

INSPECTION REPORT

ALEXANDRA INFANT SCHOOL

Beckenham

LEA area: Bromley

Unique reference number: 101586

Headteacher: Ms Michelle Lewis

Reporting inspector: Brenda Spencer
20451

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th September 2001

Inspection number: 230228

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kent House Road Beckenham Kent
Postcode:	BR3 1JG
Telephone number:	(0208) 778 4714
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Rogers
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20451	Brenda Spencer	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Science Design and technology Equal opportunities	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9173	Sarah McDermott	Lay inspector		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?
22577	Margaret Hart	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Music Special educational needs	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22790	Jane Pinney	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Geography Physical education English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Alexandra Infants is a mixed school in Beckenham, Kent for pupils aged four to seven years. The school has a Unit with 18 places for pupils from age three with severe learning difficulties and autism. The socio-economic background of pupils and their attainment on entry to the school are broadly below average. There are 127 pupils attending full time; 65 are boys and 62 are girls. The Reception class has 19 boys and 14 girls attending on a part time basis during their introduction to school. Thirteen pupils left and 11 joined the school year last year outside the normal times of transfer. The majority of pupils are white. Only 46 pupils come from ethnic minority groups and there are only five pupils for whom English is an additional language. The additional languages spoken by these children are Turkish and Arabic. Nineteen per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register. Six per cent have Special Educational Need statements, primarily for speech and communication difficulties, which is well above the national average. Twenty three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Alexandra is an effective school. Pupils achieve standards in most aspects of learning in line with national expectations often from low starting points. The staff successfully ensure that pupils with learning difficulties are integrated into the life of the school. The quality of the curriculum supports all pupils in developing an enthusiasm for their learning. The leadership and management are very good. Whilst costs per pupil are high because of the specialist provision, given the other factors the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides very effective leadership which is constantly seeking improvement in standards and provision.
- Provides a rich curriculum and very good provision for moral, social and cultural development.
- Provides a stimulating art and design curriculum which helps pupils achieve standards above average.
- Provides good quality teaching which helps pupils progress.
- Cares very well for pupils and involves their parents well in the life of the school.
- Assesses pupils' work well across all the subjects in the curriculum.
- Provides well for pupils with special educational needs and includes them well in school activities.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing and spelling.
- The level of attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998. Recommendations made at that time have been met in most respects. The governing body makes an increased and very effective contribution to directing the school. They have worked well with the local education authority in identifying their strengths and points for development. Resources, as a result of extra government grants in the form of seed funding and National Grid for Learning grant, are significantly better, particularly for information and communication technology and the Reception classes. Very good procedures are in place for assessment across all subjects. Parents comment favourably on the many physical improvements made to the building, including improved access for the disabled and purpose built facilities for the

special Unit housed within the main building. Health and safety recommendations have been fully met. In addition, the quality of teaching is much improved. The quality of school improvement planning, leadership and management are now very good. However, the level of attendance is still below the national average. Overall, the school has a very good capacity to improve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	C	D	C	C
writing	E	E	D	E
mathematics	E	E	D	D

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

Standards achieved in reading in national tests for pupils aged seven were in line with the national average in 2000. They were below the national average in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was in line with the national average in reading, writing and science. It was below the national average in mathematics. The school test results have improved over recent years and at a slightly better rate than the national trend. Boys fall below the national performance of their group to a greater extent than girls do. Girls are in line with the national average for their group in reading. Comparisons with similar schools based on the proportion of pupils who take free school meals show that results are in line with the average in reading, are below in mathematics and are well below in writing. Recently published results for 2001 show some improvement. The proportion of pupils reaching above average levels in mathematics is significantly better. Standards are in line with the national average for reading, mathematics and science, but remain below for writing and spelling. Improving this is the major priority of the school improvement plan.

Pupils achieve well overall. Scrutiny of work retained from the previous year shows that pupils try to present their work well. From below average starting points overall, they are on track to achieve standards at least in line with the national expectation in reading and speaking and listening, mathematics, science, art and design, design technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education. Standards are likely to be below expectation in writing and spelling in English. In mathematics, they develop a good facility with arithmetic and select different ways of calculation appropriately. In art and design, pupils achieve standards above expectation and master an impressive range of different techniques. Children in Reception class have settled very quickly and are making rapid progress in personal and social development. Most are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of Reception year in all the areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs and the very few for whom English is an additional language receive appropriate support and make good progress. Pupils from ethnic minorities attain a good proportion of the higher levels in national tests and achieve well in lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils arrive happily and are enthusiastic about their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are clear about school routines and most behave well in lessons and at play. Sometimes they are restless in assembly.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good and the school very rarely has to deal with incidents of bullying.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The attendance rate in 1999/2000 was below the national average. The rate of authorised absence was similar to most

	infant schools.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall for English. It is good for mathematics. Particular strengths in teaching include purposeful planning with clear targets for pupils' learning, good use of resources to develop knowledge and understanding and effective management of pupils' behaviour. Elements of lessons which were less effective related to a loss of pace, underuse of additional staff in introductions and ineffective strategies to teach spelling. The school has a good and effective strategy for teaching numeracy and a satisfactory strategy for teaching literacy – it is more effective for reading than for writing, as there are too few opportunities for redrafting written work. The very good assessment procedures and active tracking of pupils' progress supports the good targeting of staffing and resources to meet individual needs. Children in Reception show good levels of independence and enthusiasm for school in their first weeks of experience. Pupils in the Unit maintain good levels of interest and concentration, primarily because the change in their activities is so perceptively timed. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 generally enjoy their work, apply themselves to their tasks diligently and talk with enthusiasm about what they have learned.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The statutory curriculum is fully in place and is enriched by stimulating visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There is early identification of pupils' needs and good support from staff to give them full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The five pupils are included well in lessons. Assessment of their needs is effective and they receive appropriate teaching to help them make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good for moral, social and cultural development and good for spiritual development. The school's strategies for inclusion of all pupils particularly promote their social development. Staff provide good role models and strong awareness of right and wrong. Provision for cultural development celebrates the richness of our multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Pupils' academic progress is carefully tracked from year to year. Induction procedures ensure that new children make a happy start to school life. There is very good provision for child protection. The school works well with parents. There is a strong Parent Teachers Association and parents welcome the open door policy at the beginning of the day. The school is successful in including pupils from the Unit in school life.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. The senior management team is highly analytical. Co-ordinators are enthusiastic and have worked hard to meet the targets in the school improvement plan. There is adequate staffing, attractive accommodation and good learning resources. However, the school has difficulty in attracting highly qualified and experienced staff for senior posts of responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Since the last inspection the responsibility for governing the junior and infant school has been separated. The governing body and its committees have taken up these new responsibilities vigorously. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weakness. Their work is now very well documented.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. This includes detailed analysis of performance data, tracking the progress of individual children and monitoring of teaching, planning and children's work. The outcomes contribute to the very effective school improvement plan.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Resources are carefully targeted to match the priorities of the school development plan. Grants and additional funds are spent appropriately. The school achieves best value by evaluating the outcomes of their allocation of resources, comparing their performance with national averages and seeking tenders for large purchases.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much their children enjoy school. • The standards achieved and the good progress their children make. • The quality of teaching. • How the school helps children to be mature and responsible. • The good behaviour in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Information they receive on their child's progress. • Procedures for hearing children read.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views except with regard to standards in writing and spelling. However, neither the range of activities outside lessons or the procedures for helping children to learn to read are a justified cause for concern. Parents are given good information about children's progress in English, mathematics and science, but there are confusing messages in reports about other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry is judged to be below average, overall. Baseline assessments for pupils, which are made on entry to school, for the year 1999/2000 were well below average in key areas of reading, writing and number. They were below average in 2000/2001. The present September intake of Reception pupils composed of the older children of that year group show average attainment in these areas. The younger element of the year group will begin school in January 2002.
2. At the time of the inspection, the Reception class had been in school for only five half days. Most children in this group are likely to achieve the early learning goals for all the areas of learning by the end of Reception year. Induction arrangements were sensitive and appropriate. As a consequence, the children are confident in their new environment, able to make choices in their activities and developing happy relationships. Children are building well on their knowledge of writing and letters through specific teaching of these skills and through encouragement to apply them in role-play, for example by writing menus. Their confidence in speaking in a group is developing well because of the many opportunities planned for them to work together or to give opinions in whole group discussions. Stories are a daily feature of their activities and the children know that print conveys meaning. Some are confident about telling the story from the pictures in books and all know how to handle books correctly. Many children already recognise numerals and are extending their ability to count by, for example, counting, alongside their teacher, the number of children present. Their enjoyment of number is increased by the many number rhymes and songs they sing. Careful teaching of computer and design skills means that they are already achieving well in these areas and some are confident enough to pass on their newly acquired skills. Throughout the day, small muscle control is exercised in the use of pencils, pens, paint brushes, jigsaws and computer mouse and the children take part in these activities enthusiastically. In using the outside area and in physical education lessons, children are developing large muscle control in running, hopping, finding a space and in controlling wheeled vehicles. However, some children are finding it difficult to curb their enthusiasm to run fast in circles rather than weave in and out to find a space. Their creative development is progressing well in this short period of time because of the skilled musical teaching they receive. They are building up a repertoire of favourite songs, sometimes with signing and actions. They find security in role-play in the familiar setting of the home corner and clearly enjoy the opportunity to paint and print with fruit.
3. Standards have shown improvement in recent years. The school has received a school's achievement award in recognition of this. Standards achieved by pupils aged seven in reading in national tests and in science through teacher assessments were in line with the national average in 2000. They were below the national average in writing and mathematics. Results for 2001, for which there are no national comparisons available at the time of the inspection, show further improvement. Standards are now in line for reading, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics has improved significantly in 2001. However, standards in writing and spelling have fallen and are likely to be below the national average.
4. Pupils' attainment in English and literacy are below average, overall. Reading is line with expectations, an improvement since the last inspection, as are speaking, listening and handwriting. This represents good achievement overall for pupils, given their low starting points in key areas of literacy. This good achievement in reading relates to the way pupils' attainment and progress is carefully tracked over time. Staff and resources are carefully targeted at pupils needing additional support. There are many imaginative ways used to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, including the use of Dictaphones for interviews and drama. From their first weeks in school, pupils are encouraged in paired and group activities to engage in discussions. Handwriting is carefully taught and adults provide a good role model in correct formation of letters. Whilst pupils make satisfactory progress in writing and spelling,

given their starting points, their achievement could be better. Pupils are confident about trying to write independently for a range of purposes for different subjects in the curriculum. However, the work of lower attainers, in particular, is sometimes difficult to understand because of incorrect spelling. Most pupils do not make use of correct models such as word banks, personal lists and dictionaries, even when these are provided to support their writing in lessons. Spellings are sometimes carefully corrected in marking, but pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to learn these corrections. Their writing rarely goes through a redrafting process. Improving this aspect of English is the priority in the school improvement plan agreed by staff and governors.

5. Standards in mathematics are improving. They are in line with the national average both for the expected and higher levels of attainment. Boys and girls achieve equally well in this subject. This good achievement reflects the successful way the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented and the careful monitoring of and response to pupils' individual attainment and needs. Standards in numeracy are in line with expectation. The good use of assessment ensures that pupils are challenged appropriately in the work they are given. Pupils develop confidence in tackling arithmetical problems in different ways. The effective mental arithmetic introduction to mathematics lessons and the good use of resources support the development of these skills well. In mathematics lessons, these skills are applied well in practical sessions such as the class shop, with good quality support from staff. The mathematics curriculum is broad so that pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of shape, space and measure and handling data.
6. In science, standards are in line with the national average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils gain satisfactory experimental and investigation skills. They are properly introduced to ideas of fair testing and are encouraged to predict the outcomes. Reference books are used well to provide pupils with a satisfactory knowledge of the living world, materials and physical processes. The mathematical skills acquired in effective numeracy lessons are not applied often enough in science. Consequently, the range of ways observations are made and findings are reported could be broadened to raise attainment. Higher attaining pupils could achieve better with opportunities to design their own tests in order to apply the scientific skills they have acquired. All pupils show a creditable willingness to write independently about their work. However, the scrutiny of last year's work shows that pupils of below average attainment, with more support with spelling, could devote greater energy in reporting science rather than struggling with technical aspects of writing. Developing science investigation skills to higher levels is a focus for school improvement this year.
7. Pupils achieve well in their other subjects and reach standards in line with expectations in all, except art and design, where standards are above. These higher standards reflect the richness of the art and design curriculum. Teachers' good subject knowledge is supplemented by visiting artists and by visits to stimulating museums. The curriculum includes imaginative use of computer art and pupils develop a pride in their work through displaying it on the Internet. They are introduced to a breadth of artistic techniques to use creatively. All subjects are beginning to benefit from the much-improved assessment procedures which identify where higher standards can be sought. Standards remain in line with national expectations in information and communication technology in common with the last inspection. However, this represents improvement, given that expectations are now greater than before. The improved resources, effective teaching of specific computer skills and recently increased opportunity to apply these in some areas of the curriculum are having a positive impact on standards.
8. Pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well in most respects. Their needs are identified early and their work is matched well to their targets for learning. Pupils receiving specialist teaching in the Unit achieve well and are supported effectively to participate in activities and lessons in the main school. Pupils receiving full time mainstream education are taught to use signing in assemblies. This is one example of the school's commitment to inclusion of all pupils. Improved tracking of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has resulted in effective match of resources and teaching to ensure that pupils of different attainment progress well. Occasionally, the worksheets given to children of lower attainment in Reception of last academic year were too difficult for them to manage and their progress was unsatisfactory. The school has identified and prioritised the need to help

boys do as well as girls. This has been achieved in mathematics, but not, as yet, in English. Pupils from ethnic minorities did well in the last year's tests and in lessons in the present year participate and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They have maintained this positive approach to school from the last inspection. They arrive happily and confidently in the morning because parents can come into their classrooms for up to a quarter of an hour before school starts and teachers are on hand to ease them into the daily routine. Pupils are enthusiastic in their learning and are keen to 'have a go'. In a science, lesson pupils responded with enthusiasm to tasting various flavours and in a design and technology lesson all pupils lined up keenly to have their turn at cutting and peeling fruit for a fruit salad. Pupils are interested in the school's activities and, although only a few weeks into the new school year, were able to talk with animation about the games available at break times and the after school gym club. The excitement and interest of the new children in the Reception class when identifying the first letter of surprise items really supported their learning well.
10. The behaviour of the pupils is good. There have been no exclusions in recent years. In most lessons seen, the pupils concentrated well, followed instructions carefully and made the most of their learning time. There are a few lively pupils who tend to shout out of turn and find it difficult to keep on task. However, the majority of pupils ignore these distractions and their learning is disrupted very little. Pupils were mostly well behaved at break and lunch times despite the rain forcing them inside on several occasions. Some pupils were inattentive when called to line up and come in for lessons. Many pupils are quiet and respectful in assembly, but there is often an undercurrent of chattering which spoils the atmosphere and detracts from the potential spirituality. Some pupils are sufficiently concerned about the noise to mention this worry in their own booklet on what they like and dislike about assemblies. Generally, pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. However, the few pupils who misbehave have limited comprehension of how this is affecting their peers' learning. During the inspection week, they responded well to the theme of 'feelings' and are aware how different people react and are affected by different situations. They are interested in how other cultures live and what other religions believe. Some Year 1 pupils could talk in detail about the Jewish faith that they had been studying before the summer holidays.
11. Relationships in the school are very good. The school has rarely had to deal with any instances of bullying. The different genders and races of pupils play and work together very well. In a short singing and dancing session in Reception one white boy said quite spontaneously to a black boy standing on his own at the edge of the circle "Come along and hold my hand". In the dining hall the pupils from the Unit eat with the rest of the school and are accepted quite naturally into the dinner routines by the other pupils. In lessons, the pupils collaborate very effectively and help each other's learning well. The pupils are very good at including each other in learning and playing, so it is unusual to see any pupil left out.
12. The personal responsibility of the pupils is good. The new Reception pupils settle in very quickly. Soon they are confident and independent learners, making sensible choices and organising themselves competently. They register themselves in the morning by taking their name cards out of a coloured tin. Older pupils rush forward to take on jobs around the class. They particularly like being the 'leader' for the day. Many pupils are clear about their individual targets and can work towards bettering their learning by, for example, remembering to use capital letters or practising the sounds of the letters of the alphabet.
13. The attendance of pupils is unsatisfactory and has worsened since the last inspection. For the past few years the attendance rate has been below the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is similar to that of most infant schools. Absence is mostly due to illness or other medical reasons and is obviously exacerbated by the health and educational needs of the pupils in the Unit. However there is a worrying increase in the number of families who take their children out of school in term time for holidays. Not only is this disruptive to the pupils concerned, but it also affects the teaching and learning in the class as a whole. The punctuality of the pupils is satisfactory, overall. Most pupils arrive on time or earlier to make the most of

the useful settling in period, but there is a small band of regular latecomers who slip in after the registers have closed. Unsatisfactory punctuality often affects the confidence and learning of these young children. For example, during the inspection a late pupil was tearful and unwilling to join the class because the lesson had already started. The unsatisfactory attendance and, to some extent, the unsatisfactory punctuality are having a detrimental effect on individual pupil's progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. At that time just under one in ten lessons was unsatisfactory. Only one in twenty lessons was very good. During this inspection no unsatisfactory lessons were seen and one in six lessons was very good. Just over half the teaching was good or better. In particular, teaching has improved in Years 1 and 2, since this is where the majority of unsatisfactory teaching previously occurred. Often the shortcoming related to inadequate subject knowledge. This weakness has been remedied in all areas other than teaching spelling and writing. A systematic programme of training is improving subject knowledge of information and communications technology.
15. Throughout the school, the best teaching had very clear targets for the pupils' learning, which gave purpose to the lessons. These targets were made clear to the pupils. Resources were used well to promote understanding of new concepts. Behaviour was carefully managed and staff remained positive, calm and gently reminded pupils of the expected norms where these were not met. The very good procedures for assessment were generally used well to inform future planning.
16. In the reception classes, which form the Foundation Stage, just over half the teaching was good or better. A third was very good. The following distinctive features were effective in the teaching:
 - sensitivity to the emotional and personal needs of young children beginning school;
 - a well organised classroom and outside area which supported personal development well;
 - clear introduction to the routines of school life;
 - activities chosen to promote social interaction;
 - good example of vocabulary and sentence construction to support children's language development; and
 - very good teaching of basic skills.
17. The children in the Reception classes have made a very good start to their education. After only five half days in school they seemed settled and happy. Careful attention paid to establishing school routines, including at lunchtime, means that these children quickly learn what is expected of them. Consequently, they feel very secure. The furry bear is always available for a quick cuddle if any child feels unsure and this has the desired effect. Staff show a genuine interest in the children's personal affairs, for example enquiring 'How are the twins today?'
18. The classrooms are well organised to support the children's independence in making choices. The range of activities is very appropriate for the children's stage of development. Planning is effective, takes account of observations of the children and relates to the recommended areas of learning. The improvements in the accommodation and staffing since the last inspection mean that the children have appropriate access to the curriculum outside. Teaching develops important basic skills well. For example, counting is used to identify how many children are present each day. Children register themselves in the morning by recognising their name card and filing it appropriately. They are encouraged to write in role-play, for example by preparing menus or shopping lists and are taught letter sounds to help this process. They are given many opportunities to work together and help each other. Consequently their relationships are developing well and their racial harmony is an example to all.
19. In Years 1 and 2, just over a half of teaching was good or better and just over one in ten lessons was very good. Effective teaching showed the following distinctive characteristics:

- good links between subjects to reinforce learning;
 - good discussions at the beginning and at the end of lessons to revise the learning; and
 - good use of additional staff who were well briefed.
20. The use of information and communication technology to support other learning has improved since the last inspection. This is primarily due to improved resources. In English lessons, pupils use computers to record, for example, rhymes they have found. Effective teaching of skills, such as use of the shift key, caps lock and the space bar in dedicated information communication technology lessons supports this work. The curriculum plan is devised well so that related learning from different subjects occurs at similar times. Consequently, in a design and technology lesson in which fruit was prepared, teaching could draw on the work on healthy eating and the need to avoid germs covered recently in science lessons. This makes learning seem purposeful and relevant to pupils.
21. Lessons are well planned and have clear targets for what pupils should learn. Teaching explains new learning well and often employs resources very effectively to support this. For example, in mathematics, mental arithmetic strategies are explained clearly and the teaching often 'models' or shows the example well. Specific vocabulary is introduced, such as 'sour', and 'bitter' to describe the sensation of taste in science, or 'the sum of ' or 'equals' in mathematics. This enables pupils to become articulate and flexible in the language they use and understand. Discussions at the end of lessons review what has been learned well. It often supports pupils to extend their achievement. For example pupils come to scientific conclusions, such as 'the box will go faster with a big push' or reach a deeper understanding, for example of the concept of celebrations.
22. Many lessons, particularly English and mathematics, have an additional member of staff for the year group. These sessions are clearly well planned and all the adults involved are well briefed. The content of the lessons is well thought through. Sometimes the accommodation is unhelpful, for example the area outside the classroom is small. Staff working with these small groups are able to give detailed attention to individual needs. Ongoing assessment during the lesson is generally good as the numbers are manageable. Consequently, points which need to be clarified are quickly identified.
23. Teaching in the Unit was good or better in just over eight out of ten lessons. It was very good in a third of lessons. Ongoing assessment of pupils was very good, resulting in an appropriate match of activities to the individual pupil. Teaching used signs and symbols to help pupils communicate very well. The attention paid to teaching these signs to all pupils in the school to accompany singing in assembly supports inclusion well. The rhythm of change of activities is carefully judged to help the pupils maintain attention and interest. Pupils' challenging behaviour is most often successfully managed with a calm and persistent response. Overall, staff create a welcoming and supportive environment which supports the pupils on the autistic spectrum and with severe learning difficulties to make good progress.
24. Where teaching was only satisfactory the following shortcomings were evident in otherwise effective lessons:
- loss of pace;
 - occasional underuse of additional staff in introductory parts of lessons;
 - ineffective strategies to support correct spelling;
 - over-direction of pupils' work, leading to a lack of challenge;
 - over-long sessions at one activity; and
 - groupings of activities which did not maximise the pupils' opportunity to learn.
25. Loss of pace in parts of lessons resulted in slower progress made by the pupils. This arose for a number of reasons, including organising materials needed for learning, for example dictionaries which were not readily available for the task. In one mathematics lesson, the worksheet given to a group work did not match the learning target for the lesson. Some pupils became confused and their pace of learning slowed. In another, following a good introduction, the explanation of the group task was too hurried, so that pupils were not sufficiently clear about

what they were supposed to do. Sometimes the attention needed to improve behaviour means that the impetus of the lesson is lost.

26. In the majority of lessons, the investment in extra staff pays dividends. Occasionally, especially during introductions to new learning in whole class groups, the additional staff do not have a clear role. As a consequence, they do not make a contribution to the pupils' learning. Sometimes, the organisation of groups in lessons does not consistently take enough advantage of the additional adults. For example, in a lesson designing fruit salads, additional adults were used well to ensure health and safety in the cutting and preparation stage. However, the design process involved the whole class. As a result, pupils did not have enough opportunity to offer individual ideas, so they were not sufficiently challenged. In Reception classes, sometimes activities are over-long for children at an early stage of their education. For example, remaining together on the carpet continuously for a number of different activities or taking part in long physical education lessons. This is particularly tiring for young children.
27. Pupils have many good opportunities to write independently about their learning. For example, they record their findings in science or results of their research in history. However, the scrutiny of work showed marking of pupils' work is not efficient in helping them learn to spell correctly. Sometimes the teacher works very hard correcting every error, but there is no indication that the pupil follows this up. In other work, common errors are left uncorrected so that the error becomes a habit difficult to break. Pupils are sometimes given key words in lessons to support their independent writing. However, many do not make reference to this support and need more reminding to use it.
28. Overall, teaching of individual subjects is satisfactory. Teaching of the National Literacy Strategy is satisfactory. It is good for the National Numeracy Strategy. Teaching of reading, speaking, listening and handwriting, mathematics, art and design, music, physical education and in the specialist Unit is good. Teaching of science, design technology, history, information and communication technology and religious education is satisfactory. Teaching of geography based on the scrutiny of work appears satisfactory. Pupils learn reading skills well and develop strong interest in books. They develop a good use of specific mathematical vocabulary in well-structured lessons where additional staff are used well. Overall, pupils with English as an additional language and with special needs make good progress. This relates to the quality of assessment and the good use of additional staff. In the scrutiny of work of Reception children from the previous year there was some evidence that lower attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress when they are presented with worksheets which are too difficult. The care taken to track pupils' achievements in English and mathematics means that pupils of different attainment progress well in most respects. Pupils over the last two years have been below average on entry to school. Given these relatively low starting points, pupils progress well.

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

29. The school's curriculum is of good quality and fully meets statutory requirements. In addition to the usual range of subjects and activities which are expected in schools, pupils are offered many experiences which enrich their learning. These include story tellers, artists in residence, dancers and musicians. They come regularly into school and pupils go out to visit museums and other places of interest to a far greater extent than in most Infant schools. The balance of the timetable is monitored carefully, but the senior management team adopts a flexible approach which allows for major projects such as 'Inspiration Africa' and 'Arts week'. Teachers' skills are well supplemented by the skills of the visiting artists and musicians. The recent additions of drama and opportunities for class discussions such as Circle Time have further enriched pupils' experience.
30. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is planned according to the recommended areas of learning. It includes good opportunities to explore learning both inside and outside of the classrooms. At the time of the inspection the children had been in school only five half days. The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis at this time on personal, social and emotional development, together with a clear introduction to school routines.

31. All aspects of personal, social and health education are appropriately in place – including information on the use and misuse of medicines and those aspects of growth and development covered by the Governors' policy on sex education. The school has a good and effective strategy for teaching numeracy and a satisfactory strategy for teaching literacy – it is clearly more effective at present for reading than for writing, but is under active review. There are examples of good cross-curricular planning – for example, opportunities for using art and design to support other subjects are planned in detail. There is an innovative 'open' session before morning registration, when parents are welcomed into the classroom: and there is a very popular 'keep fit' club once a week. The nature and quantity of extra-curricular activities are fully appropriate for children of this age.
32. The school includes two specially resourced classes for pupils who have learning difficulties or who are autistic. This has helped to develop a really inclusive ethos. Pupils with distinctive needs, whether these are concerned with learning English as an additional language or with other barriers to learning, are supported alongside other pupils wherever possible and tasks are adapted well to give all pupils access to the curriculum. The signing and use of symbols that are of such value to pupils with communication difficulties are now used by all pupils to the benefit of both groups. Individual Education Plans are integrated into teachers' lesson planning and help pupils make good progress.
33. There are good links with the community through local artists and cultural projects such as 'Inspiration Africa'. The Horniman museum both receives visits from the pupils and exhibits their work and Bromley Business Partnership, working with Railtrack, offers the experience of handling money and reading timetables. There are also good links with Health Authority personnel and with the 'Life Caravan' information and education service. There are good links with local schools and especially with the Junior School. These include a 'link' Governor and many meetings with Junior School staff to discuss pupils' needs prior to transfer.
34. The school makes very good provision overall for pupils' personal development as they progress through the school. There is an improvement in the provision for moral, social and cultural development since the previous inspection.
35. The provision for spiritual development is good. The school provides an environment where all pupils are valued. Stories, discussions and the daily act of worship affirm the importance of respecting others' beliefs and values. The result is that pupils treat each other with sensitivity and respect. Circle Time provides pupils with frequent opportunity to relate what they have learnt in religious education lessons to their own experiences and to explore their own feelings. In this way, pupils are being helped to establish their own sense of values and self worth, as, for example, when Year 2 pupils discuss things that are precious to them. The daily act of collective worship is satisfactory and fulfils statutory requirements. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. There are also some good opportunities for pupils to experience awe and wonder, for example in science and art and design, but there are few planned opportunities for spiritual development in areas of the curriculum outside religious education.
36. The provision for moral development is very good. It is very strongly promoted through the caring ethos of the school that is built upon respect for others. All staff act as very good role models. Without exception, they unflinchingly treat pupils with courtesy and sensitivity. The staff understand the importance of raising self esteem through rewards rather than sanctions. They consistently apply the code of discipline, supported by the effective use of certificates. Moral development is further enhanced through the regular enforcement of basic routines, such as the demonstration of good manners towards each other. Assemblies, stories and discussions are used most effectively to reinforce moral issues. As a result, most pupils develop a clear understanding that there are consequences to the way people behave and they are aware of the difference between right and wrong.
37. Provision for social development is very good. The successful inclusion of pupils with special needs makes a very good contribution towards social development, as pupils learn to show tolerance and patience towards each other. Socially, pupils are encouraged to partner another pupil when help is needed. For example, a pupil who is anxious in the playground will often be

paired with one who is more self-assured. In all levels of school life, pupils are given frequent opportunity to work together and to participate as part of a group, as, for example, when Reception children talk in pairs about the models of Humpty Dumpty that they are making. Pupils are expected to demonstrate responsibility for their own belongings from an early age and to take on responsibility for certain tasks, such as taking the register to the school office. Frequent trips into the wider community to visit places of local interest are particularly effective in developing pupils' social skills, building confidence in relationships and instilling a sense of citizenship. Pupils show concern for others less fortunate than themselves by participating in frequent fundraising events.

38. The provision for cultural development is very good. Knowledge and understanding of pupils' own rich and diverse heritage is promoted well through history, geography and music. This is further enhanced by the provision of frequent opportunities for visits from the school to local areas of interest and by visitors to the school. For example, a grandfather of one of the pupils recently visited the school to talk about local history. The school places high priority in the development of understanding of the beliefs and traditions of other cultures. In this they are well supported by parents, who have been involved in organising activities such as an Afro-Caribbean carnival fair day. There are many planned opportunities across the curriculum to celebrate other cultures, through, for example, music, art and dance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school cares for its pupils very well. It justifiably prides itself on including all the pupils, whatever their ability or background, in the full range of learning opportunities and in the life of the school.
40. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare are very good. All staff, including those new to the school, know who is designated to deal with child protection concerns and are aware in practice what to do should they have any suspicions of child abuse. Most staff have had recent training in child protection procedures, although some non teaching staff have not been sufficiently updated. The school is careful to ensure that they are well informed about pupils entering the school with domestic problems, so that they can call on outside agencies to work together effectively with the school to support the pupil and family.
41. Welfare and first aid procedures are very good. The school has plenty of staff with first aid certificates, and first aid boxes are kept appropriately stocked. All staff are well aware of the pupils with particular medical needs. They have had training in looking after pupils with Epilepsy and can quickly access asthma pumps for those with breathing problems. Bumps and grazes are carefully recorded and parents are notified via a home slip. There is no dedicated welfare room, but minor injuries are administered to effectively on the ottoman bench in the entrance hall. The staff in the Unit are particularly knowledgeable in welfare procedures and support the pupils in their charge very well. Midday meal supervisors are vigilant and caring at lunchtimes. The pupils speak fondly of their mid-day supervisors and often ask them to help with opening difficult lunch packs or to join them in games in the playground. Pupils are protected from offensive materials on the Internet through use of a filtered Internet service and using it only under supervision.
42. The school has very good health and safety procedures. It has worked very effectively since the last inspection to remedy the issues raised: there are now sinks in every classroom; a ramp has been installed to allow disabled access; teachers now all wear suitable clothing to lead physical education lessons. Also, a toilet has been added to each Reception classroom and the Reception children have access to their own special and safe play area. The whole school is secure, well served by keypads on all the entrance doors. The caretaker is conscientious in checking the maintenance and security of the building. The minor recommendations of a recent health and safety audit by the local education authority have been effectively completed.
43. Strategies for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are good. The chance for parents and carers to come into the classrooms and meet the teacher before school starts encourages many parents to come early and make the most of this settling in period. Registration is extremely prompt and latecomers are carefully recorded in the Late Book. This

- allows the school to keep a careful eye on families whose children are persistently late to see if they improve their punctuality. The registers are clear in identifying the reasons for absence. The head teacher frequently reminds parents of the need for their children's regular attendance at school. However, a growing number of parents are taking their children for holidays in term time. The head teacher does not condone this, emphasises the disruption to learning caused by it and asks parents to fill out holiday request forms, but the lure of cheap holidays is often too strong. The school works well with the education welfare service to do spot checks on attendance and to follow up with visits to families with attendance problems.
44. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting acceptable behaviour. Staff have high expectations of appropriate behaviour and act as good role models. Any incidents of bullying are nipped in the bud very quickly. The pupils are clear about the reward system and the acknowledgements they receive for good behaviour and work. They look forward to the Friday assembly when certificates are given out to those pupils who have collected sufficient 'good' stamps. Staff are calm and patient with pupils who misbehave. For the most part, this is effective in not drawing attention to the inappropriate behaviour. However, on some occasions teachers do not clearly identify the boundaries beyond which behaviour is unacceptable, so the disruption drags on throughout the lesson. The school has improved its recording of incidents of poor behaviour since the last inspection. Each class teacher notes any occasions of misbehaviour and identifies how they were resolved. Pupils with particular behavioural problems are very well supported with the use of behaviour charts and the full co-operation of the parents. The expertise in the Unit in dealing with pupils who find concentration difficult is used well throughout the school. Good use is also made of the education authority's behavioural support team to improve behaviour and learning. The introduction of an inclusion access assistant demonstrates the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils gain the most from their learning. The assistant is still defining her role and as yet it is not fully conceived how it will work in practice. Overall, the school is working very well to make sure that misbehaviour is not an obstacle to inclusion in the full learning process.
45. There has been significant improvement in procedures for assessment since the previous inspection and these are now very good. Assessment is rigorously implemented at the beginning of the Reception year and information gained is used well to move children's learning forward. Arrangements for statutory tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 are in line with national procedures. As part of the school's strategy to raise standards a well considered programme of annual tests is also implemented in Year 1. The tests are used to monitor progress in literacy and numeracy. The results are systematically collated and used well to track pupils' progress through the school. Staff analyse the results to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance and make good use of this information to inform their planning in English and mathematics, so that work is well matched to individual needs. In addition, assessment information is used to establish individual targets for improvement in English, although this practice has not yet been extended to the other core subjects of mathematics and science. A strength of the assessment in English and mathematics is the practice of pinpointing assessment within each level of the National Curriculum, so that for example, within level 1 of the National Curriculum the school has established three levels of assessment. This enables teachers to focus very precisely on where weaknesses lie and where to go next to improve standards. Recently, good procedures have been established for assessment in other subjects but they are not yet being used consistently to inform teachers' planning. The school uses national materials to guide teachers in making assessments and for each subject there is a compilation of assessed work to help them further.
46. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are strengths of the school. New Reception pupils are settled into school life very effectively. The opportunity to be visited at home is taken up by nearly all parents, so the pupils rapidly feel at ease with their new teacher and the teacher can make a personal link between home and school. Parents can make several visits before their children start, including the Christmas or summer fair and a meeting with the teacher, so their relaxed confidence in the school rubs off on their children as they start. Very soon new pupils are confident and effective learners. Pupils are given good chances to learn to be independent and responsible. They are encouraged to take on jobs around the class, such as returning the registers to the office or handing out the books. There is no specific sex education, but questions and interest are dealt with sensitively and appropriately. The school makes good use of the visit of the Life Caravan to introduce the

pupils to the use and potential dangers of drugs. Each pupil has individual targets to help them improve their work. Consequently they learn quickly to start to take responsibility for their own learning. However, occasionally, lessons can be too prescriptive and over-directed, which detracts from the ability of pupils to make informed and independent choices. The end of year reports perceptively conclude how each pupil has developed personally over the year. When it is time for the Year 2 pupils to move on, they have a very good number of opportunities to familiarise themselves with the junior school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Parents play a very effective and important part in their children's learning at school and home. The parents are very well included in their children's education, as clearly demonstrated at the beginning of the day when parents are actively encouraged to come into the classrooms for 15 minutes to talk to the teachers, see their children's work and help to settle them for the day. The staff appreciate this very good support of the parents and the school is building up a beneficial partnership for the pupils' good education.
48. Parents are well satisfied with the school. They particularly like the standards achieved, the good progress their children make and the good quality of teaching. They also think highly of the way the school helps their children to be mature and responsible and the good behaviour of the pupils. The inspection team concurs with most of these positive views, but has reservations about the standards in writing and spelling. Parents have some concerns about the range of activities outside lessons, the information they receive on their children's progress and the procedures in school for hearing pupils read. The range of activities outside lessons is good and entirely appropriate for infant pupils. 'Fitzone' is the only organised club after school, but the school is open for 15 minutes before lessons start each day and many families make the most of this time to settle their children. The inspection team agrees that the information on progress is sometimes confusing. Parents do not have a justified cause for worry about reading in school because pupils are heard to read regularly by teachers and class assistants.
49. The quality of information provided to parents is good. General information on the activities in the school and what is being taught is particularly good. Parents receive three different newsletters from the head teacher, the governors and the parent teacher association. Of special note is the regular information sheet from the class teachers on what is going to be taught each week and how parents can help at home. Additionally, several well-attended curriculum open afternoons have informed parents effectively about how numeracy, literacy, science and the arts are taught. The prospectus is informative and gives a good flavour of the school, but the annual report from governors to parents omits many legal requirements. The school has put much thought into the content of the end of year report and has introduced an innovative design. The reports clearly describe what has been taught in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and give a perceptive overview of personal development, but they are not consistent in giving clear messages on how the pupils have progressed in each subject over the year. The indication of simple targets and how parents can help their children progress in their learning is most useful.
50. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good and has improved further still since the last inspection. Parents help the school in many different guises and roles. The active parent teacher association raises valuable funds towards the school's resources. Parents are often seen in school, helping with reading or giving a hand with lessons such as design and technology. Some also are of great assistance in helping to tend the plants in the Reception play area outside. Apart from parents who run the parent teacher association or become parent governors, there are also parent representatives for each class. All these parents are setting a very good example to their children in being active supporters of the school community. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. Attendance is high at events such as parent consultation meetings and curriculum open afternoons. Most parents are conscientious in hearing their children read and encouraging them with their homework. Although parents are very keen to see their children succeed and to do all they can to help, as yet most parents have shown little interest in wider school management issues. The annual governors' meeting draws little support and the response to the consultation on the redesign of the Reception playground was disappointing.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. At the time of the last inspection the leadership and management of the school were judged to be in need of some improvement. This related particularly to the work of the governing body, the quality and impact of plans for improvement and lack of necessary documentation. All these features are now of very good quality and the school should feel justifiably proud of these and its many other improvements. The rate of progress has been rapid and sustained. All key

issues raised by the last inspection have been very successfully addressed, except raising the level of attendance.

52. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction for the school. She combines this with a sensitive understanding of the strengths of her staff, available resources and what is reasonable to tackle. Consequently, the staff are enthusiastic and motivated. The senior management team has very recently expanded to include an assistant headteacher. The distinct roles of the team members have been defined, but common to all is a responsibility for ensuring inclusion of all pupils. This commitment is reflected in the successful integration of pupils from the Unit into the life of the school. Pupils of all levels of attainment and the few who have English as an additional language make good progress in most aspects of their learning. There are harmonious relationships between pupils from different ethnic groups. In common with most schools, girls perform better, overall, than boys in tests.
53. The role of co-ordinators has been strengthened since the last inspection, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the provision in their subjects. Very good assessment procedures are now in place for all subjects which generally provide useful information on the achievement and attainment of pupils. Whilst there are sufficient staff, the school reports difficulty in recruiting desirably qualified and experienced staff, for example to lead mathematics, science and the Foundation Stage. Presently, the headteacher is managing mathematics and the Foundation Stage. Much progress is still being made in these areas, but this is a heavy burden to carry. In common with other small schools, several members of staff carry more than one curriculum post.
54. Effective monitoring procedures include looking at planning, scrutiny of work by the senior management team and interviews with pupils about their work by co-ordinators. In addition, there is detailed tracking of pupils from baseline assessment in Reception class, through tests in English and mathematics in Year 1 to performance in national tests in Year 2. This information is carefully analysed to identify where pupils are achieving well and where standards need to be higher. In national tests in 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics was below the national average. In the last year, the proportion of pupils reaching these levels in mathematics was increased significantly and reached the national average. This is an achievement given the below average starting points of many of these pupils on entry to school. Tracking of pupils' performance has identified clearly that the standards in spelling and writing need to be higher. Consequently this is a major component of the school improvement plan. Analysis of data, supported by the school's information management systems, is very well used to seek improvement.
55. The school has implemented the procedures required for performance management. All the teachers have targets. Observation of teaching is established. The headteacher has an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and uses this very well, with the deputy headteacher, to inform the priorities for inservice training and the school development plan.
56. The governing body is rigorous, vigorous and very effective in meeting its statutory responsibilities. At the time of the last inspection, the same body governed the junior and infant schools. These responsibilities have been separated and the new governing body has been operating for 18 months. In February 2001 it undertook a self-evaluation with the support of the local education authority. It emerged as a highly reflective organisation, eager to improve for the benefit of the pupils. All the action points made by that evaluation with regard to strategic vision, acting as critical friends and calling the school to account for standards have been implemented. The governors are thoroughly familiar with the interpretation of school performance data. They use this to inform their regular visits to classes, interviews with co-ordinators and monitoring. They have good links with the junior school. For example, one governor has oversight of the provision for literacy in both schools. The performance of boys and girls and different ethnic groups has been analysed for the end of Year 2. The governors intend for the current year to begin tracking these groups from Reception class to ensure that their progress is consistently good enough.
57. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The school has carefully planned to spend more money on staff and to deploy them to include all pupils in

raised achievement. The ratio of staff to pupils has improved since the last inspection. The good number of experienced and new staff includes a generous amount of additional teachers and classroom assistants. Extra staff are generally used well to teach small groups outside the classroom or to support in the lesson and so bolster particular pupils' learning. On occasion, the role of the extra adults in the classroom is not sufficiently focused or organised in the best way to promote the pupils' independent learning. Subject expertise is satisfactorily matched to the role of co-ordinators. Due to recent recruitment problems, the head teacher and assistant head teacher have temporarily taken over the co-ordination of mathematics and science. The professional development of staff is well organised to match the current needs of the school and pupils. The midday meal supervisors work very well as a team. Although they do not have regular formal meetings with the senior management team, they feel a valued part of the staff body. The newly qualified teachers from this year and last rightly appreciate the very organised and thorough support they have received.

58. The school has good accommodation. It is well maintained and has been subject to a focused and extensive programme of refurbishment in the past few years, so that the accommodation better complements the infant curriculum. Since the last inspection a secure play area has been designed and set up for the Foundation Stage children, a new playground has been added to the back of the building and the pupils in the Unit have been accommodated in new classrooms in the main building. This accommodation for the pupils in the Unit is satisfactory at the present. However, it will be very cramped when the provision has the full complement of pupils and staff. Sinks have been plumbed in to give each classroom running water and the Reception classes now have their own toilet facilities. Most classrooms are spacious enough for infant pupils. The wide corridor spaces allow for effective group work. However, when pupils sit on cold linoleum in draughty and noisy areas, their concentration and learning are detrimentally affected. The hall is used well for assemblies, lunchtimes and physical education. The school does not have a separate room for a library, but each classroom has a satisfactory supply of books and the library collection is available near the main entrance. Despite this weakness in accommodation, the school is very successful in promoting reading as a pleasurable activity. Outside areas are colourfully decorated with the pupils' murals and provide sufficient space for recreation and physical education. The Reception and Unit pupils have use of a safe and interesting area, with shrubs, trees, an awning for shelter and a safety surface waiting for climbing equipment. The separate buildings that used to house the Unit are now surplus to requirements and are not currently being efficiently used.
59. The range and quality of learning resources are good. The school makes the best use it can of available space to store equipment. Several subject areas were considered to be lacking in resources at the time of the last inspection. The school has invested funds to improve the resources in information and communication technology, history, geography and music. The latter two subjects are now considered to be well resourced. In addition, the school has a good number of laptop computers and a very useful mobile charging unit. The Foundation Stage pupils have an adequate amount of resources and equipment to support their learning.
60. The budget is clearly set to meet the priorities of the school improvement plan. In previous years the emphasis has been on successfully improving shortcomings in the accommodation and resources highlighted by the previous inspection report. This financial year, additional funding and the budget surplus have been targeted on extra staffing to support the involvement of all pupils in lessons, to extend higher attainers and give added support to pupils working at levels below average, particularly in writing. In most respects this is largely successful. However, in a few lessons some additional adults are underused, particularly in the initial introduction. Spending is monitored on a monthly basis by the finance committee and reported to the full governing body at termly meetings. Additional funding to the school budget has been particularly well spent and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, the National Grid for Learning award was spent on six laptops. This is already improving the pupils' access and attainment in information and communication technology. Additional funding has enabled the outside area of the school to be developed to support the curriculum. The Reception classes are particularly fortunate to benefit from this.
61. The school applies the principles of best value well. The staff and governors carefully compare the school's performance with national statistics and take action to remedy any shortcomings.

The outcomes of decisions regarding staffing, curriculum and use of resources are evaluated, using the school's detailed tracking of the progress of individual pupils. Governors intend to analyse performance data at the end of the academic year to ascertain whether the funding on additional staffing has been well spent. Tenders are sought for significant financial contracts. Parents' views were sought on the development of the external parts of the school. Extending this to regular more formal consultation with parents would enhance the good work already being done to achieve best value.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to improve the school further the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (a) carry out the plans to develop staff skills in teaching writing and spelling in order to raise standards in these areas (see paragraphs 3, 4, 14, 27, 73, 74, 87, 94, 103);
- (b) improve the level of authorised attendance by continuing efforts to persuade parents of its importance (see paragraphs 13, 51).

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be included in the plan:

- clarify reports so that distinct judgements are made on both progress and attainment in every subject (see paragraph 48);
- extend the good work in place for seeking best value by consulting parents formally for their views on the quality of provision (see paragraph 61); and
- plan consistently for the use of additional staff so that they contribute to children's learning throughout the lesson (see paragraphs 57, 26, 87, 94).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	18	11	0	0	0
Percentage	0	17	52	31	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	144.5
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	31

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	39	26	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	28	36
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	56	52	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (76)	80 (79)	92 (81)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	35	33
	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	57	59	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (83)	91 (86)	89 (81)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	13
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	7
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	82
Any other minority ethnic group	17

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	229

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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	631 699
Total expenditure	625 130
Expenditure per pupil	3 239
Balance brought forward from previous year	71 495
Balance carried forward to next year	78 064

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	196
Number of questionnaires returned	44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	20	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	30	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	64	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	48	7	5	0
The teaching is good.	59	39	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	39	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	30	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	45	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	36	14	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	45	48	5	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	34	7	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	30	34	7	2

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

63. Important improvements have been made in the provision for pupils in the Reception classes since the last inspection. The successful implementation of the Foundation Stage means there is no longer confusion in the curriculum plan with the requirements of Years 1 and 2. The classrooms are larger and the outside area has been developed to provide well for the curriculum outdoors. These changes in the accommodation have resulted in a curriculum which is no longer over-formal.
64. Children are admitted to the Reception classes in September and January. At the time of the inspection, the children had attended on a part time basis for five days. This is the initial part of a two week part time introduction to school. Their attainment on entry is average, overall, but covers a wide spectrum of ability. This group is likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of Reception. This contrasts with the attainment of the intake for the previous two years which was below and well below average. In particular, the latter groups were below average in reading, writing and knowledge of number.
65. The teaching is good, overall, for all the areas of learning. In particular, at this sensitive time in the children's education, staff are very successfully ensuring their emotional security. Routines are being clearly introduced. The classrooms are well organised to promote children's independence. The open door policy at the beginning of the day enables parents and children to make a relaxed and happy start to the day. Staff provide very courteous role models and help children to develop good relationships. Staff are quick to comment on good behaviour, particularly with the children who sometimes fall short of expectations. Basic skills are well taught. Sometimes this is through demonstration, such as using the mouse to draw on the computer or by encouraging competent children to share these skills. Familiar nursery rhymes and songs are used well to count forwards and backwards. Children are encouraged to write in role play, for example in compiling shopping lists. Learning letter sounds and letter recognition skills support this well. Staff are also very challenging, for example inviting children to reflect on their joining methods of a Humpty Dumpty model and to try new and better ways so that the limbs will move. The scrutiny of work from the previous year suggests that some children of below average attainment are given worksheets which are too difficult to understand even with adult support. Sometimes activities are over-long for these young children. For example, remaining together on the carpet continuously for a number of different activities or taking part in long physical education lessons.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. The induction arrangements are very successful. After only two weeks in school children are showing a high level of involvement in their activities. They come into school very happily with their parents. They are able to make choices about what to do and engage with a sense of purpose. They do not flit from one thing to another. They generally feel secure because of the caring attitude of adults in school. Staff are sensitive to their emotional needs and offer the furry bear to cuddle if someone is feeling unhappy. Relationships between boys and girls, those of different ability and from different ethnic groups are very good. A Middle Eastern boy happily shared his computer skills with a girl and taught her to use different thickness pens and colours and how to print. The clear reinforcement of routines and class conventions of putting up hands and listening to one another helps the children feel secure. Most are competent and confident in taking advantage of the opportunities around them.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Generally the children listen well, although a significant group, mostly boys, finds this difficult on occasion. Sometimes, children spend periods of playing alongside each other in silence, for example when making a model of Humpty Dumpty, using the dolls' house or construction equipment. Staff plan many activities which support social and communication development,

for example games of snakes and ladders, computer work in pairs and discussions. Several children are already confident in giving their opinions in large groups, for example when both Reception classes join for assembly. Staff support language development well by asking questions which require extended answers. They provide good models of replies where children need support. Many children know the names of letters in their first name and some the sound, particularly of the initial letter. The children are being taught letter sounds, but, as yet, many do not recognise or sound these letters independently. The children are given good opportunities to write during their activities. For example, play in the homecorner was extended by the teacher providing paper and encouraging children to write shopping lists. They write letters in the sand and make marks using the computer. Many children can write their name, but a few still make marks which do not resemble letters. They know how books work from front to back and many will 'tell the story' from the picture, even from unfamiliar books.

Mathematical development

68. Many of the children already count objects accurately and recognise most of the numbers to 10. Staff make good links with other areas of learning. Song, in particular, is used well to practise knowledge of numbers. The children enjoy familiar nursery rhymes, counting back the 'six little spacemen' or forward '1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive'. Some confidently count the number of children in attendance along with the teacher up to 15. When playing snakes and ladders they count the correct number from the dice, but do not always go in the correct direction. Some children recognise the dots as a number without counting. Many children already recognise triangles, squares and circles, although some confuse their names. In talk, children use language such as 'bigger' and 'first'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Staff develop the children's skills particularly well in this area. There are very high expectations and the children are already rising to them. They are being carefully introduced to the computer. Direct teaching of skills has enabled some children to draw and print independently, to choose the thickness and colour of pen. They show great keenness to pass on their knowledge. There is a small range of construction equipment available which is used well. Staff are teaching a range of joining techniques and encouraging children to evaluate their models and try again, using newly acquired skills. Challenging discussions are held in whole class groups, for example exploring what worked well, why no one tried butterfly clips and how joining them in different ways could move the limbs.

Physical development

70. The children have very many good opportunities to develop their co-ordination and fine muscle control. They use scissors, pens, paintbrushes, staplers, jigsaw puzzles, dice and counters in games. Most children do so correctly. In the outside area they manoeuvre around each other on tricycles and throw bean bags competently. In physical education lessons in the hall, most can run around without bumping into each other and can find a space. Some children run around fast in circles rather than weaving in and out. Many can undress and dress for these lessons independently. The teaching successfully uses examples of high attainment, for example stretching well to support other children to do better. Where behaviour from a few individuals becomes slightly overexcited the teaching focuses well on positive aspects and uses gentle reminders of the expectations. The children's vocabulary of movement and parts of their body is developed well in these lessons.

Creative development

71. The children enjoy singing and respond well to the humour injected in these lessons. For example the teacher made clucking noises of the chickens in Old Macdonald's Farm, much to their initial surprise and delight. The home corner provides a familiar setting in the children's early days in school to engage in imaginative play and to get to know one another. Both boys and girls enjoy rearranging the wooden dolls' house. They dance enthusiastically to accompany song and gradually refine rhythmic clapping to song with the teacher's support. They are exploring colour through printing with fruit and painting at the easel.

ENGLISH

72. Standards achieved in English by the end of Year 2 are below average, overall, although reading standards are firmly in line with national expectations, as are standards achieved in speaking and listening. Pupils' writing is below average for their age and their spelling is well below average. This picture is seen both in the results of the recent Standard Assessment Tests and in pupils' work seen during the inspection. The school has achieved significant improvement in reading since 1998, in particular raising the proportion of pupils who attain the higher levels in reading tests. The remaining weaknesses in writing and spelling have been identified and are a major focus in the School Improvement Plan. However, effective strategies still need to be put in place and staff training completed as planned. Pupils' progress and achievement in their time at the school are good, as many start school at age five with below average ability and limited experience of books and writing.
73. By the age of seven, pupils can conduct interviews with other pupils about their favourite games, recording them on Dictaphones. They listen well to teachers and to each other and speak clearly, although they do not project their voices well when talking to the whole class. The great majority of pupils can read simple texts fluently, accurately and with good understanding by age seven. The higher attaining pupils can read books consisting of many chapters and which use rich and varied vocabulary. Almost all pupils are positive about reading and many are very enthusiastic, preferring reading, for example, to football. All pupils read well enough by the end of Year 2 to support their work in other subjects. When writing, pupils are confident and willing to 'have a go' and this is to be commended. A few pupils are able to write passages of narrative or poems, choosing their words carefully to make their writing interesting, and spelling most of them correctly. However, most pupils do not get past the stage of writing many words as they sound to them and in their books for English, history and science there are often phrases which adults are unable to read. Pupils are not used to correcting their work and very rarely make an improved draft after the teacher has marked their work. Standards in handwriting are in line with national expectations and the school is working hard, and with some success, at achieving fluent, joined-up writing. Pupils who have special needs achieve well and so do those pupils who are still learning English as an additional language. Boys do not achieve quite as well as girls in English and the school is taking steps to improve boys' performance through purchasing material which will improve their motivation.
74. Teaching in English is satisfactory overall and is good in about half the lessons – occasionally it is very good. Reading is well taught, promoting confidence and good attitudes to learning to read and this contributes to good progress and achievement. Handwriting is also well taught, with teachers demonstrating correct formation consistently and well and most pupils developing fluent and legible writing. There are some good ideas used for promoting good speaking and listening, for example, the use of Dictaphones for interviews to motivate pupils to consider what they should ask and think about how to reply. However, teachers do not have sufficiently effective strategies for teaching writing and spelling. For example, they do not make enough use of re-drafting work, making pupils correct mistakes, or referring to correct models in word banks, personal lists and dictionaries. Pupils, therefore, tend to repeat mistakes again and again. There is some group writing in which a member of staff acts as 'scribe', but this technique is not fully used. There is some evidence of word processors being used to produce a corrected and improved version of a pupil's work, but this is seen too infrequently. In the most successful lessons, activities are well planned with appropriate materials well matched to pupils' different abilities and this helps them work independently and use their time well. In lessons which, although satisfactory overall, require some improvement, pupils are not secure enough in knowing what to do when they are not directly supervised and their rate of work is slow. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, but there needs to be further training focused on teaching pupils to write and spell. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants, leading to good achievement and, similarly, the small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported and achieve well. The school has an inclusive approach and most learning support takes place within the classrooms or in literacy groups. Teachers have been given additional guidance on teaching reading to pupils who have difficulty learning. Teachers assess

pupils' progress and attainment very well, both formally and informally and make satisfactory use of their assessments when planning future lessons.

75. The subject is actively led by an experienced co-ordinator who tracks planning, progress and achievement. The co-ordinator and the senior management team have together identified the difficulties which need to be tackled. The introduction of drama has broadened the curriculum and is likely to improve performance in speaking and writing. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is satisfactory, overall. It is working well for reading, speaking and listening, but is not effective enough for writing and spelling. Whilst pupils are given many opportunities to write for other subjects they need more support to spell correctly. Teachers will need to introduce more flexibility into the scheme of work so that pupils do not move on to new work until previous knowledge and skills are really secure – even if this means that the scheme of work is not completely covered. Resources for English have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. The library contains a satisfactory selection of non-fiction books, but is limited by the space available. However, this provision does contribute well to pupils' positive attitudes to reading.

MATHEMATICS

76. Standards of work are improving and, at age seven, most pupils attain the levels expected for their age. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Pupils' numeracy skills are average and improving. They achieve well from their starting points because of rigorous teaching that is firmly based on the National Numeracy Strategy and appropriate to individual pupils' needs. Standards have risen since the previous inspection.
77. In 2000, results in the national tests for seven year olds were below the national average and similar schools. An average proportion of pupils achieved the expected levels for their age, but the proportion attaining the higher level was below average. In 2001, test results indicate a significant improvement of pupils attaining the higher level. At this early stage in the school year, on the basis of their previous year's work, the improvement in standards is being maintained, with the majority of pupils attaining the expected standard and about 25 per cent attaining the higher standard.
78. The brisk mental session at the start of each lesson is effective in focusing attention on the many different ways of dealing with numerical operations and pupils make sound progress in the development of their mental arithmetic skills across the school. Pupils in Year 2 count up and down in tens from numbers between ten and 100. Most can state whether numbers are more than or less than ten and can rapidly calculate single digit numbers added to multiples of ten. In Year 1, number rhymes and songs are used well to reinforce counting skills and pupils correctly count forwards and backwards from 20.
79. Pupils are making good progress in their numeracy skills and they are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Teachers successfully build pupils' confidence in the application of number skills through the use of a wide variety of stimulating materials and techniques, as for example by using dice to consolidate pupils' understanding of number bonds to ten. As a result, pupils acquire a variety of strategies for calculation, including estimation and rounding up and down. Most pupils are able to identify the value of different digits in three digit numbers and the more able add and subtract three digit numbers confidently.
80. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of shape, space and measure. They learn to use standard measurements as they calculate length and weight, although this knowledge is not applied often enough in other subjects. They can interpret data and make reasoned judgements from pictorial data, as for example when they use a bar graph to identify which pupil has the largest number of stickers. However, the school is aware that the use of computer skills is insufficiently integral to work in mathematics and is in the process of improving this provision, given the recent acquisition of adequate resources.
81. Pupils are given good opportunity in mathematics lessons to apply their numerical skills in practical experiences, such as in the class shop. However, there are fewer opportunities for numeracy across other areas of the curriculum.

82. Teaching is good, overall, throughout the school. It was good in three of the five lessons observed, very good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. The quality of teaching contributes significantly to pupils' learning and the improving standards. Strong emphasis is given to the correct use of mathematical terminology and this contributes well to the development of literacy skills. The well-balanced, three-part lessons are providing good opportunities for pupils to gain and extend knowledge, practise new skills and share ideas. The lessons promote interest and pupils mostly concentrate well on their tasks. Good lessons include purposeful use of time and resources and tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson in which pupils were involved in adding multiples of 10. The higher attaining pupils were calculating numbers over 100 and were efficiently using a variety of resources, including number squares and number lines to help them in their calculations. Lower attaining pupils were receiving good support from a learning assistant so that they were correctly calculating pairs of multiples of ten. Where the lesson was satisfactory rather than good, the teacher lost sight of what the pupils were expected to learn during the middle part of the lesson and at this point some pupils became rather confused as to what was expected of them. In all lessons, practical activities are helping pupils learn to develop strategies and reinforce their understanding of number. Teachers make good use of assessments to ensure that pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged, with the result that all are making good progress and achieve well.
83. The headteacher, as co-ordinator, has worked very well to promote mathematics and improve standards. The attainment of higher attaining pupils was identified as an area for improvement and initiatives have been implemented that have been successful in raising standards for this group of pupils. For example, the school has brought in specialist teachers to work with these pupils in each year group and detailed tracking procedures are now in place in order to focus as closely as possible on specific needs of individual pupils.

SCIENCE

84. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in teacher assessments at age seven was just below the national average. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels and higher were similar to the national average. There are no national comparisons available for 2001 but the overall performance of pupils is similar to 2000. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved significantly. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and lessons now have a consistently clear focus which is understood by the pupils.
85. The scrutiny of work from last year and assessment data show that pupils acquire a broad scientific knowledge and make satisfactory progress, overall. They understand that push and pull are forces. They know these forces can alter the speed and direction of a moving object. They sort objects in various ways: natural and man-made, magnetic and non-magnetic and by their material, for example plastic or wood. Higher attaining pupils identify the specific purposes materials can best be used for, according to their distinctive properties. Pupils investigate where mini beasts can be found in the school environment. This knowledge is extended by use of reference books. They learn about healthy eating and the benefits of exercise. Knowledge about germs and hygiene is reinforced well in design and technology lessons when making, for example, fruit salads. In investigations and experimental work, pupils of below average attainment find difficulty in recording their work. They are able to describe, for example, features of living things and materials, but they do not readily compare them. Both average and above average attainers are developing an understanding of fair tests and make predictions about what will happen. The higher attainers record their findings and label diagrams in greater detail. Many pupils find it difficult to draw conclusions from their investigations.
86. Pupils show a great interest in their lessons. They particularly enjoy moments of revelation, for example the unexpected taste of lemon juice or vinegar. Pupils in Year 2 were delighted by the surprise of the unexpectedly slow motion of a relatively small box. It had been filled with heavy objects. Pupils with special needs contribute well to discussion in lessons.

87. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. Planning is effective. Lessons have clear targets for the pupils' learning and resources are well prepared. Staff are skilful in using resources to promote understanding. Ideas and vocabulary are introduced and reinforced well by use of the white board and in whole class discussions. Additional staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in group work. They are occasionally under-used in whole class sessions. Due care is paid to ensuring health and safety, for example by supplying spoons for each pupil when tasting food. Pupils are encouraged to write about their work independently. No examples of copied work were evident in the scrutiny. Marking of this work sometimes includes very careful correction of spelling errors, but the pupils do not follow this up. In lessons, when key words are helpfully provided many pupils do not make use of them. Consequently, writing by pupils with below average attainment does not always communicate its meaning. The examples of pupils' work did include some bar charts recording the distance travelled by vehicles. However, these were not labelled. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in science investigations. Teaching often challenges pupils with thought provoking questions which support pupils in making high level conclusions, for example 'why did the middle sized box move so slowly?' However, higher attaining pupils could be challenged further by developing their own tests and investigations by the end of Year 2.
88. The school has had no success in recruiting a science co-ordinator externally. This post has been taken by the assistant headteacher from the beginning of term. Despite this difficulty, the school has accurately identified the way to raise attainment in the subject. The application of information and communication technology has been limited in the past because of lack of resources. Raising challenge for higher attainers and use of ICT are key priorities in the school improvement plan. The science curriculum is well resourced and the equipment is well organised.

ART AND DESIGN

89. Standards in art and design, as judged by the quality of pupils' work, exceed national expectations. Standards have risen since the last inspection, when they were judged to be in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 2, pupils can make careful observational drawings of flowers and buildings, mix colours to create particular effects and adapt the style of artists such as Monet and Munch for use in their own work. They use sketch books and develop their ideas; they can use a wide variety of fabric printing and stencilling techniques and create three-dimensional works, using clay, paper pulp and fabric; they can make paper sculptures to illustrate words like "wiggly" and "wavy", and make pictures with mosaics.
90. No art and design lessons could be seen during the week of the inspection so no judgement can be drawn from the quality of teaching in lessons. However, the quality of pupils' work and the abundant documentary and photographic evidence point to good teaching throughout the school. The subject knowledge of the teachers is supplemented by the skills of visiting artists and by visits to museums and galleries and these are frequent occurrences. The exciting programme of experiences clearly increases the pupils' enthusiasm as well as introducing them to a wide range of techniques and styles from all over the world. All pupils have access to these experiences and those pupils with special educational needs, or who are additional language learners, benefit particularly from them and achieve well. There is unusually thorough assessment of pupils' progress and attainment in art and design, and this contributes to good achievement and progress. There is imaginative use of new technology; for example, pupils have used the computer art program to express their feelings about music; others have been able to see their own work displayed on the Internet.
91. Art and design is well co-ordinated and whole school themes and arts weeks are organised which increase pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Opportunities for art and design work are planned into all subject areas. The school allocates very good resources to this area and achieves its aim of enriching the lives of all pupils through the arts. The pupils' displayed work makes all classrooms and corridors bright and colourful places and gives pupils a real sense of achievement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. In common with the findings of the last inspection, pupils make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected of them by the end of Year 2. Since that time, the school has put in place very good procedures for assessing design and technology.
93. The scrutiny of work from last year, reference to the school portfolio and assessment data and photographs of special events show that pupils have good design and making experiences. They develop the necessary skills, for example to make wheeled vehicles, lanterns and cards using slides and levers. They learn related vocabulary such as 'chassis' and 'rod'. Average and higher attaining pupils evaluate their work and make suggestions for improvement. Relatively few pupils plan their work using detailed and labelled diagrams. Below average attainers and those with special educational needs most often use pictures to describe the making process. Pupils from different ethnic groups make similar progress. Pupils' attitudes in their lesson are satisfactory.
94. Based on the one lesson observed, the scrutiny of work and assessment data, teaching is satisfactory. The lesson observed in Year 1 involved making a fruit salad. Pupils are given clear instructions in the safe use of tools and in handling food safely and hygienically. This is reinforced well by linked science lessons exploring senses which discuss the need to avoid passing germs when tasting different foods. Resources are well prepared. The prescribed nature of some instructions means that pupils are not always given enough opportunity to make choices in the task, for example which fruits to combine. Parents who help in these activity-based lessons are well briefed on their roles. However, the additional adults are not consistently best used. Pupils could discuss in smaller groups more easily, rather than as a whole class, what they have done or make suggestions for improvements. Pupils use their literacy skills appropriately to plan and evaluate their work, but need more support in using correct spelling.
95. The co-ordinator is well informed and active in seeking improvement in the subject. The development of use of information and technology communication is the priority for this year. At present both information and communication technology and numeracy make little contribution to the subject. Resources are satisfactory. Special events such as art week enrich the curriculum and give pupils time to finish products such as wheeled vehicles by painting and varnishing.

GEOGRAPHY

96. It was possible to see only one lesson during the inspection and judgements are supported by evidence from pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Attainment is broadly in line with national expectations and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Curriculum planning has improved and geography is now taught throughout the year. A recently introduced scheme of work is being used effectively to plan the delivery of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum.
97. At age seven, pupils have made satisfactory progress in their acquisition of geographical skills and knowledge. They learn about the local area from walks and bus trips, locating specific physical and human features such as parks and shops. They draw simple maps of the route from school to the local town, using keys to identify main features. Pupils enjoy visits to contrasting localities and produce a class booklet showing similarities and differences. Some pupils have difficulty describing the reasons for their views on these locations. They have visited Kew Gardens, writing detailed descriptions of the conditions and plants inside the glass houses. As they plot the journeys of the class bear 'Barnaby', who is taken around the world on holidays, pupils are learning to identify major countries on a world map and to pinpoint the position of these countries on the globe. They enjoy learning about the conditions of other countries as they hear for example, what types of food Barnaby bear ate while in Spain.
98. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are given appropriate tasks and good support which enables them to make the same progress as other pupils. All pupils benefit from the good provision of resources which have been improved since the previous inspection and are easily accessible in each classroom.

99. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, but, in the lesson seen during the inspection the quality of teaching was satisfactory. The lesson was very well prepared and organised, so that a brisk pace was maintained throughout, thereby enhancing pupils' learning. The teacher had clearly made good assessment of pupils' needs and was building well on previous learning. However, as the lesson progressed some pupils were given tasks that did not sufficiently relate to what the pupils were intended to learn, which limited progress during this part of the lesson. Most pupils enjoy geography and behave well. In discussion, they are polite and friendly and keen to talk about what they have learnt.
100. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and efficient, managing the subject well. Assessment procedures have been recently improved and are now good, but have not yet had time to have a positive impact on standards. A good programme of visits makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning and social and cultural development. As yet information and communication technology does not contribute significantly to the subject.

HISTORY

101. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected for them at the age of seven years. This is in common with the findings of the last inspection. Since that time, the school has made the following important improvements: a policy and useful assessment procedures are now in place. The plan for the curriculum has been reviewed in the light of changes in legislation. These improvements are not yet sufficiently established to have had an impact on standards. The co-ordinator is well established and is making a good contribution to leadership of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are now making satisfactory progress.
102. As the inspection was timed so early in the academic year the scrutiny of work is taken from last year. Based on this, pupils reach a good understanding of the differences in domestic life between their own experience and people in the past. For example, these include how toys have changed and what holidays were like in the post Second World War period. Only higher attaining pupils explain the reasons for change and they make good use of different sources for information, including the Internet. Below average attainers can sequence pictures to show the chronology of change, for example of toys and domestic tools. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They try to present their work well. In the one lesson observed all groups of pupils listened and showed interest.
103. Based on the one lesson seen and the scrutiny of work, teaching is satisfactory. The curriculum is planned well, with clear objectives for the pupils' learning. The use of resources, for example a 1912 map of local allotments, helps pupils understand different ways the past is represented and to develop historical 'detective skills' to identify change over time. The school uses the local community well. During the inspection, a grandad spoke to Year 2 pupils about his holidays at Ramsgate in the fifties. He used photos from the family album and clearly captured the pupils' interest. Their writing and questions showed their grasp of the differences and similarities between his experiences and their own. Pupils are regularly encouraged to write independently about their historical work. However, they are not helped sufficiently to use correct spelling, for example by making reference to relevant word banks. This means that they rehearse incorrect spelling and some work by lower attaining pupils is not possible to understand.
104. Leadership and management of the subject are enthusiastic and effective. The resources are satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched well by visits to places such as The Ragged School and Bodiam Castle. Overall, the use of information and communication technology has been limited in the past because of lack of equipment. This has been addressed in the previous term through special funding and developing this aspect is a focus of the school improvement plan.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards attained by pupils in information and communication technology are on track to meet national expectations by the end of Year 2. Recent improvements in equipment have begun to give all pupils much more experience of working with computers, but many pupils still work

slowly because of lack of prior experience; for example, they take a long time to find a letter on the keyboard. Pupils can write words and sentences, use art programs to draw pictures and combine text and pictures. As yet, they have had too little experience of reviewing and modifying their written work. They have printed out decorated labels for their coat-pegs. Pupils know about the Internet as a source of information and as a means of communication and have seen their own artwork displayed on a web page. They understand how information and communication technology is used in devices that are in everyday use, such as tape recorders and microwave ovens and they can guide programmable toys and use adventure games. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection towards the more rigorous standards now required and the new laptop computers have begun to make a real impact on standards, although starting from quite a low level. All pupils now have access to computers and there are good, specialised programs available for pupils with special educational needs. The use of symbols generated by computers to communicate messages, an important part of teaching in the special Unit classes, is now extending to all classes. This is very helpful in ensuring the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in the work of the whole school.

106. On the basis of one short observation of an ICT lesson, plus use of information and communication technology in other subject areas, for example the use of the Internet in history and for design in art and design, it appears that teaching is satisfactory. Subject knowledge is variable and not all teachers have yet undergone the basic training currently being offered to schools. Sometimes pupils do not receive enough support from staff where use of the computer is part of a lesson involving different group activities and they work too slowly, but attitudes are good and pupils help each other. Some inappropriate things have been taught in the past – such as use of the Capitals Lock rather than the Shift Key, but the scheme of work now in place should ensure that basic skills are correctly taught. Assessment sheets have been introduced and these are intended to help to track pupils' development of skills.
107. The co-ordinator is active and enthusiastic. In the short time she has been leading the subject she has put in place appropriate schemes of work, monitored pupils' performance and begun to build up a portfolio of work samples. She is able to offer good support to colleagues when difficulties arise. Resources are now satisfactory and are still improving and further staff training is planned.

MUSIC

108. Standards in music by age seven meet national expectations for pupils of this age and the school has maintained its standards since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils can sing with good pitch and rhythm. Many can, with support, compose rhythmic and original sequences of sound, using hand and body movements and can talk about how different music makes them feel. Recording of composed sequences, for example, through symbols, is at a very early stage. Pupils listen well to recorded and live music and they perform for the whole class the sequences they have composed. The higher attainers are beginning to improve and develop their work. Pupils know the names of common percussion and brass instruments and know something about how sound is produced by each one. They are familiar with some musical terms, for example, pitch, tempo and timbre, and they can choose and order sounds to create a particular effect. Pupils follow instructions well and can start and stop on command and play louder and softer at a sign from the teacher. All pupils have access to music lessons and activities, including those who, because of English language learning or special needs, sometimes find spoken language difficult to understand and these pupils make good progress.
109. Teaching in music is good. Most lessons are taught by the specialist co-ordinator and by a visiting music teacher. Knowledge of the subject is good and this ensures that pupils have stimulating teaching which helps them to listen carefully and enjoy their music. The teacher illustrates musical vocabulary very well, using drum and triangle to illustrate the difference between playing loud and soft, surprising the pupils with sudden loud playing. These vivid illustrations help pupils understand and remember what they are taught. There is good ongoing assessment which is used to ensure that all pupils develop skills and knowledge securely. Lessons are well-planned and targets for learning very clear and shared with the pupils who work hard and maintain their motivation through the various activities. Work in pairs helps pupils' social awareness and pupils can show great concern, patience and consideration for a

partner who is unable to do what is asked for any reason. Pupils enjoy making and listening to all kinds of music.

110. Music is well led: the music co-ordinator has put in place appropriate schemes of work and assessment procedures. She has overseen the improvement since the last inspection in the quality and range of musical instruments available to pupils. She also co-ordinates themes in the school concerts and has established a programme of music to be played and discussed in assemblies. A 'have a go' drum show is planned for the near future and live musicians, from different cultural groups, are invited whenever possible. Information and communication technology supports the subject well.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. A lesson was observed in each year group, both of which involved games. Standards in games are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2. In Year 1, pupils make good progress in their games skills and achieve well.
112. Pupils in Year 2 move around the hall with appropriate control when skipping, jumping and running, but a significant minority demonstrate a lack of awareness of space, keeping to the middle of the room and bumping into other pupils when changing direction. Most pupils can send and receive a ball or beanbag accurately. Higher attaining pupils competently catch a ball in one hand. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate good skills for their age. They have a good understanding of the routines required for safe working in the hall, responding promptly for example to adults' instructions. Many pupils demonstrate good control as they practise different ways of controlling balls. For example, one girl used her feet very efficiently to manipulate a small ball along the floor, as she kept the ball close and prevented it from rolling away.
113. The quality of teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. Where teaching was good, the lesson included warm up and cool down sessions and pupils were given maximum opportunity to engage in physical movement. A strong feature of this lesson was the opportunity provided at the beginning for pupils to make their own choice of equipment as they spent some time practising skills previously learned. Learning was further enhanced as the teacher effectively developed skills during the lesson with suitably challenging activities. For example, pupils were effectively encouraged to improve their throwing skills as they aimed a beanbag at a ball to make it move. In both lessons, teachers were appropriately dressed and pupils were used well to demonstrate examples of good practice. Although most pupils behaved well, both lessons were disturbed in parts by the unruly behaviour of a minority of pupils. Although teachers demonstrated good control, the time taken to manage these pupils' behaviour and regain their attention slowed the pace of the lesson and restricted learning.
114. Planning has been improved since the last inspection. A new scheme of work has recently been introduced that is already beginning to have a positive impact on progress, as demonstrated by the good achievement that is evident in Year 1. Assessment procedures have also been improved and are now good. Teachers consistently monitor which pupils have exceeded or are not meeting expectations in standards, although they are not yet regularly using assessment to inform future planning. The subject is managed well by an able and enthusiastic co-ordinator. There are good resources for the effective delivery of all parts of the programmes of study.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. As at the time of the previous inspection, attainment at the end of Year 2 is in line with that expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. Good assessment procedures are now in place, although these have not yet had time to affect standards.
116. A new scheme of work has been drafted, which has successfully adapted the locally agreed syllabus and a national scheme to the specific needs of the school. Pupils make sound progress as they develop their awareness about religion and also what can be learnt from it.

Much emphasis is given to relating pupils' knowledge to their own lives and this promotes a sound understanding of the underlying principles of faiths.

117. At age seven, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of stories from the Bible and understand that these stories have deeper meaning. They know about some events in the life of Christ and begin to understand what relevance these have to their own lives. For example, as they learn about the Easter Story pupils apply their writing skills to describe their feelings on Lent. Pupils know about other major Christian festivals, such as Christmas and harvest and about major festivals and events in other faiths, such as the Jewish festival of Hanukkah. Pupils are beginning to recognise that there are differences between their own religious customs and those of other faiths, and that religious beliefs affect the way that people live.
118. Of the two lessons that it was possible to observe during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good in one lesson and in the other satisfactory. Where teaching was good the lesson was efficiently planned, relevant and interesting, with resources and questioning used well to promote good attitudes to learning. Progress was good because, as the class discussed celebrations, the teacher effectively related the knowledge that was being taught to the pupils' own experiences. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good the pace of the lesson became too slow and pupils began to lose interest. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall, as most listen carefully and respond appropriately in discussion. However, a minority of pupils do not sit quietly and fail to participate fully in the lesson.
119. The subject co-ordinator has been most effective in improving the curriculum through the new scheme of work and instigating assessment procedures, although she has not yet had time to evaluate the success of these initiatives by checking the standards achieved. The subject is well resourced. There are some visits to local places of worship and local religious leaders are involved in supporting learning. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the study of faiths and moral issues. Collective worship sometimes includes faith stories and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' religious education. As yet information and communication technology is not used to support learning in this subject.

UNIT FOR SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

120. The school has two classes which were established for pupils with severe learning difficulties. One class caters for the younger children and one for pupils up to age eight. The London Borough of Bromley has recently designated these classes as a resource for autistic pupils and many of the pupils in the two classes now fall within this group. Children admitted to the special classes will have a statement of special educational needs on which Alexandra Infants Specialist Provision is named as the most appropriate school. All pupils have an individualised programme tailored to meet their needs and integration experiences are carefully planned for lessons and assemblies wherever appropriate.
121. It is inappropriate to judge pupils' attainment by age related national standards, because of their special needs. Pupils achieve well and make good progress towards the targets on their Individual Education Plans. Pupils use signing to support their communication and pictorial symbols to help them understand the timetable and the structure of the day. Most can recognise their own name written in joined script and can trace over it with their finger. Some can read and write words and draw pictures to help them express themselves. They are developing the concepts of 'more' and 'less' and many can count objects up to five or even beyond. In art and design, pupils contribute to class collages and make leaf prints; in music, they join in singing and show interest in musical instruments. Pupils use appropriate computer programs to help them with reading and number work. They join in school lunch and school assemblies and work towards joining ordinary classes for selected activities such as physical education. They are included in school outings, such as the trip to Kew Gardens. Within the lessons in the special classrooms are many activities aimed at helping them to relate to one another, develop good work habits and behave appropriately. Games, class assembly, Circle Time and drinks time are all successful parts of their social development.

122. Teaching in the special classes is good, overall. Despite the challenging behaviour of the pupils and the recent increase in pupils with autism, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen and three out of four lessons were good or very good. Teachers have good general teaching skills and good knowledge of behaviour management techniques. They are still in the process of learning specialist techniques which are appropriate for autistic pupils, but are already using well skills which they have learned in recent training courses. In particular, there is good use of symbols and reference objects which show pupils what activities have finished and what is coming next. Classroom assistants play a full and valuable part in teaching activities and there is excellent teamwork. In the most successful lessons, pupils move between activities smoothly and with no wasting of time. The staff judge their concentration span very well, so that they are working hard all the time. Teaching and learning are both very intensive in this kind of classroom, but the pupils show great benefits in the progress that they make and the more settled behaviour they achieve. Staff have had some training in handling and restraint – both of which may be needed with this pupil group – but are still sometimes a little tentative and nervous. Additional training is planned and this will further increase their skill and confidence. Continued specialist support and training from the Borough are essential, as is contact with other schools and units dealing with pupils on the autistic continuum. Teachers plan well and alongside the corresponding age group in the mainstream classes. This ensures that pupils have access to a full and balanced curriculum and have maximum opportunity to join ordinary classes where possible. These inclusion experiences are very carefully prepared and monitored to ensure that pupils do not fail or disrupt the learning of others. Individual Education Plans are well written and pupils have additional short term targets to work on, which are shared with them and which help them to progress. Assessment is of good quality and classroom assistants take an active part in recording pupils' responses and achievements. Good discussions and teamwork ensure that the results of assessment are fed in to future planning.
123. The special classes are well led by the special educational needs co-ordinator with very good support from the head teacher and senior management team which ensures that these pupils are really part of the school. The new buildings which have brought the special classrooms, formerly in huts in the grounds, inside the main building, have greatly enhanced the pupils' physical environment and opportunities for inclusion.
124. The special resource classes now provide a good education for their pupils and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. These improvements are seen in the quality of teaching, the accommodation and resources, better Individual Education Plans and improved use of assessment.