of their own learning.
95. Pupils' writing is a little below average. Handwriting and spelling are improved through regular practice. By the age of 11, pupils' handwriting is joined, legible, clear and fluent. Most pupils use capital letters, full stops, speech marks and question marks correctly. Only a few higher attaining pupils consistently structure sentences into paragraphs, although several are beginning to attempt to do so. Writing in subjects such as history and science does not make a consistent contribution to factual writing. The very good behaviour of most pupils in lessons strongly supports their learning. The subject gives good support to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They write about and discuss moral and social issues, and reflect upon the feelings of different characters in good quality, cultural texts. Expectations for average and higher attaining pupils are high, and teachers' planning gives consideration to written tasks that challenge them to make the progress of which they are capable. All pupils, with help from class teachers, set realistic targets for their own improvement. These targets are placed on their desks, and teachers generally refer to them as and when necessary.
96. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are at the early stages of learning English are fully included in lessons because support for them is good. Specialist teachers and assistants are well trained, prepared and available to support pupils directly and to advise class teachers about ways of helping these pupils. The most convincing measure of the school's success is the number of pupils who start with very low levels of attainment in English, but who leave, matching the expected standards, in Year 6.
97. English is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator whose own teaching of the subject is very good. She has only recently taken responsibility for English and has not herself been involved in direct monitoring of teaching. She has identified this as necessary, so as to ensure consistency of practice. Procedures for assessment are good and are applied well to adapt the planning of what is taught. Information and communication technology, especially word processing, is improving within English and plans exist to increase its frequency and quality of use. The curriculum is effectively enriched through visits and visitors. Very good examples were attendance of a workshop on *Cinderella* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and visitors from an African theatre group. Teachers make sound use of homework to consolidate pupils' learning and to develop their basic skills.

### **Provision for pupils with English as an additional language**

98. Over 70 per cent of pupils come from homes where English is an additional language. Progress in language development made by these pupils is good. As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, most of them attain expected standards for their age in English, mathematics and science. This achievement reflects how well the school provides for them.
99. Teaching and pupils' learning are well organised throughout the school. Support staff are well trained and are efficiently used by class teachers. The co-ordinator, who is a recent appointment, has appropriate plans to play a more active role in lessons. Class teachers are aware of the specific needs of pupils with English as an additional language and the co-ordinator keeps them well informed of methods and developments.

100. Good support and teaching ensure pupils' full and equal access to the National Curriculum. Planning is undertaken in partnership with class teachers to meet pupils' needs. It ensures consistent links between mainstream staff, outside agencies and the support team. As a result, a consistent approach ensures clear progress as pupils move through the school. Pupils from different ethnic groups, including native white pupils, mix and play together well. This factor helps pupils at an early stage of English to acquire colloquial language, which in turn means that they can join in day to day talk, conversation and social activity.
101. The co-ordinator has drawn up a clear and precise action plan, which will further strengthen this important aspect of the school's work. Assessment data is well used to assess the stage of English acquisition of pupils who join the school. Staff with ability to speak pupils' home languages are, as far as possible, used to keep parents informed about their children's progress and the work of the school. The school is justifiably proud of the achievements of all of its pupils, including those with English as an additional language.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in National Curriculum tests was well below average. Results of National Curriculum tests in 2001 showed large gains in both age groups in the numbers of pupils reaching the expected level. Although the school's scores remain well below the national average for pupils in Year 2, the gap between the national figure and the school's average has narrowed considerably. In Year 6, the school's 2001 results were below average, rather than well below, when compared with the national figure. Furthermore, the school's general trend has been upward over the last four years. Compared with often low starting points when pupils first enter the school, these results demonstrate good achievement. Furthermore, results in Year 6 are above average in comparison with similar schools. Differences in the performance of boys and girls are more likely to reflect the characteristics of successive year groups than differences of treatment. For example, results show that in some groups one gender performs better, and then the reverse is so in another. No significant differences were found between performances of different ethnic groups, and pupils with English as an additional language make progress at similar rates to other pupils. They achieved well in the 2001 tests in Year 6.
103. During the inspection, attainment in mathematics was below average in the younger age group (judged in Year 2) and around average in Year 6, which confirms continued improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are learning well because the overall quality of teaching has improved to good from mostly satisfactory, which was the finding in the 1998 inspection.
104. Younger pupils were observed carrying out simple calculations successfully, adding and subtracting digits to and from numbers with two digits. They counted forwards and backwards in tens. However, standards were below average, as many pupils found these tasks difficult without adult help. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils understood how to split seven into three smaller numbers in their heads. In a Year 2 lesson, they combined numbers mentally up to twenty, with a few higher attainers going further. Pupils are beginning to use mental strategies to find answers to problems that include the use of money. Most pupils in Year 2 identify multiples of 2, 5 and 10; know about doubling, and the method of adding ten and plus or minus one for operations involving eleven and nine respectively. They study number patterns and sequences and readily identify odd and even numbers. Work in shape and space is a little below average. Although most pupils could name regular two and three-dimensional shapes, familiarity with their properties or ideas of faces, edges and surfaces were not understood securely. Data-handling activities include the use of Venn and Carroll diagrams to sort numbers. This method was observed in sorting information in a geography lesson, providing a good example of the use of numeracy in another subject. Pupils successfully use simple lists, charts and block graphs to communicate findings. Pupils are developing their mathematical vocabulary and in a Year 2 lesson were able to explain their operations simply and clearly. In the same lesson, the teacher used skilful questioning to help higher attaining pupils take understanding further.
105. Standards of attainment by Year 6 are broadly average. Learning in classes for older pupils is strong owing to consistently good teaching, which also promotes good attitudes amongst pupils. Pupils' calculation grows in accuracy and they use a variety of mental strategies. In Year 6, they understand the use of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, solving problems that often

involve money. Many of them explain their reasoning well and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Most pupils have sound knowledge of multiplication tables and multiply two-digit numbers accurately by single digits. A few higher attaining pupils take this work further, when they multiply numbers up to a thousand by two-digit numbers. Several pupils know how to use decimal points to help with multiplication and division. Nearly all of them understand simple fractions and relate them to proportions of shapes as well as of numbers. Pupils measure accurately and use a variety of relevant units. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils used a range of instruments to draw and measure angles when constructing triangles. Nearly all pupils know how to find perimeters of regular shapes. Nearly all older pupils present and interpret information well, using a range of charts, graphs and tables. In a particularly successful lesson in Year 3, pupils planned and completed a frequency table. They understood how to collect and record data. They interpreted and questioned the data and made good sense of the results. By Year 6, pupils recognise and extend number sequences. Higher attainers know how to predict future numbers, beyond just the next number, in these sequences. They are beginning to develop simple formulae with brackets to show the general rule for answering such problems. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well throughout the school. Their individual education plans are precise and many contain relevant mathematical targets. These inform teachers and assistants well, so pupils receive the teaching that is required to learn. As a result, they make progress at rates similar to other pupils. Teachers' support for pupils with English as an additional language is effective and expertise in dealing with them is good. For example, explanations are made slowly and clearly, helping them to understand and to follow what to do. When English is at an early stage, learning assistants usually support them in a group within classrooms, ensuring that they have the confidence to carry out tasks and make good progress.

106. Nearly all pupils enjoy numeracy lessons, which follow the nationally recommended pattern and promote good learning opportunities. They enjoy using their personal whiteboards to display answers in oral sessions. They understand relative sizes of numbers and interpret simple graphs and charts to glean information when situations arise. The use of measurement was seen in other subjects, such as geography, science and design and technology. Attitudes to numeracy are good and pupils co-operate well with each other and with teachers. They make considerable efforts to learn. Written work is mostly neat and tidy.
107. Teaching is good. In a high proportion of observed lessons, it was of this quality, including some in which it was very good or excellent. The remainder was satisfactory, with no unsatisfactory teaching. In the good and very good teaching, questioning directed to particular pupils helped to find out whether or not they had properly understood. Where understanding had not been mastered, teaching was adjusted accordingly. These skilful methods made a very effective contribution to pupils' learning. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, however, this skill was not as apparent and pupils' quiet attentiveness might be mistaken as evidence of understanding. As a result, average and low attainers without identified special needs were sometimes not supported early enough in lessons and made unnecessary errors. In several lessons, teachers used information technology to support work. Usually this focused on simple arithmetic or data-handling. Planning indicates that, when new facilities are introduced, it will be used further. Before the inspection, a few parents were concerned that high attainers might be left to get on by themselves, without sufficient teaching. Inspectors saw little evidence of this. High attainers particularly enjoyed the challenge that their work offered.
108. The deputy head teacher provides very good leadership and direction. Strategic planning and priorities are clearly determined. Assessment and monitoring of progress are good, and include systematic half-termly tasks. Teachers submit weekly lesson plans, and they welcome opportunities to develop teaching strategies. Learning resources and accommodation are adequate and used effectively.

## **SCIENCE**

109. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment is below average. Nevertheless, pupils' achievements are good, because many of them have made good progress from a low starting point on entry to the school.



110. Current attainment in Year 6 is broadly average. Standards have therefore continued to improve. These improvements reflect the 2001 National Curriculum tests, in which the school's results are above those of similar schools. Overall, attainment has improved strongly since the last inspection when it was below average. Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language make good progress throughout the school and their results contributed well to the school's rising performance.
111. By the age of seven, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are below average, although their knowledge of facts about living things is often good. They know what plants need, and compare attributes and habitats of different animals. However, their knowledge about other aspects is not as developed. For example, they find it hard to identify simple properties of materials or state the effects of heating or cooling on water. Pupils know that electricity is needed to light up bulbs, but most have only limited understanding of how circuits are constructed.
112. By the age of 11, pupils' average skills, knowledge and understanding are not consistently reflected in written work, which does not sufficiently demonstrate how investigative skills are used. Pupils know many of the important organs of the body, and the more able explain how some of them work. They know the parts of plants and their functions, and the more able use words such as 'photosynthesis'. Pupils explain food chains and adaptation, and some say why animals store fat. Many pupils know about the properties of materials and physical processes. They state when sieving or filtering is appropriate and understand the role of evaporation and condensation in the water cycle. They explain different electrical circuits. The more able have a good knowledge about different forces such as magnetism, gravity, friction and air resistance, and explain the balance of forces when a boat floats. However, it is unclear how far they have observed, tested and experimented in order to arrive at their knowledge.
113. Better teaching than at the time of the last inspection has been a major factor in raising pupils' attainment. Teachers ensure that pupils learn correct scientific words. For example, when those in Year 2 investigated the effects of heating and freezing, they talked about materials becoming 'solid' or 'liquid'. Teachers plan this feature well. When pupils in Year 5 learnt about drugs, for example, they listened to facts, used books to carry out research and recorded what they found out. They used this information to work together in order to make presentations to other pupils in the class. Because they are interested, pupils pay attention, work hard and co-operate well. This contributes to their social development. Teachers always bring pupils' attention to the lesson's purpose, and often hold brief discussions at sensible intervals to check how learning is progressing. Teachers make suggestions to groups about ways to improve their thinking and recording of work.
114. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good throughout the school. It ranged from satisfactory to excellent and included a high proportion that was good and very good. In most lessons, teachers demonstrated high expectations. In one lesson in Year 3, for example, the teacher insisted that pupils thought carefully before making predictions and drawing conclusions. In a Year 6 lesson on circuits, the teacher expected pupils to predict the effect of the thickness of different wires on the bulb's brightness. This generated enthusiasm to share ideas, and it is to the pupils' credit that when they could not come to a consensus, they disagreed amicably. Where required, pupils receive very attentive support from assistants. Teachers manage pupils well and command respect based on good relationships. Teachers include pupils in discussions well, irrespective of their ethnic groups, special educational needs or gender. Teachers' lessons generate interest and involvement, because they are well paced and employ a variety of resources. As a result of these qualities, learning is consistently good. However, a few minor aspects of teaching slow progress down. First, limited evidence of experimental skills was found, except in Years 2 and 6. Consequently, pupils do not necessarily learn consistently to apply their knowledge and to develop their understanding. In turn, independence and confidence in carrying out such work does not develop steadily or consistently. For example, ready-made frameworks and formats for written work are still in use even in some of the classes for older pupils. Secondly, the quality of marking varies. Comments do not always offer pupils sufficient information about why their work is of a particular standard, nor what they could do to improve it. Moreover, in some classes, teachers rarely ensure that pupils correct mistakes that marking has identified.

115. Co-ordination of science is strong and includes good procedures for keeping a check of pupils' progress. The information that this produces is used well to assist with planning. Teachers examine National Curriculum test results to establish any patterns that might indicate gaps or weaknesses in what is taught. This practice helps to show whether any differences occur in the performances of groups of pupils. Teachers test pupils periodically during each year to see how learning is progressing and to set targets both for classes and individuals. The co-ordinator ensures that teachers receive good in-service training to develop knowledge and confidence in all aspects of the subject. She also monitors pupils' and teachers' work in order to feed back helpful suggestions. Those pupils whose performance could be raised further receive additional support. Finally, the school ensures that science has its own place on the timetable. This feature has addressed the issue raised at the last inspection that science was not being covered adequately because its content was too mixed up with that of other subjects in over-arching topics and themes.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

116. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained attainment at levels that broadly match national expectations by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6. It has raised standards, from below national expectations, to meet expected levels in Year 2.
117. Teaching is very good. Strengths included teachers' effective methods; planning of work to high levels of expectation, and strong management of pupils. In both lessons, a brisk pace produced a very purposeful atmosphere and pupils worked hard and with enthusiasm. Pupils behave and respond very well to high expectations of them and enjoy positive relationships with teachers. As a result, pupils' efforts to learn were also very good, especially amongst those with either special educational needs or English as an additional language. However, pupils do not always use their sketchbooks carefully and work in them does not consistently reflect what they achieved in lessons or their work around the school.
118. In classes for younger pupils, opportunities to develop a good range of skills are planned. For example, Year 1 pupils produce pictures, patterns and collages with a significant amount of detail for their age, although drawings were sometimes restricted to simple outlines, with little evidence of shading. Illustrations to accompany ideas in their poems and stories are produced expressively in paint and crayon. Nearly all Year 2 pupils, too, demonstrate skills that match what is expected for their age. For example, their self-portraits were confident and bold in style and yet carefully composed. Artistic techniques were used well in design and technology to finish models and products. Pupils use computer paint-programs, such as *Dazzle*, to combine two-dimensional shapes into recognisable objects or patterns. In textile work, pupils develop sound sewing skills, when they produce cross-stitch patterns on fabric.
119. Planning also supports sound development of skills in classes for older pupils. Work builds carefully on what has been previously taught. For example, in Year 4, pupils' careful observation of the shape and colour of flowers and their knowledge of Van Gogh's paintings of *Sunflowers* was evident in works of their own. Opportunities to experiment with different types of printing led to imaginative uses of form and colour with string prints. Pupils in Year 3 used computer graphics well to create repeating patterns. Skills in computer generated art were developed further in Year 6. An imaging program was used well to scan and make changes to photographs. Pupils often study the work of famous or established artists as a starting point for their own work, giving them an insight into both skills and artistic possibilities and intentions. Year 5 pupils, starting with examples of Matisse's work, explored ideas of shape and brilliance of colour in order to use them in their own work. A significant number were able to talk knowledgeably about Matisse's style. This work supported the needs of pupils with English as an additional language, as it explored some of the vocabulary of art. Pupils have had the opportunity to visit the National Gallery to see original paintings and sculpture.
120. Sound skills in three-dimensional work are developed through the school using malleable materials and collage. In Year 6, sculpture is found in pupils' decorated bowler hats. These were inspired by characters in a story who wore this type of hat. However, opportunities to study the art of different cultures, thereby reflecting the large range of different ethnic groups attending the school, are not explored to the extent that they might be.

121. The co-ordinator's role is currently undertaken by the headteacher. During the last term, monitoring of pupils' work has been undertaken by collecting samples. It is planned to use this method to make comparisons to ensure that pupils' progress is maintained. The recommended scheme of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is being introduced as a basis for planning lessons and ensuring that skills are developed systematically. Pupils have the opportunity to work with visiting artists and craftspeople. For example, pupils in Year 1 worked with visitors from the local Discover Centre to create a series of pictures that illustrated their poems. The school has also entered a national competition in Year 6, using very detailed sketches and imaginative uses of colour. An art club is available for pupils on Friday lunchtimes and provides opportunities to enhance and enrich skills. Two teaching assistants supervise this club and its work makes an outstanding contribution to displays around the school.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. At the time of the last inspection, attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 was broadly in line with national expectations. No overall statement about the quality of teaching was made, although resources for the subject were poor. Attainment through the school as a whole has been maintained at nationally expected levels. A specialist teacher is currently working at the school and has begun, in a few classes, to teach alongside the class teacher. He is offering general advice, which has improved expectations of what can be achieved, and is providing high levels of expertise. In cases where this teacher has supported the designing and making of models and products, standards are particularly high and a much wider range of resources has been used. For example, pupils in Year 4 designed burglar alarms for model houses. Materials such as wood, metallic foil, recycled objects, wire, battery cells and card were employed. In order to complete their products, pupils constructed simple pressure pads that acted as switches in an electrical circuit. As a would-be burglar stepped on the pad, the circuit was completed and the alarm set off. Designs for these products were well drawn up, including labels, materials and written suggestions for joining parts together. What was taught provided good opportunities for pupils to consolidate and apply knowledge that had been acquired in science lessons.
123. In a lesson in Year 2, effective teaching produced good uses of specific language. For example, the teacher questioned pupils about the meaning of "specifications". She captured pupils' imagination well by setting the problem of how Mrs McDougall could get her eggs to market. Smashing an egg provided a strong visual impact of the difficulty. Clearly a vehicle was needed that would carry them safely. Designing and making this vehicle became the pupils' task. Pupils demonstrated good knowledge of the requirements of a design when they began to use labels to help to explain their ideas. Shortage of time was a constraint in this lesson, as it did not permit pupils to complete their planning. The teacher had recognised the difficulty and lesson plans showed that time was available to complete the task later in the week. Learning was therefore not impaired. Skills are developed soundly as pupils move on through the school. Examples of work, including the use of simple hydraulics, were on display around the school, and confirmed that standards of designing and making are in line with those expected at different ages. This work included textiles and food technology in Years 3 and 4. Pupils in Year 6 recalled many details of how they had designed bridges in a previous class. They understood the need to design carefully, bearing in mind ideas about the strength of structures, measurements, materials and how to cut and join them. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils' work matched expected levels well. They used sewing to join fabrics, having designed slippers. Good features included the thinking that had been given to putting on straps in a way that ensured strength and neatness. Pupils had clear ideas about how this could be done.
124. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers demonstrated good knowledge of the different elements of the subject, although less emphasis was evident on pupils' evaluation of their models or products than on designing and making. Management of pupils and resources were strong features and contributed to good efforts from pupils. Planning and discussions with both the co-ordinator and the specialist teacher suggest that the quality of teaching is improving rapidly. This improvement is based on the expertise and advice that have raised teachers' knowledge and awareness of the subject's requirements. Better availability and uses of resources are also factors.
125. Co-ordination is generally good and the specialist is being used well to raise standards. Planned improvements include the development of procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' achievements further, and continuing to raise teachers' expertise. Plans exist to use computers to control products that have been designed and made. However, this type of work is not undertaken at present.

## GEOGRAPHY

126. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment in geography were found to be below national expectations through the school. Since then, attainment has risen and is now broadly in line with national expectations.

127. As pupils move through Years 1 and 2, they become familiar with the environment around the school and locality. In Year 2, good teaching helps pupils to understand the importance of keys and symbols on plans and maps. They design and use symbols of their own to locate hills, rivers, mountains, farms, shops and roads on their islands. The standard of their map work is good, and teachers' expectations are high. In one very good lesson pupils learnt to compare the physical and human features of the Stratford area of Newham with the Isle of Struay. As a result of good questioning, pupils explained the uses of transport in different areas and why means of transport might differ. Furthermore, pupils demonstrated good geographical reasoning in explaining that "less people" on their islands would mean fewer cars than in Stratford. In Stratford, people needed to "...go further to jobs" and so there are "...more cars and buses in London." Most pupils acquire good basic skills and understanding of geographical terms. During Year 2, they begin to learn how to compare features of different places, matching the expectations in the National Curriculum for their age.
128. Good teaching continues in most lessons in classes from Year 3 onwards. As a result learning continues to develop steadily and knowledge and skills are broadened and honed. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils built on their observations, following a walk around Stratford. They compared local uses of land with those of a village in Yorkshire. Pupils with special needs, and those at early stages of English were supported well and nearly all pupils listed several differences. As a result of the support, they also presented their findings in graphs. What had already been taught was further extended in written work in Year 5. Pupils achieved well when they collected evidence of types and numbers of vehicles on local roads, noise levels and local shopping facilities. Elements of this work, such as the clarity with which pupils had interpreted the data, was of a standard higher than normally expected. Pupils drew conclusions and made recommendations based on their findings, including protests to the editor of *The Times*. This produced a good link with work in literacy, providing a purpose for writing letters. In Year 6, pupils study Africa, carrying out project work on a chosen country. Pupils use the skills that they have acquired lower down the school to plan these projects. They extend their skills further by making decisions about what evidence to collect; how to synthesise what is gathered from different sources, and how to present it.
129. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge of requirements in the National Curriculum is good. Planning ensures careful allocation of time for each element of the subject. Pupils with special needs or with English as an additional language are supported well to ensure that they understand what to do. In lessons, much of the teachers' open questioning made pupils think carefully, as answers could be given in a variety of ways. Thus, good methods led to good intellectual efforts from pupils and good learning. However, this feature was not as strong in a lesson in Year 6. On occasions, single word answers such as "books" or "the Internet" were accepted. Opportunities to extend pupils' language by exploring, for example, what sort of books or web-sites might be most useful and what sort of information could be found were missed. Nevertheless, practical tasks and investigative work are encouraged well through the school and pupils take care with the presentation of their recorded work. Good teaching is helping pupils to enjoy their geography lessons, so they are well motivated and work hard. They listen carefully and follow instructions well, even though English is an additional language for many of them. In Year 6, pupils enjoyed the use of computers, sending a fax and receiving E-mail.
130. The subject is organised by a new co-ordinator who has been in post for only two months. She has not yet had time to develop a new action plan for the subject, nor to review the impact of what is taught. However, learning resources are sufficient to support teaching, although textbooks and atlases are not plentiful.

## HISTORY

131. At the time of the last inspection, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 was below national expectations. No overall judgement was made of the work of pupils in Year 6, although evidence was found that some pupils were good at using dates and time-lines to sequence historical events. However, such skills are generally expected at a younger age than Year 6. Currently attainment is below what is normally expected in Years 2 and 6. Therefore, indications are that standards are about the same as in 1998. Bearing in mind that a high proportion of pupils are

refugees and come from recently arrived families, general knowledge of the country's past is likely to be limited. For this reason, low overall attainment is not unexpected and pupils' achievements are reasonable.

132. By the end of Year 2, pupils sequence episodes in the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. However, they find it difficult to compare their own lives with those of previous generations. Many of them lack a historical vocabulary with which to discuss the past. They find it difficult to explain events or changes that have occurred in the way that people live. Pupils' ideas of where to gain information about the past are less limited. For example, several suggested their grandparents, books and "old things".
133. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment remains below average. As in the last inspection, they could sequence historical eras correctly. Many of them knew the dates of World War II. In a discussion, some pupils explained changes in attitudes to punishment, and demonstrated a sound understanding of how children have been treated at different times. Pupils are beginning to understand that history is written from different viewpoints, but are less informed about different sorts of evidence, other than books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. Pupils' written work is of limited depth.
134. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning of what is taught is clearly based on the National Curriculum. However, pupils' work suggests that weaknesses occur in the teaching of basic skills. For example, average and lower attainers especially find it difficult to make sense of what they discover, and in communicating it, owing to lack of vocabulary and uses of historical English. Lessons contained many features that could be used to model good practice and raise standards. For example, in two lessons that were observed a taped dramatisation of Boadicea's revolt against the Romans held pupils' interest. Teachers stopped the tape at relevant points to emphasise what was happening. Good explanations drew pupils' attention to the reasons for the Romans' success. This good use of resources helped to advance pupils' understanding and knowledge. They asked many questions, which showed understanding of the feelings of the invaded people. Teachers in these lessons ensured that they responded to as many pupils as possible, so they all felt fully included. Assistants in the classroom provide invaluable support to pupils' with special educational needs, and to those for whom English is an additional language.
135. The teacher with responsibility for co-ordinating history has not been in the school for long enough to review current procedures. She is aware that several learning resources are in need of replacement, and that more historical artefacts are required.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

136. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology were reported as in line with national expectations. However, opportunities to use skills that had been acquired lower down the school were limited. Apart from the use of floor robots, the use of technology to control devices was not evident. Standards in information and communication technology are now below those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Expectations of what can be achieved in this fast developing subject are higher now, and have overtaken standards at the school. In the last inspection, resources were good for that time and included two computers in most classes, as well as a suite of another ten. These computers are now obsolete, so currently resources are not as good as they were. Present resources allow pupils insufficient practice to reach the levels expected. The school is on the point of setting up a new computer room with up to date machines. These new resources come partly from a grant from *Wired-up Communities*. It will also help to provide households on the surrounding estate with Internet and E-mail access.
137. In Year 2, most pupils can use a drawing program. They use a mouse to select tools and click accurately on the correct icons. Word processing skills are mainly linked to English. However, the lack of enough computers reduces opportunities for drafting, redrafting and completing best copies, and thereby developing skills further. Computers were, however, often seen in use to support mathematics at this age. In Year 6, basic skills are sound, but pupils do not develop and use a broad enough range of techniques and program applications. For example, the use of computers to control other devices is limited, as it was in the last inspection. The use of

programs to process text; the use of pictures and graphics, and collecting and storing data are close to what is normally expected. Older pupils also gather information from the Internet.

138. Computers are often used well to support pupils with English as an additional language and with special educational needs. Programs are available that develop specific language skills. However, the specific skills of pupils with computers at home are not sufficiently monitored and known to use them resourcefully at school. As a result, they are not challenged enough to improve skills further. Opportunities to create databases that use and explore the range and richness of pupils' various cultural backgrounds are also missed. It is planned to improve this feature once the new suite is opened and, conversely, pupils in Year 6 have constructed a database about countries in Africa. This work supports their topics in geography lessons, and develops skills of interrogation, seeking and sorting answers to each other's questions. A few opportunities are apparent to seek information from CD-ROM. For example, in Year 3, pupils learnt about the Romans in Britain.
139. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory although, in lessons, it was often good and, in some cases, very good. This discrepancy occurs because teacher's subject knowledge and management of pupils are good. These strong features result in good lessons. However, over time, the quality of teaching is hampered by lack of access to computers during lessons. In turn, opportunities to practise and consolidate skills are restricted, slowing progress. Nevertheless, owing to good teaching in lessons, pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic users of computers. They usually work in pairs, and co-operate well.
140. The co-ordinator has a secure knowledge of the subject and a clear and positive vision for the future and provides good leadership and direction. Plans for development are very clear and many of them are on the point of introduction. For example, teaching and support staff have already received laptop computers, which, together with training financed by the New Opportunities Fund, will improve subject knowledge and skills. The detailed scheme of work explains what pupils should learn and when they should learn it.

## MUSIC

141. At the time of the 1998 inspection, overall attainment in music was in line with national expectations at Years 2 and 6. In Year 2, pupils sang well and were beginning to compose their own tunes. In Year 6, they sang a variety of songs in parts and used complex rhythms. Pupils reached these standards despite weaknesses that were identified in what was being taught. Levels of attainment are still in line with what is normally expected and standards have been maintained. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, Most pupils recalled and appraised previous compositions that they had learnt for Diwali. Several of them shared recollections about their uses of bells and other percussion. The teacher used good musical language, and pupils were encouraged to remember its meaning. The pace of the lesson was another strong feature, which helped to maintain interest. Further opportunities to listen to music and to make comments about it were provided. Taped music that represented a train journey allowed pupils to demonstrate that they had indeed remembered the meaning of terminology such as "tempo" and "allentando". Pupils' performances of songs such as *Puffer Train* were enhanced by the teacher's own expertise when she accompanied them on a piano-accordion. All of this provides evidence that overall attainment is in line with what is expected.
142. Good teaching helps pupils to build on skills as they move through the school. As a result, by the time they reach Year 6, nearly all pupils have learnt to write music down using graphical symbols. They are confident performers, taking part in concerts for their parents and during assemblies. They play pitched and unpitched instruments, co-operating well in groups and ensembles. Instrumental teaching of the piano and violin enhances provision. Although it was not possible to observe this aspect, a pupil's expertise on the piano was used well in assembly to provide music for classes to muster and leave. Older pupils' singing was often of good quality with generally accurate pitch. Dynamic variations that matched the sentiments within verses were also sometimes apparent. These features demonstrate that overall attainment remains in line with national expectations.

143. The specialist teacher has introduced a good plan of work for the use of non-specialist teachers through the school. It includes lesson plans, advice on required resources and taped music to support teaching. Previously identified weaknesses in what was taught have, therefore, now been rectified. However, little opportunity to use new technology to play or compose music was seen.
144. Overall, teaching is good, although it included a satisfactory lesson. The main feature that separated the good teaching from the satisfactory was the greater confidence and expertise of the teachers. For example, in the otherwise satisfactory lesson, part of which involved listening to *The Little Train of Caipira*, the teacher gave pupils too much to do at once, which made it difficult for them to understand. Conversely, in the lesson taught by the specialist, skills were introduced in a series of short pacy bursts, and pupils learnt more effectively.
145. Co-ordination is good. The specialist teacher takes responsibility for the subject. Her advice has helped to improve provision. However, as a part-time teacher, she does not have sufficient time to monitor teaching or to work alongside other staff. Resources are generally good and support learning well. Music makes a strong contribution to the life of the school. For example, during festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Eid, pupils learn traditional tunes or compose appropriate music of their own.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. During the inspection, it was only possible to see games and gymnastics lessons. However, all aspects of the National Curriculum are planned and taught. In Years 2 and 6, standards match those expected nationally and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. For example, pupils in Year 2 throw and catch well for their age. They show awareness of space around them, moving into it well and they understand that safety is important. Older pupils understand the need to plan and practise movements in order to put them together in refined sequences. A swimming programme is in place at a pool in the local Atherton Centre. Pupils in Year 5 completed the term's programme during the inspection. Suitably qualified instructors are responsible for these lessons. Teachers who accompany the pupils confirm that most of them attain the government's minimum safety standard in these sessions.
147. A very wide range of activities is available to pupils outside lessons and supplement what is taught very well, contributing strongly to overall attainment. These activities include football, netball, badminton, table tennis, cricket, hockey, rugby and several dance clubs. Good numbers of pupils in the targeted age groups attend them.
148. Sports and games are regarded as a strong feature within the subject. Because of adverse weather conditions only one outdoor lesson, which was in Year 2, was seen. It proceeded at a brisk pace and the teacher ensured good safety and that pupils kept moving. Brief explanations, supported by good uses of pupils to demonstrate, resulted in a good lesson in which throwing and catching skills were developed well.
149. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. All teachers include appropriate warm-up and cool-down sessions and help pupils to understand the effects of exercise on their bodies. They use praise well to encourage hard work. As a result, most pupils make a good physical effort. Pupils who perform activities well are frequently asked to demonstrate. This modelling of skills ensures that activity is not inhibited for pupils with English at an early stage and helps them to understand what to do to make progress at similar rates to other pupils.
150. The enthusiasm of the teachers rubs off on pupils. As they get older, pupils' confidence and desire to take part in lessons increases. Few older pupils, for example, forget kit, whereas younger ones are less diligent. In a Year 1 class, for example, nearly one-third of the class came to school without suitable clothing to change into and missed the lesson. A few of these pupils fail to participate on a regular basis, which prevents them from making satisfactory progress. Opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively in pairs and groups are planned. Pupils are sensitive when they comment on and evaluate the work of others and show considerable maturity when they act upon suggestions.



151. The subject is well led by a newly appointed, capable co-ordinator. She is currently reviewing policy and what is taught to ensure that it matches the latest national guidance. Methods of assessing pupils' attainment are to be included in this review as present have been identified as lacking formality and consistency.
152. Very effective links with a local high school have been developed and a staff training session in gymnastics has been planned. Resources have been audited and reviewed recently. Their quality and quantity are good, supporting pupils' learning well.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

153. Attainment at the age of seven matches expectations in the locally agreed syllabus and, by Year 6, is above expectations. Pupils in Year 2 showed that they are acquiring and developing a good knowledge and understanding of religious stories and festivals. In Year 6, pupils explained important features of Christianity and other principal religions of the world. For example, they knew details about Jesus's life and the people whom he met and helped. They understood that clubs and organisations are often part of the life of religious communities and discussed the meaning of promises and prayers. In discussions of relationships, they reflected sensitively on their own, and others' feelings. Younger pupils showed good understanding of the meaning of friendship and that most world faiths contained teaching about helping one another. Older pupils know of circumstances that create happiness and sadness and of giving as well as receiving. They discussed important elements of family life.
154. Very good teaching has ensured that nearly all pupils in Year 6 know some of the key features of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. They learn how these religions celebrate festivals and significant rites of passage. In a good lesson in Year 3, nearly all pupils recalled the story of Rama and Sita and its connection with Diwali. Pupils' interest was captured well by the use of a video that explained the festival through the eyes of a child. This good method led to good understanding of what the festival means to Sikh and Hindu children. Discussion with pupils in Years 5 and 6 indicated that they have very good knowledge of the five pillars of Islam. They spoke convincingly of 'Salat' and 'Zakat', defining what these words mean and relating them to ideas in other faiths. These pupils named the holy books and places of worship in a range of faiths. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the teacher had carried out detailed research and planning. As a result, good learning amongst pupils occurred. They understood the responsibilities of a Moslem believer to undertake Hajj'. Many pupils were aware that pilgrimage is an important feature of other religions. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 recognised many religious artefacts; knew something of their significance and function, and were able to describe the importance of symbols in religious worship. During the inspection, pupils in Year 5 led a very good assembly on Eid, explaining its significance in a meaningful and reverential manner. Very good teaching in Year 6 produced a very thoughtful, mature discussion on the role of religious buildings and sites. These older pupils express their thoughts with great sensitivity, demonstrating an awareness and growing understanding of the importance of religion in a believer's eyes.
155. The overall quality of teaching is very good. Planning is of high quality, which is confirmed by the detail that was seen in the lessons. This planning of lessons supports teachers' knowledge and helps to raise expectations of pupils. Skilful questioning is used to lead pupils' understanding. Teachers are successful in imparting knowledge and enabling pupils to express their feelings openly and confidently. For example, pupils spoke freely about ways in which people show belief in God. They have good opportunities to reflect upon their learning and their own understanding of religious and spiritual issues. The provision of opportunities for reflection is a very strong feature of teaching in the subject. In all lessons, pupils with special educational needs are well supported. This support enables their inclusion in discussions and activities.
156. Religious education is taught to all pupils. Parents are informed of their right to withdraw pupils from lessons and assemblies through the school's prospectus. The headteacher is acting as co-ordinator for the subject. With good support from the local authority, she has reviewed and rewritten the school's scheme of work, ensuring a good match with the locally agreed syllabus. This draft document contains excellent guidance for good teaching of the subject.
157. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. For example, teaching has improved from satisfactory to very good. Teachers also make good use of pupils' first hand knowledge and faith experiences. However, parental contributions are not sought to the same extent.