

INSPECTION REPORT

CHILDERIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

New Cross, London

LEA area: Lewisham

Unique reference number: 100675

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Hollis

Reporting inspector: Mr George Crowther
18814

Dates of inspection: 26th – 30th November 2001

Inspection number: 230287

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss Dinah Griffiths
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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George Crowther <i>Registered inspector</i> 18814	Science Art and design Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The schools results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Elizabeth Dickson <i>Lay inspector</i> 19653		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?
Jo Harris <i>Team inspector</i> 3678	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Religious education	
Andrew Hicks <i>Team inspector</i> 25778	Information and communication technology Music	
David Mylroie <i>Team inspector</i> 28069	Mathematics Design and technology English as an additional language	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
Susan Senior <i>Team inspector</i> 10226	Geography History	
Kate Sheraton <i>Team inspector</i> 17752	English Physical education Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Childeric is a large, community primary school for boys and girls who are 3-11 years old. It has 350 full-time pupils in the main school and 59 who attend the nursery, 35 full time and 24 part time. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds, which the school regards as a great strength. The school is situated in an area of considerable social disadvantage and is part of an Education Action Zone. It serves many families whose social circumstances are much less favourable than national averages. More than half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is well below average, and very low in their language and social skills. About a third of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, of whom seven have a statement. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. About two-thirds of the pupils are learning English as an additional language, and about half of these are at the early stages of learning English, a very high proportion compared with the national picture. The school has had a very high turnover of teachers during the past two years and there are still considerable difficulties appointing permanent staff. This has affected the quality of teaching and learning in some classes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Childeric is an improving school. It provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils, in challenging circumstances, but it still has weaknesses that reduce its effectiveness. Although the staff have succeeded in improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour, a small minority of pupils still find it difficult to respond well in lessons, which limits their progress. Senior staff have put in place better systems to improve teaching and learning, but these have yet to have an impact on raising standards of attainment. There is a positive, friendly atmosphere within the school that supports pupils' learning. Many pupils start school with considerable weaknesses in their knowledge and skills, particularly in English, but most pupils achieve in line with their abilities. Attainment in Year 6, however, is still below national expectations in mathematics, and well below expectations in English and science, owing to the large proportion of pupils who have special needs or who are learning English as an additional language. Although many teachers are new to the school, or teaching on a temporary basis, the quality of teaching is good for the youngest children and satisfactory overall. Leadership and management of the school are good and the headteacher is providing a strong lead in seeking to raise pupils' attainment. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Good leadership by the headteacher and senior staff is improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Very good teaching in the nursery gives children a good start to school.
- The school provides good care and support for all pupils, many of whom have particular social, emotional and learning needs.
- The school provides good information for parents and encourages them to be involved in their children's education.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is not high enough.
- The unsatisfactory attitudes to learning and poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils in most classes restrict their progress and that of other pupils.
- There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some lessons.
- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough or are late for school too frequently.
- Information about pupils' attainment and achievements is not used effectively to plan the next steps in learning.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in June 1998, the school was judged to provide a satisfactory standard of education, but there were significant weaknesses in leadership and management, the quality of teaching, the planning of the curriculum, and the assessment of pupils' achievements. Too little progress was made in tackling these weaknesses until the appointment of a new headteacher just over a year ago. Since then, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the action points, which have become an integral part of its plans for improvement. The leadership and management of the school are now much better organised, so key staff are beginning to have an impact on raising standards. The quality of teaching has improved. The curriculum is organised and planned more systematically. Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is more effective. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are now in place so that strengths can be shared and weaknesses identified and tackled. As yet, these measures have resulted in only marginal improvements in pupils' attainment in national tests, but there is already evidence that standards are beginning to improve. The school is continuing to improve, and has a good capacity to raise standards further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E*	E*	E*	E	highest 5% of schools A*
mathematics	E	E*	E*	E*	well above average A
science	E*	E*	E*	E	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E
					lowest 5% of schools E*

Results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 reflect the low attainment of many pupils when they join the school, and are further depressed by a high turnover of pupils. Results in the 2001 tests for English, mathematics and science were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Comparisons with 'similar schools' are weak, but these are based solely on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. This school has a number of other factors that lower attainment, such as the high proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language. The school did not reach the targets it had set itself in English and mathematics, but the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in English and science improved significantly. Over the past four years, results have improved at a similar rate to the national trend.

Attainment on entry to the school is well below average compared with what is expected nationally. In the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception), pupils' achievements are good, but very few reach the expected standard by the time they join Year 1, except in their physical skills. In the infants, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but attainment at the end of Year 2 is still well below national expectations.

Attainment in the current Year 6 is below national expectations in mathematics, and well below expectations in English and science. In all three subjects, however, pupils' achievements in the juniors are satisfactory, apart from a small minority, mainly boys, whose poor attitudes to learning limit their progress. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are weak. In some lessons in subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers make sure that these skills are used and developed, but this is not planned systematically enough. In religious education, pupils' achievements are good because many show a particular interest in the subject; attainment in Year 6 matches that expected by the locally agreed syllabus. In design and technology and physical education, pupils make good progress, and reach standards that are close to national expectations. In information and communication technology (ICT), geography and history, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but attainment in Year 6 is below national expectations. In art, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because they do not develop a wide enough range of skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils like coming to school. Most pupils are interested in their lessons, though many find it difficult to channel their efforts and concentrate on their work. A small minority of pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes to learning and do not try hard enough.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A few pupils misbehave too often, which affects their learning and that of others. Nineteen pupils have been excluded from school in the past year; this has helped to set acceptable standards of behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Whatever their background, pupils generally work and play well together. Relationships between pupils and adults are good, but some pupils find it difficult to sustain stable relationships. They respond positively when given opportunities to take on responsibility, but they do not readily show initiative.
Attendance	Poor. Well below the national average. Too many pupils are late for school, which disrupts the beginning of the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a number of good features, and has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is very good in the nursery and good in the reception class. A good range of well-chosen activities helps the children to grow in confidence and to develop their skills steadily. Throughout the school, lessons are prepared carefully, and most teachers have good skills in managing pupils' behaviour, which can be challenging. As a result, in many lessons, pupils enjoy their work and make good gains in learning.

Where teaching was good or very good, learning was organised in small steps, often through practical activities, and tasks were well matched to pupils' needs so that they could be successful. In these lessons, teachers were very clear about what pupils should learn, activities were interesting and pupils got a lot done. In many lessons, classroom assistants made an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Where teaching had weaknesses, the teacher did not succeed in ensuring that all the pupils were engaged in their learning, so time was lost in managing misbehaviour. A slow pace to learning or too much time spent listening to the teacher were weak features of some lessons. The teaching of English is satisfactory across the school. The teaching of mathematics is good in the infants but has weaknesses in the juniors. Throughout the school, each class contains a significant proportion of pupils who have poor learning skills. They find it hard to sustain concentration and to make an effort with their work. In these circumstances, teachers have to be very skilled to ensure that progress is made.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Good for children in the nursery and reception classes. Good practical work in a number of subjects, but a weakness in art. In some subjects, nationally recommended schemes of work are used without sufficient adaptation. Some lessons start late because staff have to ensure that pupils are settled. Religious education, personal and social education, and extra support for English and mathematics are good features. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Provision is often good in lessons, with both teachers and classroom assistants supporting these pupils well. The organisation of provision across the school, however, is unsatisfactory, which leads to inconsistencies in the support pupils receive in lessons.
Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Teachers are well aware of the needs of these pupils and provide appropriate activities and good support. The specialist support teachers make a good contribution in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Staff think pupils' personal development is very important, and it is promoted effectively. There is good provision for pupils' moral and social development through lessons and the day-to-day life of the school. Spiritual and cultural development are sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Making sure that pupils are settled and happy in school is a major priority. The school has good procedures to ensure that pupils are cared for effectively.
Assessment	Satisfactory. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are improving, but teachers are not yet making full use of the information gathered to track pupils' progress across the school and to plan appropriate work for them.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works hard to develop a good partnership with parents and encourages them to be involved in the work of the school and their children's learning. Many parents, however, do not involve themselves in the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides highly committed and effective leadership, with a clear focus on raising standards. She is receiving good support from the newly-appointed deputy, and from senior colleagues who lead teams of staff within the school. Subject leaders are not yet fully effective; they do not have a good enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, so they cannot make specific plans to raise standards.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governing body is well organised, enthusiastic and fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Many governors already have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and what it needs to do to improve, but all governors are not yet playing a full enough part in monitoring the work of the school and planning the way forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There is a growing emphasis on monitoring pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching and learning. This is beginning to identify more precisely what the school needs to do to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses its resources to promote good learning for pupils, such as the spending on classroom assistants, which is effective. Funds for specific initiatives, such as 'Excellence in Cities' are also used to enhance provision.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has sufficient staff, but continual changes of teaching staff are a weakness. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants provide good support in lessons. The school building is old, but it is well maintained and provides adequate facilities. There is no grassed area for games. Resources for learning are adequate in all subjects, and good for design and technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Their children enjoy going to school and make good progress. ▪ Teaching is good. ▪ The school is very approachable if parents have concerns. ▪ The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. ▪ The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework. ▪ Some would like more activities outside lessons.

Only a very small proportion of parents returned the questionnaire or attended the meeting. The great majority of these parents are pleased with most aspects of the school's work. Inspectors' judgements support many of parents' positive views. Inspectors find, however, that most pupils are making satisfactory rather than good progress, and there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some lessons. The amount of homework pupils' should receive is about right, but not consistent between classes. The range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

*(Pupils' **attainment** is what they know, understand and can do at a particular point in time e.g. at the end of Year 2. Pupils' **achievements** are the progress they make in relation to their initial attainment. Therefore, a child starting school with low attainment may achieve well but still not reach the nationally expected standard of attainment.)*

1. There is a wide range of attainment amongst the children who join the nursery but, overall, it is well below average compared with what is expected nationally. Attainment is very low in pupils' communication, language and literacy skills, but only below average in physical skills. Currently, approximately half the children in the nursery are learning English as an additional language and, of these, twenty are at an early stage. Very good teaching in the nursery, and good teaching in the reception class, ensures that children achieve well in all areas of learning. However, despite good teaching, very few are likely to attain the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Most should reach the expected standard in their physical skills. Overall, therefore, when they join Year 1, pupils' attainment remains well below average.
2. In the 2001 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2, results were very low in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Based on teachers' assessments, attainment in science was also very low. These results are broadly similar to those reported at the previous inspection.
3. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in the current Year 2 is below national expectations in mathematics, and well below in English and science. Many pupils begin Year 1 with skills that are well below average compared with what is expected nationally. In mathematics, pupils' achievements are good during the infants, owing to consistently good teaching of basic skills in numeracy; the current pupils are attaining at a better standard than indicated by last year's test results. In English, science and most other subjects, pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. In art, however, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because the teaching does not provide a sufficient range of experiences. Overall, attainment is about the same as at the last inspection, but pupils' achievements have improved in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), history and religious education.
4. Results of the 2001 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 6 were very low in English, mathematics and science. These results were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. However, the school's overall performance improved on 2000, particularly in science. Few pupils reached the higher Level 5 of attainment, which depressed the overall performance. For 2001, the school had set ambitious targets for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics, but it failed to reach them. Attainment is rather better than at the previous inspection because the school's results have improved at a similar rate to the national trend. In each year group, about 50 per cent of the pupils are attaining below, or well below, the expected standard because they have special educational needs or because they are learning English as an additional language. Consequently, comparing the school results to those achieved nationally creates a very negative picture that does not reflect the pupils' achievements.

5. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that attainment in the current Year 6 is below national expectations in mathematics, and well below in English and science. This is an improvement on the results of national tests in 2001. Given that many pupils join Year 3 with well below average skills, achievement during the juniors is satisfactory, and recent improvements in the quality of teaching are ensuring good progress in many lessons. In most other subjects, pupils' achievements are satisfactory across the juniors, even though attainment in Year 6 is below national expectations in ICT, geography, history and physical education. In design and technology, attainment in Year 6 is close to national expectations because the curriculum is very well structured and the practical activity suits pupils' aptitudes. In religious education, attainment matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus because the school values and celebrates the religious diversity within its community, pupils are very interested in the subject, and a good amount of time is allocated to teaching it. In art, however, attainment is well below national expectations. The quality of art teaching and the curriculum vary considerably between classes, so many pupils complete too narrow a range of work and rarely develop ideas through different media. As a result, pupils do not improve their knowledge and skills in a systematic way as they move through the school. Overall, attainment is about the same as reported at the last inspection, but pupils now make better progress in ICT and history.

6. At both Year 2 and Year 6, the school's results in national assessments are compared with those gained by 'similar' schools. These comparisons are based solely on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, and indicate that results are much worse than 'similar' schools. It is the view of the inspection team that such comparisons are unreliable. Childeric has a number of other factors that depress overall attainment, including a very high proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language, and a large turnover of pupils and teachers from year to year. This is a school with low attainment. It is not a school where pupils are achieving a lot less than they should.

7. Most of the time, pupils of all abilities achieve appropriately. Pupils who have special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in relation to their initial attainment, which is a similar finding to the previous inspection. In lessons where work is well matched to their needs, such as literacy and numeracy, or where they receive targeted support from teachers and classroom assistants, they often make good gains in learning towards the targets set for them. This is particularly noticeable in the gains that some pupils are making with their understanding of phonics. In a few lessons seen, however, higher-attaining pupils were not challenged sufficiently by the work they were given and made unsatisfactory progress.

8. At the end of Year 2, there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. By the end of Year 6, however, girls outperform boys by a considerable margin. The school is already taking action to improve the poor achievements of many boys in the juniors. The difficulties largely revolve around attitudes and behaviour rather than ability. There is a significant minority of boys, often a few in each class, mainly of black Caribbean origin (but not exclusively), whose behaviour is very challenging. They are not well motivated to learn and would prefer to gain attention by their foolish behaviour rather than by succeeding with their work. The school is trying hard to reverse these poor attitudes. In most lessons, teachers adopt a very positive approach to motivating these pupils. They praise any effort made with work and celebrate success. Around the school, 'squaddies' appointed from amongst the oldest pupils carry out various responsibilities and provide good role models. It is too early to judge whether these measures will be effective.

9. Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievements have improved in some subjects, but attainment in English, mathematics and science remains low. Recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are benefiting the progress pupils make in lessons, but have yet to be fully reflected in pupils' attainment, particularly in the results of national tests. The school has a large proportion of pupils in each year group who are lower attaining and, whilst their achievements are satisfactory, they are unlikely to reach the nationally expected standard by Year 6. The rate of improvement has been sound since the last inspection and the school is well placed to raise standards further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are variable but satisfactory overall. Most pupils enjoy school and want to learn. When they are given work that is well matched to their level of ability, they show interest and are keen to be involved. Many, however, find it difficult to listen attentively and to concentrate on their work. A small minority have unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour. This has a negative impact on the quality of learning of the pupils themselves and of others in their classes.

11. Most pupils know the standards of behaviour expected and behave well in lessons and around the school. For many of them this does not come easily, and it is a reflection of the school's efforts that there are few incidents of poor behaviour. There are a number of pupils, however, who display challenging behaviour, and teachers have to work hard to maintain control. Teachers work well with support staff to ensure that disturbance to the rest of the class is kept to a minimum, although in some cases the flow of the lesson is disrupted. In many classes pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour have been established through the teachers' hard work and commitment. In a Year 2 science lesson, when pupils were making clay pots, they were lively and interested and helped each other. Likewise, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils showed a high level of interest, did their work sensibly and co-operated well in pairs. However, in a number of lessons, some pupils misbehaved or were inattentive. For example, in a Year 2 ICT lesson, a small number of pupils were noisy, and squabbles broke out at times. Despite what the teacher tried to do to rectify the situation, this group continued to be inattentive and disobedient. In an even more extreme example in a personal and social education lesson, some pupils found it difficult to engage in sensible, thoughtful discussion, and became disruptive and uncooperative, showing immature behaviour. Eighteen pupils were excluded for fixed periods during the last academic year and one permanently. This number is much higher than the national average, but the sanction has been used justifiably to improve the standards of behaviour in the school.

12. Relationships between pupils and with adults are satisfactory. Pupils are open and friendly and enjoy talking to visitors and volunteering information. Many tend to seek more attention than is usual. Pupils generally play well together and develop appropriate relationships, although for quite a few their own interests are always foremost. For example, some pupils find it hard to share or take turns, and pick on others' weaknesses. Although occasionally robust and boisterous in the playground, pupils seldom become aggressive. They respond well to the midday supervisors both in the playground and dining hall. Pupils are confident that should an incident of oppressive behaviour occur, staff would deal with it appropriately. Pupils from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds get on well together and,

during the inspection, there was no sign that there are any racial tensions. Friendships and, indeed, disagreements were not related to ethnicity. Most pupils respect and care for the school's property and environment. Although pupils do not readily show initiative, pupils in Year 6 show a sense of responsibility and maturity in their roles as 'playground squaddies' when helping to look after younger ones.

13. Attendance remains poor in the school and this has a negative effect on pupils' progress. Recent half-termly figures given by the school indicate attendance is about 88 per cent, which is well below the national average. Unauthorised absences are well above the national figure. The low attendance rate is due to a number of factors, including the high mobility rate in the school population, absence due to extended holidays, and pupils staying at home for health reasons. No specific group of pupils has an attendance significantly worse than others. Punctuality is still a problem, with a significant minority of pupils arriving after the start of school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a number of good features, and has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is very good in the nursery and good in the reception class. A good range of well-chosen activities helps the children to grow in confidence and to develop their skills steadily. Throughout the school, lessons are prepared carefully, and most teachers have good skills in managing pupils' behaviour, which can be challenging. As a result, in many lessons, pupils enjoy their work and make good gains in learning. Where teaching was good or very good, learning was organised in small steps, often through practical activities, and tasks were well matched to pupils' needs so that they could be successful. In these lessons, teachers were very clear about what pupils should learn, activities were interesting and pupils got a lot done. In many lessons, classroom assistants made an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Where teaching had weaknesses, the teacher did not succeed in ensuring that all the pupils were engaged in their learning, so time was wasted in managing misbehaviour. A slow pace to learning or too much time spent listening to the teacher were weak features of some lessons. Throughout the school, each class contains a significant proportion of pupils who have poor learning skills. They find it hard to sustain concentration and to make an effort with their work. In these circumstances, teachers have to be very skilled to ensure that progress is made.

15. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of the lessons observed. It was good or better in 48 per cent, and very good in 11 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in just six of the 83 lessons seen. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection when 18 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall, and mathematics is taught particularly well in the infants. The teaching of ICT and history has improved since the previous inspection when pupils made unsatisfactory progress in these subjects. The teaching of art is not as good as at the last inspection because only in a few classes do pupils experience a range of work that enables them to develop their skills steadily. Teaching of all other subjects is sound.

16. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory and often good. In English and mathematics, teachers generally use questions effectively and adapt tasks to make sure that the work matches the needs of these pupils. However, in some

lessons in other subjects, where teachers follow nationally recommended schemes of work without adaptation, some of the pupils do not understand the work because it is too difficult for them. Classroom assistants work well with pupils who have special educational needs and help them to learn. Lessons such as Additional Literacy Support, provided by specialist teachers and teaching assistants are effective. These sessions have a very clear purpose and the learning is broken down into very small steps. As a result, they make a good contribution to raising achievement for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in developing their phonic skills.

17. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) is a strength of the school, an improvement since the previous inspection, and provides the children with a very good start. A wide range of well-planned activities in both the nursery and reception classes interests the children and provides many opportunities to enrich their experience. All the staff support the children's learning effectively, with a particular emphasis on developing their language skills. As a result of good teaching, the children made good gains in learning in all of the sessions seen. All adults enjoy very good relationships with the children, which help them to teach effectively.

18. Throughout the rest of the school, teachers have a sound knowledge of most subjects, even though some are from overseas, newly appointed and have had little time to familiarise themselves with the National Curriculum. Where teaching was good, it was often the teacher's confident knowledge of the subject that enabled them to inject pace and challenge into the lesson. For example, in a music lesson for Year 4, the teacher's careful planning and good demonstrations enabled the pupils to sing a 'round' in two parts and to accompany their singing by playing chime bars. In a few science, music and physical education lessons observed, however, weaknesses in teachers' knowledge resulted in activities that did not extend pupils' skills and understanding.

19. Basic skills are well taught throughout the school. Many teachers are particularly adept at structuring learning in small steps so pupils gain confidence from success and make good progress. Reading is taught methodically, using a structured scheme, so most pupils make sound progress during the infants. A daily session of guided reading helps pupils to build their skills steadily. A number of good literacy lessons were seen, in which letter sounds, spelling and punctuation were taught well. In mathematics, counting and calculating skills are taught effectively in most lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils strengthened their multiplication skills in an effective, quick-fire session, and the teacher skillfully used a wide range of mathematical language to check and extend their understanding. In a very good physical education lesson for Year 1, the teacher introduced and practised new skills methodically, sustaining the pupils' interest and concentration, and ensuring that they made very good gains in learning. Teachers know that many of the pupils need constant reinforcement of their basic skills.

20. Teachers plan most lessons carefully. For example, the planning for a very good dance lesson in Year 1 contained precise details about the purpose, content and structure of the lesson, and led to very effective learning as pupils responded in movement and gesture to 'The Yellow Submarine'. Teachers generally identify clear learning objectives and, in the better lessons, share them with pupils so that they know what they are trying to achieve. Many

separated?” helped the pupils to focus on thinking about the methods they should choose rather than just on the task.

21. Where teaching was good or very good, it was often the pace and well-matched challenge of the activities that resulted in pupils being interested in their learning, trying hard and making good progress. For example, in a gymnastics lesson for Year 4, after a lively warm up, the teacher gave pupils challenging tasks that required them to compose a sequence of movements. She observed performances carefully, highlighted good features, and provided helpful comments that enabled pupils to improve their work. She kept the pace of the lesson moving. As a result, pupils made good progress in enhancing the quality of their sequences. Where teaching was good or better, work was well matched to pupils’ needs. However, in many of the lessons where teaching had weaknesses, work was either too hard for many of the pupils, or too easy for the higher attainers. In some cases, the task was too routine to allow higher-attaining pupils to extend their own learning.

22. Most lessons are well organised and teachers use a sound range of methods and strategies to promote learning. Pupils learnt best when they were given well-structured, practical activities that built in small steps on their existing skills and understanding. A number of science lessons were good examples, such as work in Year 2 making clay pots, where pupils observed the material carefully, and predicted what might happen when it is heated. Good literacy and numeracy lessons were also seen in which teachers adopted similar methods. A number of good lessons were seen when teachers gathered pupils in a circle to discuss personal and social issues, including a very effective session in Year 5 in which the pupils really enjoyed exploring ideas about teamwork. Many teachers have good skills in questioning pupils and leading discussions. Group and individual work, however, is not always as productive because teachers do not always ensure that pupils settle quickly to their tasks, and they do not monitor progress closely enough.

23. Teachers generally manage pupils’ behaviour very effectively, despite the fact that a significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural special needs. A number of teachers have outstanding skills. They are persistent in their praise for good work and behaviour, they are firm when needed and, for the most part, pupils respond by listening attentively, concentrating on their work and behaving well. In a few lessons, however, weaknesses in the teacher’s management of pupils’ behaviour slowed their learning. Time was used well in most of the lessons observed, though some lessons started late, often because teachers were settling the pupils. A weakness in a few lessons was that the whole-class introduction was too slow, or lasted too long, and this did not leave enough time for the pupils’ tasks. The good skills of classroom assistants are used well in most lessons, for example working with a group, or supporting an individual.

24. Most teachers have sound strategies to assess pupils’ understanding. They often begin the lesson with a review of previous learning to check what pupils know, and they discuss work with pupils in lessons to assess their progress. However, the quality of the marking of pupils’ work is unsatisfactory. Most of it is restricted to ticks and occasional praise. Only in a few cases had teachers posed questions, noted the level of pupils’ attainment, or suggested

ways in which work might be improved. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory. The school expects pupils to read at home each night, and many do. Across the school, there is a regular pattern of more formal homework, though this is not always consistent between classes. Parents’

willingness and ability to help their child with work at home varies considerably. A significant minority of the small number of parents who returned the questionnaire said that they were unhappy with the amount of homework, but inspectors think it is about right.

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

25. Since the previous inspection, there has been a satisfactory improvement in the school's curriculum. The curriculum provided for children in the nursery and reception classes is good, with a wide range of well-organised activities, carefully matched to the children's needs. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. In the infants and juniors, the curriculum is satisfactory overall, and has both strengths and weaknesses. Practical work in mathematics and science is a strength, as is the provision for religious education where pupils study a wide range of faiths. The curriculum for ICT has also improved since the last inspection. In English, a weaker aspect is the lack of planned opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills. In mathematics, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply the mathematical skills they have learnt. In art, the range of work is too narrow in many classes. These weaknesses are preventing standards from rising further in these subjects. Although teaching time meets national recommendations, on several occasions during the inspection lessons began late, which reduced the amount of time available for learning. The school meets all statutory requirements with regard to the curriculum it provides.

26. The quality of curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection. For example, planning for pupils learning English as an additional language was inadequate, but is now satisfactory, as is the overall quality of planning for subjects. Through the introduction of schemes of work, mostly based on national guidance, the school now has a framework that can ensure that pupils develop their skills and understanding step by step. However, in some subjects, the scheme of work has not been adapted to the needs of the pupils. This results in a curriculum that can be too difficult for some pupils because the national guidance assumes previous learning that has not taken place.

27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The curriculum is generally adapted effectively to meet their needs, including special lessons and extra support. However, this is not organised well across the school, so some pupils benefit more than others. Lessons for small groups of pupils, such as the work of the special educational needs co-ordinator and additional literacy support is good, but there is insufficient liaison to ensure that pupils consistently apply this learning in their class work. Most of these pupils have good individual education plans. These have clear targets, which specify the next steps in each pupil's learning and identify the specific actions that the school will take to help the pupils meet their targets. In addition, the school has started to use pastoral support plans to improve the behaviour of some pupils, and these are proving useful. All the plans are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. When necessary, the school draws effectively on external sources of support for individual pupils.

28. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily established, and mathematics and English lessons are based on the recommended patterns of work. The extra support given to

pupils in these lessons by classroom assistants and other teachers helps pupils make progress. However, opportunities are missed in other subjects for pupils to develop the skills they have learnt.

29. The curriculum is extended appropriately through educational visits and visitors to school who work with the pupils. For example, children in the nursery visited the Science Museum, and a number of classes have visited the Florence Nightingale Museum. Visitors to the school have included members of the fire brigade to discuss fire safety, and the local police to talk about the dangers of drugs misuse with Years 5 and 6. The provision of a steel band and a social support group enhances the wider curriculum. There is also a range of clubs for pupils, including football and dance. These extra activities help to support pupils' personal development and give them opportunities to extend skills learnt in lessons.

30. The school makes sure that all pupils are included in the teaching and learning it provides. It promotes equality of opportunity through the provision it makes for boys and girls, for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and for pupils with special educational needs. It has looked carefully at the results achieved by pupils in national tests, identified discrepancies between various groups, and is taking action. For example, the poor achievement of boys during the juniors is being tackled. There are, however, inconsistencies in the work covered in classes of the same age group, giving some pupils a richer, more stimulating curriculum than others. This has been exacerbated by many changes of teachers during the past few years. Higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons and the work they are given can be too easy.

31. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Good use is made of times when pupils gather in a circle to discuss their thoughts about moral and social issues, and a number of good sessions were observed during the inspection. The Learning Mentor makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal development, working with individuals who are having difficulty relating to others in school, or leading 'circle time' with a whole class. Her work is helping many children to gain more from their learning in lessons. The school's provision for pupils' personal development helps to support the good relationships seen and ensures that pupils with special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language are fully included in all the school has to offer. The school has appropriate arrangements for teaching sex education in Year 6.

32. Because the school places great importance on pupils' personal development, staff work very hard to promote pupils' self-esteem and social skills. As part of this, provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. There is less emphasis on provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, which is satisfactory.

33. The religious education curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Through study of the world's major religions, pupils reflect on their own and others' values and beliefs. This is reinforced through links with the local church. Assemblies are held each day, and help to develop a sense of community within the school. There is appropriate music playing as pupils enter the hall, thus providing a welcoming atmosphere.

Pupils are aware of how to behave in assembly and they sit quietly and listen carefully. At other times of the day, they occasionally experience awe and wonder as, for example, when children in

reception made prints of leaves and reacted with amazement at their achievements. 'Circle time' provides good opportunities for pupils to explore their own and other's feelings.

34. Good provision for moral development ensures that pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong. The headteacher sets a positive tone through her courtesy and respect for pupils. Clear codes of behaviour are displayed around the school and made known to pupils. Difficulties can arise, however, when new or temporary teachers are unclear of procedures or policy. Moral issues are discussed regularly, and the theme of helping others was explored in assemblies held during the inspection. The personal and social education programme provides opportunities for pupils to discuss issues such as rules, responsibilities and relationships. Good work and behaviour are recognised and reinforced through the weekly 'praise assembly'.

35. Pupils' social development is effectively promoted in a variety of ways. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to work together and exchange ideas, as when a class shared information and listened to each other attentively during a discussion about the poor in Tudor times. At lunchtime, pupils in Year 6 take turns to act as 'playground squaddies', befriending younger pupils. This helps to foster positive relationships across the school. The breakfast club provides an opportunity for pupils to meet socially in a secure environment. Extra-curricular activities, visits to places of interest and visitors to school all contribute positively to the development of pupils' wider social skills. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils, through their representatives, to contribute to the community and develop their awareness of citizenship. For example, the council discusses matters such as the school rules and after school clubs. A Year 6 residential visit provides older pupils with a valuable experience, developing independence and teamwork.

36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school takes its pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds, and values the richness and diversity of cultures. Pupils are provided with knowledge and insight into the values and beliefs of their own and other cultures through assemblies and religious education lessons. The festivals of the major world religions are celebrated. In English, pupils study a range of texts for different cultures. The school takes part in Black History month. Visits to museums, art galleries and theatres enrich pupils' cultural experiences, and help to promote the history and culture of Britain. In recent months, pupils from Childeric have visited a wide range of places including the Tate Modern, the Museum of London and Greenwich Park. Although art does not play as strong a part in pupils' cultural development as they might, pupils from all backgrounds participate in the school's steel band and dance club.

37. The school has good links with the local community, which are providing practical benefits for pupils' learning. For example, visits to the local church were reflected in the work covered in design and technology in Year 3 where pupils designed and made banners. The school has good relationships with other schools. These include being part of a useful network of other local primary schools, which shares ideas and good practice. The school has also taken part in staff training on the theme of Accelerated Learning with a local secondary school. Membership of an Education Action Zone is also beginning to enrich the curriculum and develop staff confidence in being able to teach drama and music. This initiative is at an early stage and is not yet having a significant impact on raising standards.

38. Provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language has improved since the previous inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. It is now satisfactory, overall, with several good features. The pupils are catered for by class teachers and classroom assistants at Childeric, and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy (EMAS) staff, who also teach pupils who are in danger of underachieving.

39. In the school as a whole, 147 pupils have been identified as being at the early stages of learning English, which is a very high proportion when compared with schools nationally. Sixty of these pupils are currently receiving EMAS support. The other pupils are supported in class by their class teachers and, in many lessons, by other support staff.

40. Pupils who are supported by the EMAS teachers attain well below national expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6, in line with other pupils in the school. However, those pupils tested at the end of the juniors are frequently different pupils from those tested at the end of the infants because many pupils move away during their time at the school. Those pupils who remain at the school throughout the infants and juniors achieve well in developing their spoken English and no longer need support by the time they reach Year 6. They also achieve in line with their peers in subjects other than English where they carry out the same activities as the rest of the class.

41. The pupils are well supported by the three specialist EMAS teachers. The work set for them in withdrawal groups and when supported in class helps them to make satisfactory progress. The specialist teachers use a good range of methods, which support the pupils' acquisition of language well. For example, they use gesture as well as speech. In one mixed Year 1 and 2 group, pupils were learning to match letters with the sounds they make and learn the vocabulary related to position such as 'over', 'under' and 'on'. They used a variety of apparatus for this, including pictures and words, and they also sang a song about the alphabet. In another Year 3 class, the specialist teacher supported the class teacher in helping pupils turn data they had collected on a frequency table about different ways of coming to school into a pictogram. The other specialist teacher has supported pupils from Year 1 in making a book about a bus journey they had taken. This helped the pupils develop their writing skills as well as their speaking skills.

42. In discussions with pupils it was clear that they are proud of their achievements and appreciate the way the school has helped them to learn English. They spoke particularly highly of the support given to them by the EMAS teachers.

43. The school carefully tracks the progress being made by these pupils and encourages them to continue to develop their first language. Pupils take part in all aspects of the curriculum and are included fully in all class and school activities.

44. The school is developing good systems for monitoring the progress made by pupils who are supported by the EMAS teachers. It keeps detailed records and assesses pupils through the use of nationally accepted tests. Each pupil has an individual action plan, which identifies what he or she needs to learn in order to ensure that language skills are developed. These are

of a satisfactory quality and support teachers' planning. Satisfactory assessment procedures are also in place for identifying pupils' needs when they enter the school. These include discussions between the class teachers, specialist teachers, parents and interpreters.

45. The school has good systems for communicating with parents of pupils who are being supported by EMAS. It uses the local education authority's translation and interpretation service in order to ensure that parents are fully informed about their children's progress and school events. The specialist teachers also attend meetings with parents to discuss their children's progress. The school has a bank of regularly needed letters in a range of languages to aid communication with parents, and one of the specialist teachers helps parents develop their own skills in speaking English. Parents and pupils are very appreciative of this. Parents do not receive a copy of their child's individual action plan, however, and this is a weakness.

46. The leadership and management of the provision for teaching pupils who are learning English as an additional language is satisfactory overall and improving. It has recently been taken over by the new deputy headteacher who has drawn up an action plan to develop this area of the school's work further. Recently, however, funds have been cut by the local education authority, which is limiting the amount of support that is available to some pupils. The school has the capacity to build on the good improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school provides a caring environment for its pupils, in which they can feel valued and secure. The procedures for child protection, first aid and health and safety are good, and pupils are supervised well at all times. The sensitive, warm and caring attitudes that permeate the nursery are fundamental in helping the youngest children settle into school life.

48. Since her appointment, the headteacher has focused on developing positive strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour, promoting positive attitudes and raising pupils' self-esteem. Most teachers and support staff respond to pupils in a positive way, which raises self-esteem. They expect good standards of behaviour and politeness. However, the high turnover of staff, and number of temporary staff, make it difficult for the school to achieve consistency in expectations. The school's Learning Mentor gives valuable support to individual pupils and groups of pupils with behaviour or learning problems, and is achieving success. She also makes a highly effective contribution to the school's personal and social education programme through supporting individual teachers and taking the lead in class 'circle times'. The midday supervisors provide regular and effective support at lunchtime and, during the inspection, a number of incidents were successfully defused by prompt, thoughtful action. The school has effective links with appropriate agencies and specialist staff to support pupils and parents where there are behavioural and emotional difficulties. All incidents of serious behaviour problems are recorded and monitored, and parents involved as necessary.

49. The school has been successful in promoting a strong anti-bullying and anti-racist culture. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with effectively.

50. The school puts a lot of effort into improving attendance rates. It has good and consistent procedures to monitor attendance, which have improved significantly since the last inspection. The computerised recording system is used effectively to identify pupils with poor attendance, and absences are followed up promptly and efficiently. There is good and regular support from the Education Welfare Officer who investigates cases of prolonged absence and irregular attendance, making home visits when required. Despite the school's strenuous efforts, attendance remains low.

51. The school's arrangements for child protection are good and comply with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures. The headteacher is the named person with responsibility for child protection. All staff have undergone training and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns over particular children. Health and safety arrangements are good. The school recently had a health and safety audit and has followed up the minor issues identified. Regular risk assessments are carried out, including those relating to school visits.

52. The previous inspection identified assessment and recording of pupils' academic attainment and progress as a weakness. Since then, and especially in the last year, development of new systems has begun. This is a big task, and the school has made some progress. Procedures for recording pupils' academic attainment and progress are now satisfactory for most subjects but, because they are new, teachers do not yet make sufficient use of assessment information when planning work and setting targets for pupils' improvement.

53. The deputy headteacher has recently taken over the role of assessment co-ordinator, and has carried out a detailed analysis of standardised tests that pupils take each year. This analysis is a good foundation on which to build. It has already enabled the school to identify pupils who require extra support in English and mathematics, and additional lessons are already taking place under schemes such as Additional Literacy Support and the mathematics 'Springboard' programme.

54. New recording systems are in place for tracking pupils' progress in National Curriculum subjects. These are best developed in English and mathematics, and there are some examples of good practice in using assessment information to set individual targets for pupils to improve their skills. Where this occurs, and especially in mathematics, it is beginning to have an impact on the standards pupils reach. However, this practice is not widespread enough in the school at present. In most other subjects, a brief record sheet has been developed that should, once its use is firmly established, enable teachers to keep track of pupils' general progress. The assessment and record keeping for pupils with special educational needs is rigorous and shows a good understanding of the pupils. Care is taken to ensure that the support provided meets the particular needs of each pupil.

55. The school recognises that weaknesses still exist, and staff are clear that the measures taken so far are just the beginning. The new systems are a good start, but need considerable refinement in order to provide teachers with the level of detail they will require, if they are to make effective use of information when planning work and setting targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. Less than 10 per cent of parents completed the parents' questionnaire and only 12 parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector before the inspection. However, based on the limited sample available, parents appear to hold a positive view of the school. They feel well informed about their children's progress and would feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns or problems.

57. The school gives a high priority to working with parents and building good relationships with them. It wants them to be involved with its activities and their children's learning. This is difficult for many parents whose experience of schools and the English education system is limited. With help from initiatives such as the family literacy project and weekly coffee morning, the school is beginning to be successful in showing parents how they can support their children's learning by reading and playing games with them. The school occasionally holds special sessions to inform parents about curriculum matters such as numeracy and literacy, and these have been quite well attended. There is a reasonable attendance at parental consultation evenings. The school works well with the parents of pupils who have special needs. Staff involve parents fully in discussions about the special educational needs of their children, including those learning English as an additional language, and the support that will be provided.

58. The overall amount and quality of information available to parents is good. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are attractive publications and give parents a clear picture of the school and its activities. Pupils' annual reports are detailed and informative and have been improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment is generally well reported and the information given meets statutory requirements. The reports also contain targets that help parents understand what their children need to do to improve their current rate of progress. The weekly newsletters are attractively set out and provide parents with up-to-date information about school matters. Most written communications issued by the school are in English. Due to the increasing diversity of languages in the community, the school does not translate documents routinely, but effective use is made of pupils and other adults to translate when necessary. At parents' evenings interpreters are on hand to help out with communication.

59. Many parents cannot help in school because their grasp of English is limited. There is no parent-teacher association and attendance at many school events is low, but improving. The language barrier means that many are unable to help their children with the work, particularly reading. Consequently, many parents have little direct impact on the work of the school. The home circumstances of some families make it difficult for them to give time and space for their children to work at home. Some parents do support their children's learning, but for many their contribution is often limited by their personal circumstances. Despite that, the school has effective and supportive links with them. For example, during the inspection week, many parents attended the birthday assembly for pupils in the infants. A significant minority of parents, however, do not support their children's education as much as they should because they do not ensure regular attendance and punctuality.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The school is led and managed by a highly committed and effective headteacher. She has been in post for just over a year and, in that time, has begun to make a considerable number of improvements in order to raise pupils' attainment. A particular success has been the improvement in pupils' behaviour and attitudes across the school. The headteacher has set a clear educational direction for the school and there are already signs of improvement in the standards attained by the pupils. For example, in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001, the school improved the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 by 14 per cent across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This was a greater increase than the eight per cent average for Lewisham, whilst the national average remained static. The school's aims and values are reflected well in its day-to-day life, and the staff work hard to provide a safe and secure environment in which the children can develop and grow. The school is focused on encouraging children to be motivated, and uses a range of strategies, such as the appointment of the Learning Mentor, to promote this for all pupils.

61. The senior management team is developing as a strong and enthusiastic group who are working closely together to lead the necessary improvements in the school. Its members have very clearly defined roles, which help them to carry out their work effectively, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. There is appropriate delegation of responsibilities amongst the staff and there is a clear sense of commitment to moving the school forward. However, many subject leaders are not effective because they are new to the role and have not yet developed a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in their subjects.

62. The day-to-day management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs operates smoothly across the school. This ensures that individual action plans are completed, reviews of pupil progress take place and that teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. However, there is unsatisfactory co-ordination of the provision across the school, which means that there are inconsistencies in the identification of pupils with special educational needs and the strategies that are used to support and monitor the progress of these pupils. There are also insufficient links between the work of different specialists within the school and with class teachers, which means that support is not always co-ordinated and learning is not always transferred to different situations.

63. The governing body has a very clear commitment to the pupils and is working well with the headteacher and staff to shape the direction of the school, particularly with regard to raising the academic standards. However, many governors do not yet have a clear enough picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and they do not play a full enough part in formulating the school improvement plan and monitoring its implementation. The governing body is well organised and brings considerable expertise to the role. Through its appropriate committee structure it ensures that all statutory requirements are met. There are effective procedures in place, such as a named 'buddy' governor, to help new governors become fully involved in the work of the governing body.

64. The school has started to implement a sound programme to monitor its work, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, members of the senior management

team have carried out classroom observations and these have led to targeted support to improve weaknesses in teaching. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, subject leaders do not carry out enough monitoring of teaching and learning and therefore do not always have a clear enough view of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject. The school also monitors the standards of attainment of the pupils and is implementing specific strategies such as additional literacy support and booster groups to raise standards.

65. The school improvement plan is a useful tool to support school improvement, and is much better than at the previous inspection. The plan has appropriate priorities for development, which are centred on raising pupils' attainment. There is a coherent picture of the action that the school will take to raise standards, though the targets for improvement are not always precise enough and the actions do not always include all the costs. The school has a sound system of performance management for teachers, which is based on the nationally recommended framework, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Targets have been set with teachers but these are not yet linked directly to the provision of appropriate in-service training and development.

66. Arrangements for the financial management of the school are secure and well organised by the senior administrative assistant. There are effective financial routines, which are understood and followed by the staff involved. Expenditure is monitored on a regular basis by the headteacher, senior administrative assistant and the finance committee of the governing body. Grants are used for their designated purposes. For example, the Excellence in Cities funding is used to employ a Learning Mentor. There are sound procedures in place to ensure that the school receives value for money when purchasing resources. The school also evaluates the link between its use of resources and the quality of education provided. For example, the school reviewed the effectiveness of work to support particular pupils, called the 'nurture group', in order to make informed decisions about the deployment of staff. Expenditure per pupil is high but, taking into account the achievement of the pupils and the targeted provision to meet particular needs, the school offers sound value for money.

67. The school uses new technology well to enhance its efficiency. The school's accounts, attendance records and information about pupils' levels of attainment are kept on central software systems. Communications between governors and staff are facilitated by the regular use of e-mail and the school is beginning to use the Internet creatively to aid recruitment.

68. The constant turnover of teaching staff disrupts many aspects of the school's work and hampers the drive to raise standards. Temporary teachers receive helpful, informal support but do not receive enough specific guidance to help them teach as effectively as possible from the beginning. The systems in place to support newly qualified teachers are sound with a named induction mentor who has received training to carry out this role. The school has well-established links with the local initial teacher training institution and contributes to the training of teachers.

69. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, though the playground area is too small. The reception classes do not have easy access to the outdoor area and movement around the school disrupts lessons that take place in the halls. The school has recently invested in new

furniture, blinds and carpets, which enhance the quality of the environment. The school is well cared for and maintained to a good standard as a result of the commitment shown by the premises manager. The learning resources available in the school enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. There is satisfactory provision across all subjects and good provision for design and technology, where resources are easily accessible within the classrooms.

70. The school's determined leadership and management and the commitment of the staff and governors gives the school a good capacity to achieve further improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. Quite recently, the school has begun to improve the standard of education it provides, but pupils' attainment is still not high enough. There are significant weaknesses in the attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of pupils, in aspects of teaching and in the use of assessment information. To raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ Improve pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, as planned, by:
 - pursuing strategies to raise the achievements of boys in the juniors;
 - providing more planned opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening, both in English lessons and in other subjects;
 - increasing the emphasis on teaching pupils to write confidently, particularly the substantial proportion who are lower attainers;
 - improving the presentation of pupils' work in all subjects;
 - increasing the emphasis on pupils using and applying their skills in mathematics;
 - ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are given sufficiently challenging work in both mathematics and science;
 - teaching science through practical activities that capture pupils' interest and help them to understand the concepts.

(paragraphs 2-5, 8, 82-90, 91-98, 99-105)

- ◆ Improve the attitudes to learning and behaviour of all pupils, as planned, and particularly the small minority whose attitudes and behaviour are poor, by:
 - setting clear expectations of good behaviour and positive attitudes in all lessons and around the school;
 - all staff being consistent in their implementation of the school's expectations and in their positive approach to encouraging good attitudes and behaviour;
 - continuing to support and encourage pupils who find it difficult to behave well;
 - making sure that activities are well matched to pupils' learning needs, so that they can be successful and gain in confidence.

(paragraphs 10-11, 133)

- ◆ Raise the standard of teaching in the lessons where there are weaknesses, by:
 - ensuring that the tasks given to pupils are interesting, well matched to their needs, and help them to take the next step in their learning;
 - teaching skills and concepts in small, manageable steps so that pupils can succeed;
 - constantly reinforcing pupils' learning, particularly the lower attainers;
 - injecting more pace into teaching;
 - enabling all teachers to observe and learn from existing good practice.

(paragraphs 14, 18-24, 88-89, 96, 104, 137)

- ◆ Use the information gathered about pupils' attainment and progress more consistently to:
 - identify areas of weakness in the curriculum and in pupils' attainment;
 - set challenging targets for pupils' achievements;
 - monitor pupils' progress towards the targets set.

(paragraphs 52-55, 89, 105)

- ◆ Improve the attendance and punctuality of those pupils who are often absent or late for school by pursuing the range of initiatives already put in place.

(paragraph 13)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Each is followed by a reference to the paragraph(s) in which it is discussed.

- ◆ Involve all governors more fully in formulating the school improvement plan and monitoring its implementation. *(63)*
- ◆ Improve the quality of the marking of pupils' work. *(24, 89, 96, 104)*
- ◆ Improve pupils' achievements in art and design. *(25, 106-110)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	31	37	5	1	0
Percentage	0	11	37	45	6	1	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 slightly more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48	350
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	25	189

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	115

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	267

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	83
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	77

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	5.2

	%
School data	1.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

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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	2001	29	28	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	20	22
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	39	37	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (65)	65 (65)	68 (73)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	23	22
	Girls	17	17	14
	Total	38	40	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (65)	70 (71)	63 (60)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	24	28	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	5	11
	Girls	14	9	16
	Total	22	14	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (37)	27 (30)	52 (41)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	8	9	9

Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	21	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	40 (26)	40 (31)	44 (40)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

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Ethnic background of pupils

<i>Must add to 350 but does not on S2</i>	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	76
Black – African heritage	100
Black – other	10
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	19
White	66
Any other minority ethnic group	70

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	20	0
Black – African heritage	4	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	15	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	295

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	1,210,342
Total expenditure	1,203,896
Expenditure per pupil	2,793
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,974
Balance carried forward to next year	30,420

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
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)	3.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	420
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	55	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	40	7	3	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	47	17	7	3
The teaching is good.	42	48	6	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	35	6	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	32	3	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	39	0	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	45	35	13	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	39	52	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	38	14	0	0

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

42	19	13	23	3
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Only 12 parents attended the meeting but they were positive about most aspects of the school's work. They were all happy with the progress their children are making and felt that children of all abilities do well. They said they are kept well informed about events in school and about their children's progress. Teachers are available and approachable. The school promotes positive values, such as tolerance, but some parents felt that this could be applied more consistently. Only a few parents help in school, but all agreed that they could be more involved if they wanted to be. Parents at the meeting were generally happy with the amount and consistency of homework, though some parents who returned the questionnaire were not. A minority view at the meeting was that parents' complaints are not always resolved satisfactorily. In common with parents who returned the questionnaire, those at the meeting said that there should be more out of school activities, to develop children's talents and interests.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

72. The nursery has thirty-five full time children, and twenty-four part time who attend either for the mornings or afternoons. Time in the nursery varies from one to five terms, and children move to a reception class in September or the following January, depending on the date of their fifth birthday. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment overall is well below that expected for their age, and very low in communication, language and literacy skills. Currently, approximately half the children in the nursery are learning English as an additional language and, of these, twenty are at an early stage of development. It is likely that, by the end of the foundation stage, most of the children in the current reception class will attain standards below those expected for their age in most areas of learning, and well below in language skills. However, they should attain the expected standards in their physical development.

73. The induction arrangements for children entering the nursery are satisfactory. Parents accompany their child for the first few days and the staged entry enables the new children to feel secure with small numbers, before all the children arrive. Parents are given various documents about the school, but the prospectus does not describe the curriculum offered in the foundation stage. Formal discussions about children's progress are only offered to those parents whose child is transferring to the reception class, though many parents discuss progress with staff as they deliver or collect their child.

74. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and very good in the nursery. This is a strength of the school, an improvement since the previous inspection, and provides the children with a very good start. A wide range of well-planned activities in both the nursery and reception classes interests the children and provides many opportunities to enrich their experience. As a result of the good teaching, the children achieve well for their abilities. All adults enjoy very good relationships with the children and are fully involved with them throughout the day. The three nursery nurses provide very effective support and are highly valued members of the early years' team. The newly appointed co-ordinator is providing good leadership and has already made a

significant impact. This is another improvement since the last inspection. She has a clear vision of future developments, though she has not yet had the opportunity to observe in the reception class.

75. The nursery provides good accommodation and is well organised, providing areas for various activities. Curriculum planning takes full account of the areas of learning specified for the Foundation Stage. The large outdoor area is a valuable resource, and is well equipped in many ways, but its position means it does not receive direct sunlight. Currently, there are no facilities for growing plants, but the school has plans to create some flowerbeds and this will improve the rather bleak outlook. The reception class has no specific outdoor area, as at the time of the previous inspection, and the building does not enable this to be provided. Both classes are adequately resourced for most areas of learning, though some items are worn and require replacement. However, the provision for ICT is insufficient in both rooms, either

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because the hardware is not working or because of lack of suitable software. Systems for assessing and recording children's progress are good, but the co-ordinator is seeking to improve them further. Frequently recorded observations by all staff and samples of work show progress in each area of learning, for each child.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. Staff place considerable emphasis on this area, and the quality of teaching is good. From a very low starting point, many children make good progress. In the nursery, children settle happily and understand the routines. They make independent choices between the many activities, and some children are beginning to collaborate, for example sharing a book or using construction equipment. Many persevere with a particular activity. One child spent a long time 'repairing' an old tape recorder, using screwdrivers and great concentration! By the end of a very good session with the nursery nurses, a group of children, many learning English as an additional language, had gained in confidence greatly and were joining in with action songs very happily, after considerable reticence at the beginning. Some children still engage in solitary play, show little imagination and need reminding of how to share and take turns. In the reception class, children continue to enjoy a range of activities and again, some persevere well. For example, after enjoying the class story, one child spent a long time drawing a picture about it in her own little book, and was justifiably proud of the high quality results. However, many children find it difficult to sustain concentration, to take turns, to share and not to call out when the class is working together.

Communication, language and literacy

77. Many children in the nursery are at the early stages of language development. Some have a very small vocabulary, and do not readily communicate with each other or the staff. However, the quality of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is good, and all adults talk with the children constantly, encouraging their response and emphasising key words. In a very good session in the nursery, the teacher worked with a small group of children to make a milk dessert. She talked constantly with the children, emphasising words such as instructions, powder, jug, stir and whisk. She encouraged the children to use their senses to describe what the dessert looked like, how it smelt and ultimately tasted. The children enjoy hearing stories and are beginning to recognise certain sounds, and names of friends beginning with these sounds. As in the nursery, children in the reception class are encouraged to see themselves as 'writers' and their own marks are valued. The

lack of confidence with language was evident in a circle time activity, when only nine children chose to report some news to the class. However, the teacher said that this was the first time that any of the children had asked questions of the child giving news, so progress is being made. Children are beginning to recognise rhyming words and the more able read some familiar words. Very good support by the nursery nurse helped a group of less able children to enjoy talking about the pictures in a book and recognise some words. A few children are progressing to writing recognisable words, with initial and final sounds correctly identified.

Mathematical development

78. Many opportunities are taken in the nursery to reinforce children's understanding of number. For example, they sing number songs, count the number of children in their group and play number games. However, while more able children count reliably beyond ten, less

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able children recite numbers but do not count accurately. Some children do not know the names of different colours, and are given many opportunities to practise this, with effective adult support. Reception children have worked hard to reinforce their understanding of number and most are secure with numbers to five and approximately three quarters of the children with numbers to ten. During the inspection, the focus was on pattern and the children enthusiastically recognised patterns on the soles of their trainers, on their socks and in the classroom and playground. More able children make repeating patterns by threading beads of two colours on a lace, and they know the names of flat shapes such as square, circle and triangle. Good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage enables the children to make good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. In the nursery, children explore sand and water, as well as a wide range of other materials. As they made the dessert, they saw the powder change colour and texture as the milk was added and they stirred. They enjoy making models from construction equipment. They have compared how they come to school and produced graphs to show the number who walk, come by car, bus or train. The children have used the computer to create pictures of creatures that live in the jungle or the ocean. In both the nursery and reception classes, children have made clay divas, having heard the story of Rama and Sita. The reception class home corner has been turned into a Diwali house and the children enjoy dressing up in clothes like saris. In a very good lesson, reception children learnt about autumn leaves. They collected some fallen leaves and explored the colours and patterns made by the veins. They experimented with heavy and light objects to see which floated or sank. In response to the big book 'Pass the Jam, Jim' which the teacher is reading in class, the children made and ate jam sandwiches. The lack of suitable software limits the development of the children's use of ICT, though they enjoy using the few programs available. Good teaching ensures that children have a wide range of experiences in this area.

Physical development

80. The quality of teaching is good. Nursery children use the large outdoor area daily, weather permitting, and enjoy climbing, balancing, running, throwing and catching. In a very good session, some children improved their skills in kicking a ball towards a goal as a result of skilled teaching by the adult. Children show awareness of space as they wheel friends in wheelbarrows and run round the fixed equipment. In both the nursery and reception classes, children use a range of small

equipment such as scissors, glue spreaders, crayons and paint brushes, which helps to develop their fine co-ordination skills. Reception children do not have outdoor facilities readily available, so the variety of experiences is not as wide as in the nursery, though they have a break each day in the playground when they use hoops and balls. In the hall, they understand the importance of warming up before they move round in a variety of ways. They took turns moving over the apparatus, using different body parts and were encouraged to finish their movement with a jump and landing with bent knees.

Creative development

81. The nursery environment supports the creative development of the children effectively, providing many opportunities for them to engage in a variety of activities. For example, they paint with brushes, sponges and their fingers. One group made models of animals after

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enjoying the story 'Walking through the jungle', while the other group made a large octopus and fish from papier-mâché, after hearing 'Commotion in the ocean'. They use untuned percussion instruments and some keep the beat accurately as they sing 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'. They enjoy singing action songs, which are very well led by the adults. Reception children were delighted when they saw the patterns of the veins appear as they completed their leaf rubbings. Their flower paintings are of a high standard, showing careful observation and good attention to detail. They enjoy using a variety of materials to make party hats and have used different papers to create collages, using descriptive words such as 'rustle' to say how the papers sounded. Teaching is good, and staff work hard to stimulate the children's imaginations, but the lack of language skills and experiences hinder this.

ENGLISH

82. Results of the 2001 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. They were well below average compared with those gained by similar schools. These results show little improvement since the previous inspection. In 2001, at the end of Year 6, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 rose five per cent compared with 2000, but the school did not achieve its target, which was 50 per cent of pupils reaching this level. At the end of Year 2, results show little difference between the performance of boys and girls but, by the end of Year 6, girls are doing much better than boys.

83. Pupils start school with language skills that are very weak compared with what is expected nationally. A high proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language. A significant number of pupils have special educational needs linked to literacy development. Taking these factors into account, pupils' achievements are satisfactory through the school. In the juniors, the boys are not achieving as well as the girls because of the high proportion of boys who do not apply themselves well and do not persevere with the tasks that are set. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress. The work in English lessons is usually adapted to their needs, for example when teachers choose texts at an appropriate level, and support staff give additional guidance. When these pupils receive targeted support in class or in small withdrawal groups they often make good progress because of the clear purpose to the activities. For

example, the special educational needs co-ordinator focused on developing the pupils' ability to sound letters.

84. In the infants, pupils do not always listen attentively in lessons, particularly if there is nothing visual or practical to focus their attention. Many pupils make few spoken contributions and those who do often make one-word responses. In Year 6, pupils share their ideas in small groups, but many have difficulty in conveying their ideas thoughtfully and carefully, and they do not build on what other pupils have said. Low attaining pupils and some average pupils lack a sufficiently wide range of words that they know and use. This indicates an overall level of speaking and listening that is well below national expectations, and affects pupils' learning across all aspects of English and most other subjects throughout the school.

85. Reading skills are well below national expectations in both the infants and juniors. The school is aware of this and has introduced additional reading time outside the literacy hour. In

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these sessions, the pupils working with the teacher make good progress and other pupils show interest in the books, tapes and reading games that are available. Some of the low attaining pupils respond particularly well to books that have been made by members of the class. In Year 2, the majority of pupils can read simple texts and use the sounds of letters to read unknown words. However, many pupils do not read simple books fluently and do not make spontaneous comments about the stories they have read. In Year 6, the average and higher attaining pupils show fluency in their reading and correct themselves when they make a mistake. They are able to recall the story and discuss the plot and characters at a simple level. They have a sound knowledge of the features of non-fiction books and use the contents page and index appropriately to find information. However, they do not make comparisons about the quality and relevance of the information from different books.

86. Pupils' writing skills are also well below national expectations. The presentation of writing is poor throughout the school, with many pupils in the juniors not forming letters correctly and not making appropriate joins to make their writing more fluid. Pupils are developing their phonic skills well and, in Year 2, many pupils spell words with 'sh' and 'th' and the higher attaining pupils spell words such as 'float'. In the juniors, pupils write in a variety of forms including poems, lists, play scripts and stories. By Year 6, they are aware of the key features of these types of writing but their vocabulary remains narrow and unimaginative and pupils do not develop more complex ideas in their writing.

87. Pupils have a range of opportunities to use their literacy skills in other parts of the curriculum. For example, in history pupils write descriptions and make comparisons, and in science they take part in group discussions. However, these are not planned for in a systematic way and, therefore, do not contribute enough to the development of literacy skills.

88. Overall, the teaching seen was satisfactory in both the infants and the juniors, and it was good in seven of the 18 lessons observed. It was less than satisfactory in just one lesson. The teaching of basic literacy skills was good in most lessons. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Teaching was particularly effective when there were small steps to structure the pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 1 class, the teacher provided brief explanations with demonstrations to teach

pupils about the information provided on book covers. Pupils also responded well when the literacy tasks were linked to practical activities that they had carried out. For example, pupils in Year 2 were well motivated to write instructions about how to make a clay pot. Resources are used effectively across the school, as seen when pupils used individual white boards very well in Year 2 to try out spelling and to write short phrases. In most lessons teachers adapt the work skillfully to meet the range of needs within the class. They ask questions and use texts that are well matched to the pupils' understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this generally leads to clear learning objectives for lessons.

89. Teaching was least effective when the work was too complex for the pupils, when too many new ideas were introduced, and when there were insufficient opportunities to practise the new work. For example, pupils in a Year 3 class understood many features about play scripts but needed further support to understand stage directions. Teachers generally have effective strategies to manage the class but, in some lessons, the behaviour of a number of pupils detracted from the learning of others, and this was not well managed. Marking in the pupils' books is variable. In some classes it provides detailed feedback about the good

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features and how the work can be improved, but this is not consistent throughout the school. The introduction of individual pupil targets is a good development, but their impact is limited because they are frequently imprecise and they are not being identified in some classes. Classroom assistants make an effective contribution to the learning of literacy skills of the lower attaining pupils. This is particularly true of the work that is being done as part of the additional literacy support programme. The achievement of pupils in these sessions is good, but the learning is not always transferred to new situations.

90. The organisation of the subject across the school is satisfactory. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and she is currently supported by a teacher in a shadow role. She has implemented a number of initiatives since she joined the school last year. These include revising the home-school reading scheme in the infants, and establishing a system of regular assessments based on examples of the pupils' writing and reading. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and has identified appropriate actions to continue the drive to raise standards. However, she has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school to judge the impact of new initiatives. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, and books are drawn from a range of cultures to enhance the curriculum offered to the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

91. Results of the 2001 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. They were also very low compared with those gained by similar schools. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was not as great as in 2000. Girls did better than boys, and the difference in Year 6 was much greater than in Year 2. Despite a fall in 2001, there has been an upward trend in the Year 6 results over the past four years, in line with the national trend. The low results are partly because a high proportion of pupils in each

year group has special educational needs, and also because a high proportion are learning English as an additional language.

92. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in both the current Year 2 and Year 6 is better than indicated in the test results and is currently below national expectations. This is largely owing to better teaching. Most lessons are planned well to meet the needs of all pupils, and teachers and classroom assistants provide good quality support. Many pupils have weak mathematical understanding when they enter Year 1. In relation to their initial attainment, pupils' achievements in both the infants and juniors are good. The work set for pupils with special educational needs is generally well matched to help them take the next step in their learning, so their achievements are also good. Pupils learning English as an additional language develop their understanding in mathematics alongside their ability to speak English, and they also achieve well.

93. In Year 1, most pupils can count forwards and backwards in ones to twenty, supplying missing numbers. They add two, single-digit numbers together and explain the methods they use. They identify simple two-dimensional shapes and are able to sort objects according to length saying which is the longest and which the shortest. There are very few higher attainers. In Year 2, this work is extended as pupils count forwards and backwards to a hundred and use the number bonds up to twenty. They begin to learn their tables by counting in twos and

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learning how to double and halve numbers. They learn to identify two and three-dimensional shapes, and they can cut up shapes to show that two halves make a whole. This represents sound improvement since the last inspection when work in shape and space was a weakness in the mathematics curriculum for Years 1 and 2

94. In the juniors, pupils build steadily on what they have learnt in the infants. For example, in Year 4 pupils learn their tables and begin to learn division facts. They also improve their understanding of fractions. In a lesson for Year 5 pupils, they were beginning to explain the strategies they had used in order to double and halve a number. This work was developed in Year 6 where pupils showed that they could apply their understanding of number in a different situation. They knew that $95 + 5 = 100$ and were able to work out that as a result $9.5 + 0.5 = 10$. Year 6 pupils measure accurately in order to calculate the perimeter of various objects, and learn to use co-ordinates to describe a location. Pupils learn about handling data through collecting it, displaying it on appropriate charts and diagrams, and interpreting the results. This represents sound improvement since the last inspection when data handling was identified as a weakness in the juniors.

95. The quality of teaching seen in the infants was consistently good. Teachers explain tasks clearly and ensure they are well matched to what pupils already know and are capable of achieving. For example, pupils in Year 1 learnt about measurement of length and width, and the teacher provided an appropriate range of non-standard measures to help the pupils develop the concept. One group realised that, in order to measure accurately, they needed to combine the measures. Teaching was good when the lesson moved quickly, pupils were not given the opportunity to lose interest and become restless, and there was a range of practical activities. However, work in pupils' books shows that their learning over time is only satisfactory because recording skills are weak and pupils do not retain new learning easily.

96. In the juniors, the quality of teaching was not as strong. Of the eight lessons observed, teaching was good in one, satisfactory in five, but unsatisfactory in two. The better teaching had similar features to that seen in the infants. In addition, teachers used good questioning techniques to ensure that pupils were thinking mathematically. For example, in the lower set in Year 6, the pupils had been reinforcing their skills in multiplication by looking for patterns. At the end of the lesson, the teacher reviewed the work that had been carried out, and extended it by asking related division questions. A good feature of teaching was when teachers gave pupils the support to explain their work. In a Year 5 lesson, as a result of good support from the teacher, the pupils were able to explain when to use a bar chart and when to use a line graph. Older pupils are not given enough practice at explaining the methods they have used, or the reasons for their answers in writing, so that they can develop their mathematical thinking and understanding. Successful teaching and learning took place when pupils were given clear objectives at the beginning of the lesson, which prepared them for what was to be learnt. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the tasks set for pupils were too hard, which resulted in pupils being frustrated at their lack of understanding. In these lessons, activities went on for too long and pupils became restless and poorly behaved. This was not always well managed, so the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils hindered their own learning and that of others. There were occasions when higher attaining pupils did not make enough progress in lessons because the work was not challenging enough. In both the infants and the juniors, the quality of teachers' marking seen in pupils' books is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. Most of the work seen was marked and the comments made to pupils were positive. However, they do not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve further.

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97. The National Numeracy Strategy is being used effectively and is helping to raise standards. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are improving, but the school is only just beginning to use this information to plan the next stage of pupils' work. Some examples were seen of mathematics being taught through other subjects. For example, in one design and technology lesson the pupils were making musical instruments and the teacher used this as an opportunity to reinforce the vocabulary the pupils already knew about three-dimensional shapes. The school does not, however, plan systematically to use and develop pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum, so opportunities are lost.

98. Since the previous inspection, the school has made good improvement in mathematics as a result of good leadership and management of the subject and support given by the local education authority advisory staff. The subject is now well organised across the school. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of strengths in the subject and areas for further development. These have been drawn up into a useful action plan, which supports further improvement. Good quality resources are used well during lessons.

SCIENCE

99. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 are about the same as at the last inspection. In 2001 they were very low compared with the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally, and very few pupils gained the higher Level 3. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved gradually since the previous inspection, but at a slower rate than the national trend. In 2001 they were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally, despite a significant improvement on the

previous year. They were well below average compared with similar schools. Within an overall picture of low attainment, girls outperformed boys by a significant margin, which was not the case at the end of Year 2.

100. Inspection evidence showed that the standard of work attained in Year 2 is well below national expectations. Pupils' recorded work showed that only the higher attainers are reaching the expected level. For example, they can sort materials into different types, such as wood, metals and plastics, and they have an early understanding of how pushing and pulling are forces that can move objects. However, only about a quarter of the pupils are working at this level. The rest carry out much the same work, but their understanding is limited and the amount they record is sparse. In a good lesson where Year 2 pupils made clay pots, attainment was rather higher. All the pupils could describe some of the properties of clay, though weak language skills restricted some responses. Many of the pupils could say what they thought would happen when the clay was heated, and they displayed a good knowledge of a range of materials. This illustrated the gap between pupils' oral responses and the quality of their recording, and also showed how a practical activity raised attainment.

101. In Year 6, attainment is also well below national expectations. Pupils' recorded work showed that most are able to carry out simple experiments, such as making an electrical circuit and relating the length of the wires used to the brightness of the bulb. The higher attainers know that parts of the experiment have to be kept the same so that it is fair, but most pupils are not secure in their understanding of what should be fixed and what should be

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varied. Predictions are fairly simple, and there are few pupils who can write a cogent conclusion. Observation skills have improved since Year 2, such as when pupils made careful note of what happened to food when it was left to rot. Once again, in a good lesson, Year 6 pupils showed higher attainment than was evident in their books. When given the challenging question, "What would happen if there were no plants?" many pupils were able to use their knowledge of food chains to predict the effects on animals, and higher attainers knew that plants used carbon dioxide and produced oxygen, which was vital for animals. Although about half of the pupils are unlikely to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6, it is often their weak English and recording skills that are holding back their development in science. The fact that all the pupils complete largely the same work is not helping the higher attainers to achieve as well as they could.

102. When pupils start school, their skills are weak in all areas of learning, and particularly in communication, language and literacy. In relation to these prior levels of attainment, pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory in both the infants and the juniors. There are a number of barriers to better achievement, such as the high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, many of whom join the school part way through their primary education. Many classes have about a fifth of pupils who leave or join the school during each year. Nonetheless, the achievement of boys whilst they are in the juniors is a weakness, often because they are not positively motivated to learn. In each class, there are a few pupils, mainly boys, who have particular emotional and behavioural difficulties, and their achievements are poor. The school is tackling these issues. Higher-attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could because the work they are given is largely the same as for other pupils and does not extend their learning sufficiently. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make similar progress to their peers.

103. Overall, the quality of teaching observed was good, and much better than at the previous inspection. Of the 11 lessons seen, teaching was good in seven and satisfactory in four. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. However, pupils' recorded work and the standards they attain indicate that their learning in lessons, and over time, is satisfactory. Pupils' weak skills, particularly in English, prevent them from capitalising on the good teaching, and many do not retain learning from one lesson to the next.

104. Where teaching was most effective, practical activities were well organised to ensure that pupils were involved in their learning. For example, a Year 4 lesson about separating solids really caught the interest of the pupils, so they worked hard, in small groups, to extract paper clips, wax buttons, and rice from sand. This type of activity contributes well to pupils' social development and their speaking and listening skills. All lessons are well planned and organised, and teachers manage pupils' behaviour skillfully so that, for the most part, pupils concentrate on their work and try hard. The most effective lessons move at a good pace and teachers pose challenging questions. For example, Year 1 pupils investigated what happened when they moved away from a source of sound, and the teacher made the pupils think hard by posing ever more challenging questions. There were some weaknesses in lessons where teaching was satisfactory overall. A lack of practical activity, and the use of worksheets for recording, provided too little motivation for pupils. Some teachers lack sufficient expertise to extend pupils' learning, and they do not make enough links between the work in lessons and

pupils' existing experience of scientific ideas in their everyday life. Overall, the marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory because it rarely comments on the content of pupils' work or indicates what they might do to improve. Although pupils enjoy science, the standard of presentation of work in their books is poor throughout the school, and teachers' expectations are not high enough.

105. The school uses a nationally recommended scheme of work, which provides good coverage of science. However, too little consideration has been given to adapting this curriculum so that it meets the needs of the children. As a result, the work is too hard or too easy for some pupils. In some classes, there is a good emphasis on experiments and investigation, but these skills are not developed systematically enough through the school. Classroom displays of scientific topics and vocabulary are very helpful, particularly where teachers refer to them regularly. Resources are adequate and teachers use them well, particularly to support practical work. Assessments of pupils' attainment are made at the end of each unit of work, but little use is being made of this information to plan future activities. Management of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is newly appointed and keen to improve standards, but has not yet had time to form a clear view of strengths and weaknesses across the school. As a result, the current improvement plan sets out tasks that are not sufficiently focused on raising standards.

ART and DESIGN

106. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well below national expectations, and lower than at the previous inspection. Despite the fact that many start school with

a low level of skills, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because they complete a narrow range of work and rarely develop ideas through different media. As a result, pupils do not improve their knowledge and skills in a systematic way as they move through the school. Only two art lessons were observed, so judgements are largely based on an examination of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff.

107. There was little pupils' work to evaluate, partly because of curriculum arrangements, which meant that some classes had only just started a 'block' of artwork, and partly because the school keeps few examples of pupils' past work. Nonetheless, what was available showed a predominance of drawing and painting, occasional collage, but very little work in three dimensions, fabric or printing. The last inspection found a much wider range of work. In Year 1, pupils have followed the theme of portraits. They considered portraits painted by a variety of famous artists and then drew in pencil, and later painted, portraits of other children. These are fairly immature. However, collage in a variety of media, inspired by close observation of the cross-section of a kiwi fruit, is of good quality for this age. In one Year 2 class, good work was beginning looking at buildings. Pupils had observed the patterns in buildings seen whilst on an educational visit and, from photographs, transferred their observations into simple printing. Their line drawings of Deptford Town Hall showed good attention to detail. There was no similar work in the other Year 2 class.

108. Year 3 pupils were just beginning their work on portraying relationships. In one class, pencil sketches of 'couples' had been inspired by the way they are portrayed in the media, and pupils had also looked at the work of famous artists. In contrast, the other class had been experimenting with colour mixing. Year 4 portraits of Henry VIII, linked to their work on the Tudors, are of good quality. In one class, there were good examples of past work, saved by the teacher, which showed a wider range of skills being developed than in other classes, such as collage and printing focusing on pattern, inspired by the work of Matisse. In Year 5, pupils had brought to school their own objects that had a special meaning, and were beginning to draw and paint them. In one class, work on colour mixing was very little advanced from that seen with younger pupils. Work in Year 6 was developing well around the theme of 'landscapes'. Sketches in pastel and charcoal of the local environment, and urban and rural landscapes drawing on the work of Lowry and Degas, were of sound quality.

109. In the two lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. However, it is evident from pupils' work that there is a lack of confidence in teaching a wider range of techniques or giving pupils more freedom to express their ideas. Constant changes of teachers have not helped in trying to establish a consistent approach. In a Year 1 lesson, skills of colour mixing to obtain pupils' skin tones were taught methodically. The teacher and classroom assistants provided considerable support as pupils looked in mirrors and mixed paints, and adults used the opportunity effectively to develop pupils' language skills. Good organisation and a systematic approach to teaching skills ensured that all the pupils made good gains in learning. Discussion with the oldest pupils revealed

that they enjoy their art lessons. The best displays of pupils' artwork are attractive, but others do not do justice to the quality of the work.

110. The school uses a nationally recommended scheme of work to plan the curriculum, but it is not implemented consistently in all classes. Some of the topics are too difficult for the pupils, because they assume previous learning that has not taken place. The use of sketchbooks was better at the last inspection than now. They are not much used as a vehicle for pupils to develop a variety of ideas in a range of media. The work of artists and craftspeople, particularly those representing a range of cultures, is not used enough to inspire the pupils' work. Organisation of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has not had an opportunity to gain a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning across the school, so she cannot easily plan for improvements.

DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY

111. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is close to national expectations. However, the work seen was of a better standard in the infants than the juniors where there were inconsistencies in quality between classes in the same year group.

112. Pupils' achievements are good through the school because they develop their skills, knowledge and understanding steadily by following the requirements of a nationally recommended scheme of work. For example, Year 2 pupils design and make their own very effective versions of Joseph's coat of many colours, using a good range of skills. Pupils in Year 3 develop these skills further by designing and making banners for the local church. In both cases, the pupils evaluated their work and suggested improvements. Pupils in Year 4

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design and make their own money containers, and the finished products are original and carefully made. Older pupils in Year 5 link their work to mathematics by designing and making musical instruments and describing them using the correct names of the shapes they have used. By Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of how products have to be designed, and they know that plans frequently need to be modified in order to achieve the best results. They have the skills necessary to be able to assemble materials, having first considered their properties. They also appreciate health and safety issues, as seen when pupils were using saws during their work in making a chassis for a vehicle.

113. Only two lessons were observed, so it is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching. However, in both lessons, teaching was satisfactory. It was not possible to meet with the co-ordinator during the inspection. However, the quality of leadership and management in the subject is currently unsatisfactory. The absence of the co-ordinator results in there not being sufficient support and advice available to other members of staff. The headteacher is taking the role on a temporary basis, but she has more pressing demands on her time. The subject is well resourced with a variety of tools and materials, which are available in each classroom. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made in this subject since the previous inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Although pupils' achievements are satisfactory through the school, standards of attainment are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Weak literacy skills are a contributory factor to these standards. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection. Only one lesson was observed, so judgements are based mainly on discussions with pupils and teachers, and a scrutiny of pupils' work.

115. The pupils learn from looking at the local environment. For example, pupils in Year 1 carried out a traffic survey of the local road and successfully discussed their impressions of noise and bustle. Pupils in Year 5 developed this theme further, and debated whether New Cross Road should be closed to traffic. Pupils in Year 6 show skill in making comparisons between different localities within the United Kingdom. They are able to use photographs to identify differences between New Cross and Cromer and to draw conclusions about the way in which the seasons significantly affect human activities in Cromer. However, they are not yet able to draw on their geographical knowledge of a range of places to suggest questions to focus their investigations. Pupils are also less successful in writing about their work because their weak literacy skills mean that they must concentrate more intensely. The significant proportion of pupils within each class who have special educational needs are sensibly provided with worksheets that reduce the amount of writing needed to record their ideas. Acquiring an understanding of specific geographical vocabulary such as 'rainfall' and 'erosion' presents a challenge to a significant proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

116. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In the one lesson seen, the teaching was good. The teacher gave clear explanations of the tasks. As a result, pupils were successfully involved in lively discussion whilst drawing

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conclusions from photographic evidence of the type of human activities in which the people of Cromer would be engaged during the summer and winter months. Although the teacher set a realistic time limit for the completion of follow-up written work, this was not met and the work remained unfinished during that lesson. Teachers do not set high enough expectations of the standard of presentation and amount of writing, and this was evident across the work seen.

117. Organisation of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory because the co-ordinator has not had an opportunity to monitor lessons. The revised scheme of work, which is based on selected units from national guidance, helps teachers to plan effectively. However, there was little evidence of work looking at contrasting environments in other parts of the world, which might contribute to pupils' cultural development. The policy now contains some guidance on specific geographical skills, such as geographical enquiry and the use of writing/discussion frames, so that the teaching will be more consistent. Assessment of pupils' progress is made at the end of each unit and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

HISTORY

118. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below national expectations, even though pupils' achievements are satisfactory through the school. Standards are adversely affected by pupils' weak literacy skills. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection.

119. By Year 2, pupils develop some understanding of the present and the past by looking at old and new toys or household objects, and by re-telling stories of famous people such as Florence Nightingale. Through watching videos that re-capture events such as Remembrance Day, pupils in Year 2 begin to empathise with people in the past. They are encouraged to reflect upon why some people are sad at this time. This work is successful because the teacher is supported by good resources. A similar approach continues further up the school where pupils are encouraged to discuss pictures and texts of the way that the poor lived during Tudor times, or to research the way in which life in Britain has changed since 1948. By Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the way in which we know about the past and have begun to realise that our present way of life is influenced by technological changes in the past. They are not able to competently record, in writing, what they have found out. Pupils with special educational needs receive support from teachers through the provision of frameworks for writing or through targeted support from a classroom assistant so that they make satisfactory progress.

120. In each of the four lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Well-planned teaching stimulates most pupils. Teachers show an understanding of the subject and work hard to encourage pupils to work independently. A good feature of some lessons was where the teacher structured the learning in small steps. This resulted in a good balance between practical and recording activities, which were well matched to the pupils' needs, so that they could be successful. The weaknesses observed were mainly in the pace of the lesson, or where the lesson was interrupted by a few pupils misbehaving. This had a detrimental effect upon the learning of the class as a whole and reduced the effectiveness of the teaching. Teachers are more successful in maintaining these pupils' concentration in lessons that are based on question and answer or discussion sessions than those that focus upon writing down their ideas.

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121. Opportunities are taken to introduce historical vocabulary and to develop literacy skills by writing for different purposes, such as recording facts or opinions and in different styles, for example on information sheets or as diary entries. The use of ICT is developing, as seen in the use of different fonts, in word-processed work, to emphasise specific aspects of Henry VIII's character.

122. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the management and co-ordination of the subject, which is now satisfactory. The adoption of a scheme based on national guidance provides teachers with a structure that they find helpful in their planning. The revised policy contains guidance, examples of good practice, and assessment procedures, so it helps to clarify and exemplify the skills that need to be taught. It is helping teachers to approach the subject with greater confidence and enthusiasm. This is an improvement since the last inspection, though the subject leader is not yet fully effective because there has been little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

123. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is below national expectations. However, standards are rising because pupils now have a regular weekly lesson, and they are taught the full range of work required by the National Curriculum. These are significant improvements since the previous inspection when pupils' achievements were judged to be unsatisfactory.

124. By Year 2, most pupils run programs successfully, use the mouse and keyboard correctly, and start work with little help from teachers or support staff. They have the expected computer operating skills. Pupils word process short stories and poems and 'paint' simple pictures. For example, pupils painted in the style of Kandinsky, combining a range of mathematical shapes of different sizes and colours. The best work is close to the standard expected for Year 2, but most pupils' work lacks sufficient refinement. Pupils learn to control a floor 'robot' by giving it instructions, but discussion with Year 3 pupils showed that they had very hazy recollections of what they did, and standards in this strand of the subject are weaker than other aspects.

125. By Year 6, some pupils use the Internet effectively to locate information. A good display of pupils' work showed how they had researched materials on the American civil rights worker Rosa Parks, which they then adapted to write biographies of her life. This work is at the standard expected. It is well set out and has been carefully edited to remove errors. However, other examples of word-processing are generally of a lower standard. Attainment in other strands of the subject is below expectations. Pupils use databases and spreadsheets to store data and draw graphs of information, for example when they study the weather. However, discussion with pupils showed that they did not know how to use the computer to manipulate data they have collected, for instance to add up automatically the total of a shopping list. Pupils recalled little of the work they had done in control technology, and standards are poor. However, more work in this strand of the subject is planned for later in the year.

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126. Despite lower than expected standards, pupils' achievements are satisfactory through the school in relation to their low initial attainment. For example, in word processing, pupils in the infants can write short passages. In the juniors, pupils use word processing and desktop publishing to write poems, stories and factual reports, and to create posters on topics such as 'Harvest Festival' or 'Healthy eating'. They use an increasing range of text and graphic effects as they get older. Progress in the data handling, modelling and control aspects of the subject is less evident, because these are taught less frequently. However, pupils are taught a sufficient range of topics, and their achievements are satisfactory overall. There is no difference in the progress made by pupils of differing abilities.

127. Only three ICT lessons were observed during the inspection, which is not enough to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. One lesson seen was good, but both of the others were unsatisfactory. Where teaching was good, pupils' lively behaviour was managed well, helped by a brisk pace to learning and demanding tasks. When supporting individual pupils, both the teacher and classroom assistant worked hard to motivate them and to encourage them to examine their work critically and see how it could be improved. In one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, however, the attitudes to work and the behaviour of a significant number of pupils were unsatisfactory. Ineffective class management, undemanding work and slow lesson pace resulted in the pupils learning little. The other unsatisfactory lesson was seriously affected by a computer malfunction that prevented pupils learning what was intended, and in other respects the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory. At the start of the two lessons in the computer suite, the teachers demonstrated new skills well. However, the computer monitor was too small for the whole class to see properly, which reduced the effectiveness of the demonstration.

128. The school has sufficient computers and other resources, situated in the computer room, to support the teaching of ICT as a separate subject. There are sufficient additional computer systems in the infants to support the wider use of ICT in teaching and learning across the curriculum, but there are not enough available in the juniors. Although overall resource provision is satisfactory, several computers were not working at the time of the inspection and the network, which was new at the time of the previous inspection, is in need of upgrading to improve its reliability.

129. The scheme of work for ICT is relatively new, and now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. New assessment systems provide a satisfactory record of pupils' progress, although it is too soon to judge their effectiveness in guiding planning. The ICT development plan is focused clearly on raising standards through improvements to resources, staff expertise and continued improvements to the curriculum and assessment procedures. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and has the support of the headteacher and governing body, who are prepared to commit the funds that will be necessary to facilitate the improvements that are planned.

MUSIC

130. There was insufficient evidence to judge pupils' attainment and achievements in music, or the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. It is not therefore possible to evaluate improvements since the last inspection.

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131. Four class lessons and two singing assemblies were observed and, on these occasions, pupils' unison singing was broadly in line with the standard expected for their ages. However, in lessons, pupils rely heavily on a recorded accompaniment and, without its support, some pupils struggle to sing in tune. In the infant singing practice observed, pupils sang enthusiastically, and combined appropriate actions with the words, but singing was not generally in tune. In the junior assembly, singing was satisfactory. Pupils sing rhythmically complex songs fairly accurately, but singing lacks variety in expression and dynamics, and some older pupils especially find it hard to sing in tune. In a Year 6 steel band lesson, pupils learned the first part of 'When the saints go marching in'. Pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson and worked hard, in response to enthusiastic and skilful teaching. As a result, their performance improved quickly with practice, and at the end of the short time available pupils were already beginning to play well as an ensemble.

132. The four class lessons observed were satisfactory, overall, and in one the quality of teaching was good. They were all well organised. The commercial scheme of work used for music supports non-specialist teachers well, and helps to ensure that work is appropriate and challenging. Teachers follow the scheme closely in lessons, and use other scheme resources such as CD recordings effectively to support singing. Where teaching was good, it was due to the greater musical expertise of the teacher. This was the case in the lesson taken by the music co-ordinator, where clear guidance in leading singing enabled pupils to make progress in learning a two part round. However, in the junior assembly observed, similar opportunities were missed, and singing was less polished than it might otherwise have been.

133. Pupils' attitudes to music and behaviour in lessons range between good and unsatisfactory. However, even where they are good overall some pupils are inconsiderate and spoil the lesson for others. In two lessons seen, both at the end of the day, many pupils were unable to sustain sufficient

concentration and interest in their work and behaviour deteriorated substantially. In both cases, the lessons effectively came to a halt with several minutes still to go. Despite this, the lessons seen were well managed and teachers coped very well with the challenging behaviour presented.

134. The curriculum is satisfactory, and the co-ordinator, although relatively new to the post, has worked hard to match the commercial scheme used to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Music provides good support for pupils' understanding of a range of cultures. Lessons involve singing and playing music from around the World, pupils perform at special celebrations such as Harvest, and older pupils play in the steel band. There are sufficient learning resources for class music lessons, but teachers make insufficient use of ICT at present. Weaknesses in assessing pupils' attainment and progress reported at the last inspection still have to be tackled.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is below national expectations, and lower than reported at the previous inspection. For example, though pupils in Year 2 show sound control of their movements at different heights and speeds, they do not reach the expected standard in considering how they can improve their work and in identifying ways they can link movements together. In Year 5, most pupils throw and catch a ball accurately,

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but many do not work well as a team or understand how to develop the techniques of a particular game. In Year 6, though most pupils have the expected level of skill in jumping, rolling, throwing and catching, they do not always show precision in their work, and many do not develop a smooth sequence of movements. Pupils understand the importance of warming up and stretching their muscles. The pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of the subject, but a minority do not concentrate during lessons, and this sometimes distracts the learning of others.

136. When pupils start nursery, many have physical skills that are below average. In relation to these initial levels of attainment, pupils' achievements are satisfactory through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are fully involved in all aspects of physical education.

137. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the nine lessons observed, two were very good, two were good, four were satisfactory, and one was unsatisfactory. In most lessons, teachers had good strategies for managing behaviour and the work was closely matched to the pupils' existing skills. Teaching was particularly effective in Years 1 and 4 where the lessons were very well organised and the learning was clearly structured in small steps. For example, pupils learnt how to control a bat in Year 1 through a series of activities that became increasingly challenging. Warm-ups are done well at the beginning of all lessons and this was a particularly good feature of a Year 4 lesson where the teacher's enthusiasm and high expectations engaged the pupils from the very beginning and resulted in the pupils working to a good standard. When teachers are knowledgeable about physical education they provide feedback that enables pupils to improve their performance. For example, pupils in a Year 4 lesson received good feedback about the quality of their movements and this led to noticeable improvements in their work. In the less effective lessons, the teachers did not provide sufficient pace and variety to keep the children attentive and active. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the pupils worked on the same tasks for too long and became restless. In some lessons, the teacher's expectations of the pupils are not high enough and there is not enough focus

on developing quality movements. There is insufficient attention to safety by some teachers who do not ensure that all children are wearing appropriate clothing and have removed jewellery.

138. The school provides a broad range of physical education activities including swimming. The curriculum is enhanced by the very popular dance and football clubs offered by the subject leader, and by contributions from visiting specialist teachers such as dance experts. Planning is based on a good framework, but this is not used consistently throughout the school and some teachers do not adapt it effectively to match the particular needs of their class. Similarly, there are inconsistencies in the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. There is insufficient monitoring of the subject to identify ways in which it could be improved. However, the newly appointed co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and has begun to develop an understanding of the improvements that are needed across the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment broadly meets the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievements are good across the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below expectations in the infants. Attainment is higher than in most other subjects because the school values and

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celebrates the religious diversity within its community and allocates a good amount of time to teaching the subject. As a result, pupils are interested to learn about different faiths and to discuss people's varying beliefs.

140. In the infants, the youngest pupils visited a local church where they learnt about the baptism ceremony. They are developing an understanding of the concept of 'belonging' as they discuss membership of a family, the school, and a religion. They know the cross and the fish are symbols of Christianity. Year 2 pupils' study of some parables enabled them to understand the underlying moral in them. Good use of developing literacy skills was evident as pupils wrote their own story based on 'The Good Samaritan'. In a good lesson, pupils enjoyed comparing traditional food eaten at different festivals such as Christmas, Eid and Diwali. The appropriate use of a big book helped pupils to see the various foods.

141. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of a number of world faiths. They know about key beliefs, places of worship, holy books, festivals and practices and this makes a significant contribution to their cultural development. Year 3 pupils visited the church and produced a class book showing their study of key features, with some extended writing detailing their visit. Year 4 pupils have also used their literacy skills, for example writing as though they were Mary keeping a diary about her journey to Bethlehem before giving birth to Jesus. They have studied Hinduism, while Year 5 learnt about Judaism and Year 6 have studied Sikhism.

142. In addition to learning factual information about different religions, the school places emphasis on pupils having opportunities to reflect and apply ideas to their own lives. Year 5 pupils interpret a moral from a number of bible stories. For example, one suggests the moral from the story of Noah's Ark is to be kind to each other. Year 6 pupils are beginning to discuss the increasing commercialisation of Christmas.

143. Only two lessons were seen, but the teaching in those was at least satisfactory. Many classrooms have good displays relating to their religious education studies. Some of these are used as a stimulus, while others celebrate pupils' completed work. In one Year 5 room, the display of pupils' fabric collages, each depicting a sign of Christianity, is of a good standard. In some classes, teachers support less able pupils so they can complete a piece of work, for example by providing a writing frame or series of pictures. Where no additional help is given, less able pupils' work is often unfinished.

144. The school has a useful policy and follows the agreed syllabus through the school. A new system of assessing pupils' achievements is currently being introduced, addressing one of the issues from the last inspection. Satisfactory resources include artefacts and books for each of the six religions studied. However, the use of ICT to support pupils' studies is unsatisfactory. Visits to the local church enhance pupils' understanding of aspects of Christianity, and pupils have also visited a Jewish synagogue and a Sikh gurdwara.

145. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and supports colleagues effectively. She has a portfolio of work from pupils of all ages through the school. She is aware that this needs updating and annotation of the samples of work would help teachers to moderate levels of attainment. To date, the co-ordinator has not undertaken any monitoring of lessons.