

INSPECTION REPORT

FRANCISCAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tooting, London

LEA area: Wandsworth

Unique reference number: 101008

Headteacher: Clare McDonnell

Reporting inspector: Frances Forrester
11590

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 November 2001

Inspection number: 230385
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior and Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	221, Franciscan Road Tooting, London.
Postcode:	SW17 8HQ
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Jenny Garland
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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11590	Frances Forrester	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Foundation stage curriculum Science	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9502	Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector		How does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15035	Roger Medhurst	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20875	Jim Howard	Team inspector	Art Geography History	
16116	Chris Taylor	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Franciscan Primary School is larger than most primary schools, with 506 pupils on roll aged 3 –11 years. This number has increased since 1998, and the school is oversubscribed. A very high percentage (60 per cent) of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The largest ethnic groups are Black African, Caribbean or another black heritage. Other large cultural groups are of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese heritage. The main languages, other than English, are Tamil, Urdu and Somali. Funded language support is provided for 90 pupils. Forty-one refugees are on the school's roll; their predominant country of origin is Somalia. The school has high pupil mobility. Last year, 103 pupils joined the school at other than the usual time for first admission and 97 left before they reached Year 6. Over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. The school serves a disadvantaged community. Many pupils cope with very difficult social circumstances and in addition there is a small group of travellers. When pupils first start school, their attainment is very low; most children have had no pre-school experience and many do not speak English. There are 183 on the school's register of special educational needs, which is high, and there are two statemented pupils. The school has been identified locally as having the highest level of need; it receives additional funding through the Excellence in Cities Project. The school has some difficulties recruiting and retaining teachers. During the inspection, there were four temporary supply teachers in post. Major building refurbishments have taken place over the last two years and this has significantly impeded the school's development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Franciscan Primary School is an effective school that provides a good education for all its pupils. The leadership and management are good and are having a significant impact on pupils' learning. The good teaching and progress pupils make means that the school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses and it gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school has an outstandingly rich provision for pupils' cultural development.
- There are excellent procedures in place to ensure child protection and pupils' welfare.
- The quality of teaching is good; staff have a shared commitment to school improvement.
- The school's support staff impact successfully on pupils' learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour. They happily take part in school productions, celebrations of festivals and assemblies.
- Music and art are school priorities and are a great strength of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in English are too low and pupils' writing is not developed sufficiently.
- The outside learning opportunities for the youngest children are inadequate.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has successfully improved since 1998. The building has been refurbished and is now much better, and this means that pupils benefit from good facilities. The quality of teaching is improved; this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and effective systems are now in place for assessing pupils' work in English, mathematics and science. The children in the Foundation Stage now benefit from a good range of learning opportunities and good quality teaching. Standards have improved in a number of subjects, particularly in science, art and religious and physical education. Personal development and arrangements for collective worship have much improved. Governors were criticised, in the last

inspection, for their lack of involvement in the school's finances. They now take an active part in monitoring the school's budget. The school is well placed to improve 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	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	D	C	A	
science	E	C	C	B	

The number of Year 6 pupils who attained the standards expected nationally in 2001 was well below average in English and average in mathematics and science. The test results indicate that fewer pupils achieved the higher levels than in other schools nationally. When these results are compared with similar schools, the standards are better. English standards are average, mathematics are well above average and science standards are above average. Year 2' test results were below average in writing, but higher in reading, mathematics and science.

The low standards in English are partly explained by the high number of pupils joining and leaving the school during the year. Throughout the school pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, have better standards in reading than in writing. By the end of Year 6, pupils write tidily, but some continue to print. Their ability to write confidently is limited. The school successfully develops pupils' speaking and listening. Children start school with a poor knowledge of number and literacy but they progress well in the nursery and Reception classes, and learn a wide range of skills. By the time they move to Year 1, pupils attain appropriate standards in personal, social and emotional, creative and physical development and in developing a knowledge and understanding of the world. However, because their standards on entry are so low, although they achieve well, their attainment is still below the national expectation for the age group in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The school did not meet locally agreed targets in English, but it has reached its target in mathematics for the last two years. The school's performance is broadly in line with the national trend.

During the inspection, pupils' work in mathematics and science suggests that they are on course to attain the expected standards for their age group although attainment in English is below average. Good work was evident in art, music, physical development and religious education. There are no differences between the performance of boys and girls or any particular groups and they achieve well according to their individual ability.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have good attitudes and are enthusiastic about school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Throughout the school, most pupils behave well. In the playground there is no evidence of bullying and good relationships are evident.
Personal development and relationships	Very good provision is made for promoting pupils' personal development.
Attendance	The school's attendance is now broadly satisfactory: it was adversely affected during the building refurbishment.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Pupils benefit from good quality teaching, and often the lessons are very good or excellent. Out of 85 observations of lessons or parts of lessons, 22 were satisfactory, 47 good and 13 very good. There were three excellent lessons. The main feature of the most successful lessons was good class management and an imaginative presentation. In these lessons, pupils learn successfully and progress very well. The teachers are good at promoting basic literacy and numeracy skills, and the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Teachers match their activities to pupils' ability and in the best lessons the topic challenges the class. The lessons which were satisfactory lacked pace or the topic was not presented in an interesting way. In these lessons, pupils made sound progress but they lost their concentration.

The school is totally committed to promoting an understanding of the world's cultural diversity. Good teaching successfully motivates pupils to learn, and helps them to acquire a good understanding of the subject.

In the nursery and Reception classes, the quality of teaching is always good and often very good. The teachers provide a wide range of activities that promote the early learning goals for the youngest children. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their teacher.

The many pupils who are learning English as an additional language have very good support. Their class teachers try hard to ensure they help them to understand their work, and sometimes they seek assistance from bilingual support staff that translate information into a pupil's mother tongue. In addition, language support teachers successfully work in partnership with class teachers. In this way, the school meets the needs of all pupils and most achieve their potential, learn well and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Throughout the school, including the youngest classes, pupils benefit from a good range of learning opportunities. In addition, very good learning experiences are provided through a rich programme of activities such as the Shakespeare Club, a steel band, Indian dancing and the gospel choir.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision and support for pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties, both in class and in smaller groups, successfully utilising learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is very good support from all staff and specialist teachers, which successfully promotes pupils' learning and their acquisition of English so that they can achieve their full potential.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Pupils' cultural development is excellent and they benefit from full integration in the school's multicultural community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is extremely successful in the care that it shows its pupils, and their welfare is of paramount importance to the staff.

The school has a strong partnership with parents, who give excellent support to the school. Parents are regularly welcomed for assemblies or other performances.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the school is good. The headteacher is committed to developing the potential of all pupils and has a strong impact on raising standards. Teachers with specific roles and responsibilities fulfil these well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is effective in carrying out its duties. The governors are enthusiastic and supportive of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school appropriately evaluates and monitors its own performance.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers make good use of resources, and the school is efficient.

There is a necessary high number of staff to support the many pupils with learning needs. The two-year building programme has adversely affected the school's plans for improvement. The school has successfully applied the principles of best value to its work, using data provided by the local education authority. The refurbished accommodation is now much improved, and the specialist computer room is already having a significant impact on pupils' learning. There are adequate resources, except for the outside play resources and facilities for the youngest children and tools and materials in 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">• The standards of pupils' work and the good progress they make.• The good leadership and management.• The school's good hospitality.• The quality of pupils' behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of interesting activities.• The experience pupils have in music.• Consistency in the teaching.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. The team were impressed with the wide range of multicultural activities available to older pupils. The inspectors noted that all pupils, regardless of race, gender or special educational need, are encouraged to participate in all school multi cultural performances. These include a steel band, Indian dancing, guitar groups and gospel singing. The school ensures pupils develop a love of music. Several members of the senior management team are keen musicians, and visitors, including past pupils who are musically talented, regularly perform for all age groups. The inspectors consider the teaching to be remarkably consistent, considering the number of temporary teachers in post.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school strives hard to reach the best results possible. The number of Year 6 pupils who attained the expectation in National Curriculum tests in 2001 was well below average in English, but average in mathematics and science when compared to all schools. Few pupils reached the higher levels in all three subjects. When these results are compared with similar schools, the standards are good. English standards are average, mathematics is well above average and science was above average. The school's low standards in English are partly explained by the high number of pupil's who are learning English as an additional language, many pupils who have educational needs and high mobility. Year 2 test results in 2001 were also below average in writing and mathematics, but higher in reading and science. When the results are compared with other similar schools they are still below average in English but mathematics is above average, and science average.
2. Children start school in the nursery and Reception classes with a poor knowledge of number and literacy, but they progress well and learn a wide range of skills. Teachers make sure that the children benefit from a good range of learning opportunities that provide a good basis for their future education. By the time they move to Year 1, children attain appropriate standards in personal, social and emotional, creative and physical development, and in developing a knowledge and understanding of the world. However, because their standards on entry are so low, although they achieve well, their attainment is below the national expectation for their age group in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development.
3. Throughout the school, pupils achieve as well as they can. The school provides good support for Year 6 pupils in a special homework club that is designed to boost pupils' attainment. At this club, pupils work in small ability groups with a teacher or learning support assistant. The school did not meet locally agreed targets in English, but it exceeded its target for mathematics for the last two years. The school's trend in performance is broadly in line with the national trend. There are no significant differences between the work of boys and girls or any particular groups. The school has identified a small group of gifted and talented older pupils who are progressing well and achieving high standards. All pupils benefit from good teaching and, when needed, additional support individually or in small groups. Reading standards throughout the school are better than writing standards, which have given cause for concern for several years. By the end of Year 6, pupils write tidily, but more often they print. Their fluency to write with confidence in lessons in other subjects is limited. The school does well to successfully develop pupils' speaking and listening, particularly in view of the high percentage that are learning English as an additional language.
4. Pupils with special educational needs attain and achieve according to their individual ability. They are effectively supported in lessons, and make good progress towards their individual targets. Teachers and learning support staff give good support to pupils who are learning English as an additional language. In addition, there are specialist language support teachers who work in partnership with class teachers to give positive focused support.
5. During the inspection, pupils' work in mathematics and science suggests that they are on course to attain the expected standards for their age group. Attainment in English is lower, with writing standards being weaker than speaking and listening and reading. Good work was evident in art, music, physical education and religious education, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They are clearly very proud of their school, and speak of it with pride. Parents commented that their children like coming to school and are disappointed when it is closed. Pupils very quickly become involved in a wide range of activities. For example, many come to school on Saturdays to practise playing steel pans. Their attitudes are good because of the provision the school offers in order to meet their needs. The teaching is often good, and pupils experience interesting lessons. Most of all, the school strongly promotes pupils' cultural traditions. It values what pupils bring to school from their home and communities. This is often seen in pupils' performances of music and dance.

7. Behaviour throughout the school is good. The school has worked hard to establish clear routines for all pupils, and has largely succeeded. There are high expectations of how pupils should behave, and the majority know and understand what standards are acceptable. However, there is a small number of pupils in the school who exhibit challenging behaviour. Teachers and support staff are good at managing these pupils. Many support staff have built up strong relationships with them, and are able to calm difficult situations and bring pupils back on task. Teachers cater well for the needs of many of these pupils and they provide stimulating activities for them. They have developed positive non-confrontational strategies for managing behaviour. There was no evidence of any bullying during the inspection, and pupils report that such incidences are rare and dealt with quickly and effectively by all members of staff. There is a high degree of racial harmony between pupils and newcomers who are made to feel at home by their peers very quickly. Exclusions are rare; only two pupils have been excluded over the last school year. The school works very hard to include and accommodate pupils from all backgrounds and needs.

8. Relationships between all members of the school community are good. These are based on mutual respect, and this impacts positively on pupils' learning and progress. Relationships between pupils are particularly good. They readily accept new pupils and are genuinely interested in their backgrounds and cultural traditions. There are good opportunities for personal development. For instance, older pupils are usually librarians. Older pupils make and share books with nursery children. Pupils help and support each other in class, and they clearly become more confident as they get older. For example, the older pupils are very confident in performing in music recitals.

9. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, and it was just below the national average in 1999 – 2000. However, attendance deteriorated quite badly in the last academic year and was well below the national average. This was caused mainly by the continued disruption of the major building works that closed the school for a week. The school has continued to work hard to promote good attendance, and this is now bearing fruit. The latest figures (for September and October) indicate an improvement. There was no unauthorised absence during this latest period.

10. There is still a considerable number of pupils who arrive late for school in the morning, as there was in the last inspection. The school encourages pupils to arrive on time but it recognises that often it is not the pupils' fault but the responsibility of parents. Rather than make an issue of each latecomer, teachers welcome them into the lesson and quickly bring them up to date with the help of the teaching assistants.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. Pupils benefit from good quality teaching throughout the school, and the lessons are often very good or excellent. Out of 85 observations of lessons or parts of lessons, 22 were satisfactory, 47 good and 13 very good. There were three excellent lessons. There were no significant differences between the quality of teaching at different key stages or year groups. The teachers are generally good at promoting basic literacy and numeracy skills, and the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Teachers effectively match their activities to pupils' individual abilities. In the best lessons, the topic challenges the class. The school is totally committed to promoting an understanding of the world's cultural diversity. Good teaching positively motivates all

pupils to learn and achieve as well as can be expected and helps them to acquire a good understanding of the subject.

12. In the nursery and Reception classes, the quality of teaching is always good, and often very good. Teachers provide a wide range of activities, which promotes the early learning goals¹ for the youngest children. In the Foundation Stage², young children have a wide range of learning opportunities that meet the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals for this age group. The teachers create a stimulating atmosphere; for example, they have imaginative creative activities and role play areas, despite lack of space in the Reception classes: for instance, an imaginary accident and emergency department was set up in the corner of the room and children have regular opportunities to play at being doctors and nurses. This successfully promotes language skills and helps children to become confident communicators. Staff pose questions to stimulate learning, for instance in the nursery the staff take turns to play in the class 'post office'. They ask children, "How many cards are you going to write?" "What will you write?" "Which countries will you send them to?" Members of staff dress up as postal workers and help the children to understand by using gesture, pictures and drawings. In both the nursery and Reception classes, activities are well matched to the children's abilities. Teachers work very well with the support staff, and a good team spirit ensures the organisation often seems effortless. In the last inspection, the Reception class was judged to be much better than the nursery but this is no longer the case, as both age groups now benefit from good provision. The teachers in all Foundation Stage classes have very good relationships, and the quality of the teaching is consistently good. Staff make their lessons fun by providing interesting activities such as hanging paper socks on a washing line in order to promote counting skills. Another example is providing corn flour or shaving soap for children to explore with their fingers. The nursery staff ensure children have many opportunities to make choices and to be independent. Children freely choose to play outside, and staff provide a range of appropriate activities to promote physical development. Although the Reception class children have good opportunities in hall lessons to develop physical skills, the rigid organisation of the outside play means there are some missed opportunities for promoting other areas of learning. The limited resources and quality of the outdoor environment in the Foundation Stage impede the quality of teaching and learning outdoors.

13. The features of the most successful lessons which help pupils to learn effectively are:

- strong class management,
- interesting topics and imaginative presentation,
- very good use of the available resources,
- very good subject knowledge,
- high expectations of behaviour, productivity and attention to basic skills,
- good relationships with pupils,
- work which is well matched to pupils' ability,
- a good understanding of how pupils learn.

14. One example of excellent teaching was in a science lesson in Year 6. It was particularly impressive because the pupils had just been performing in a school assembly and the teacher had to settle the class and refocus them quickly onto a science topic. The teacher had a strong relationship with her class and excellent class management. This, together with talented teaching, meant the pupils learned and achieved successfully. In teaching pupils about the nature of sound, the teacher recapped previous learning and gave pupils an opportunity to investigate. They were fascinated to see the prongs of a tuning fork vibrating in water and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, were well motivated and made good progress.

15. The most successful lessons effectively build on pupils' learning in a previous lesson and activities are interesting and provide challenges for all abilities. In satisfactory lessons, there were

¹ Early Learning Goals are nationally agreed areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. There are stepping-stones which children cover in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative and physical development and promoting a knowledge and understanding of the world.

² Foundation Stage is the formal name given to the nursery and Reception classes.

often good features but the pace slowed in the follow-up group work when pupils began to lose their concentration. Although the lessons started well, the overall impact of the teaching was less successful.

16. Pupils with special educational needs are generally taught well. All teachers undertake a clear responsibility for these pupils and receive good support from the deputy headteacher (who is acting as the special educational needs co-ordinator) and classroom assistants. Teachers are involved in setting and maintaining individual educational plans, and ensure these are linked to work in class. The teachers know these pupils well, prepare work appropriate to their needs and integrate them fully into classroom activities wherever possible. The school has facilities to enable it to cope with physically disabled pupils, with ramps and similar facilities to enable access. All pupils with special educational needs get full access to the curriculum, and they are included in music and dance groups and school performances. In one case, some were involved in a high quality dance and drama performance for a group of visiting adults.

17. The many pupils who are learning English as an additional language have very good support. Their class teachers try hard to ensure they understand their work and sometimes they seek assistance from bilingual support staff who translate information into a pupil's mother tongue. In addition, language support teachers successfully work in partnership with class teachers. In this way, the school meets the needs of all pupils. Most achieve their potential and learn well because they make good progress in their learning.

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

18. Curricular provision is good throughout the school. It is broad, well balanced, and meets the needs of all pupils. Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been tackled effectively. The curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and this means that the curriculum overall now meets statutory requirements. Schemes of work, and the curriculum planning that takes place within and across year groups, ensure that there is now continuity and progression in each subject for the whole school.

19. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from good provision. The staff make the best use of their resources and ensure that activities are successfully planned to promote the early learning goals for this age group. The staff work effectively as a team, and care is taken to use questions successfully to promote children's learning. Due attention is given to promoting children's personal development, and cultural development is a priority.

20. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Both are planned and carried out systematically and well in all classes. The literacy hour is supporting the development of pupils' reading skills, particularly through guided reading and the teaching of letter sounds and spelling.

21. A particular strength of the curriculum is that it is inclusive of all. It meets the needs of the high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, and it sufficiently challenges the higher attainers. This includes not only the work that is planned for the various groups but also the support given to ensure that what is planned is carried out successfully. The work of learning support assistants and specialist teachers enables all groups, particularly those who struggle with English when they enter school and those who have difficulties with learning or behaviour, to make good progress.

22. The school has made good provision for personal and social education. Lessons seen during the inspection were well planned and effective. Themes such as friendship and citizenship are addressed and the school nurse and Schools' Involvement police officer respectively assist in the delivery of sex education and drug awareness education.

23. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum. A number of

different clubs are available in sport and the arts; these include a very effective weekly Shakespeare Club, a regular homework club for Year 6, and a steel band. These are popular with pupils. Classes make visits on a systematic termly basis including museum and theatre visits and a regular visit to the Globe Theatre. Visitors to the school are many and varied. For instance, actors held a drama workshop with Year 6 pupils prior to a visit to the Wimbledon Theatre. These activities have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and raising their awareness of the arts.

24. There is very good provision for spiritual development. Assemblies are planned and delivered well, and have a special status within the school day. Within lessons, there were also opportunities for spiritual development such as in a Year 3 history lesson when pupils discussed why and how various Aztec gods were worshipped. The school has a high awareness of the religious needs of its pupils, for example by setting two rooms aside for lunchtime prayers during Ramadan.

25. There is very good provision for moral development that is evident in the way all adults act as good role models to pupils. Staff are respectful of children's views but define their high expectations of behaviour clearly; the majority of pupils are aware of the difference between right and wrong. A very powerful Year 6 class assembly performed for parents addressed the theme of broken promises, highlighting the plight of the many children in the world who are being denied a primary education despite governments' pledges to ensure this.

26. There is very good provision for social development. Infant assemblies during the week of the inspection focused on kindness and thoughtfulness. An assembly for older pupils was very effective in portraying the feelings of new arrivals at the school. A number of pupils read out pieces they had written on their experience of leaving old friends at other schools, often in a different country, to come to Franciscan. This was balanced well by a contribution from three pupils who had attended the school since the nursery and who spoke about how they helped new arrivals settle in. Pupils are also encouraged to think of the circumstances of others, for example, in fundraising for Comic Relief.

27. The provision for cultural development is excellent, and offers pupils many opportunities to celebrate their own and other cultures. During the inspection, pupils listened to a violin and piano recital of European classical music given by two parents, and performed in a guitar group and steel band. Both boys and girls performed an Indian dance in full costume and performed a play for Ramadan. Pupils also performed a series of scenes portraying life in different cultures such as in Nigeria or Guatemala. At the Shakespeare after-school club, pupils acted out scenes from 'Twelfth Night'. Pupils encounter a wide range of music and art, and all are encouraged to perform within the classroom, during assemblies or before their parents and the local community. There is a planned programme of visits during the year, to the theatre, to nature reserves and to other places of interest such as Hampton Court, Kew Gardens and the London Aquarium.

28. There are good links with the local community and other schools which also support pupils' social and cultural development. The steel band has played outside a local supermarket, and members of staff co-ordinate the local music festival at which many local schools participate. Pupils have assisted in creating a garden for an Asian Women's Group and have been involved in a refugee and asylum seeker project to make a Cloth of Gold which now hangs in the school. The school has developed links with a school in Cumbria; pupils exchange letters and pupils from Cumbria visit Franciscan each year to share their experiences.

29. Pupils with special educational needs receive a broad curriculum, which is well balanced. Support is particularly focused on literacy and numeracy, but classroom assistants also support in other subjects when needed. Pupils' progress is reviewed every term. They make good progress across the school, and are removed from the special needs register once they no longer need support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are strengths of the school. Very good relationships between all staff and pupils ensure that each child is supported well in his or her personal development. Thorough records and comprehensive systems underpin assessment in the Foundation Stage, and pupils' academic development in English, mathematics and science. At all ages, pupils are set individual targets in English, mathematics and personal development. They are regularly discussed with pupils, and with parents at consultation evenings and in the annual reports.

31. The school has appropriate procedures for health and safety. The policy is up to date, and regular inspections of the site take place. The headteacher is the named person for child protection, and she makes it a priority that all staff have regular training in this area. There is good coverage for first aid, and detailed records of accidents are kept. The headteacher is a local trainer for other schools. She is considered an expert on child protection procedures and well respected.

32. The implementation of the behaviour policy is very effective. Certificates are awarded in assembly for effort, excellent work, good manners and helpfulness. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are logged and monitored carefully. Effective procedures are in place to deal with bullying and racism, but there was no evidence of any incidents of this nature during the inspection. The positive approach taken by all staff towards behaviour means that class control is good, and that all pupils are treated fairly. There is a number of very challenging pupils throughout the school, whose behaviour is handled very well by staff so that disruption is kept to a minimum. Lunchtimes are well organised and pupils are supervised well. A range of equipment is available in the playground for pupils, which they share well.

33. Procedures for promoting good attendance are applied consistently; registers are filled in accurately and unauthorised absence is low. Attendance is monitored carefully, certificates are awarded and the school works closely with the education welfare officer where necessary. Learning mentors, funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative, effectively support pupils with less positive attitudes to school, and work with families to improve attendance. This initiative is proving successful. Time and care is taken to ensure that new pupils who arrive in the school during the year are settled in quickly.

34. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is very good. The key issue raised after the last inspection has been addressed. Assessments in the core subjects enable staff to know exactly how pupils are progressing and inform planning and target setting well. Procedures are implemented consistently, and checked by senior staff. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is very good and the assessment of those pupils who are learning English as an additional language in all classes is good and enables specific support to be targeted well. Procedures to assess progress in the foundation subjects are less developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Parents' views of the school are very positive. From the questionnaire, completed by over half the parents, there was overwhelming agreement with the statements about their child liking school, that teaching is good, that parents feel comfortable in approaching the school and that the school expects children to work hard. At the inspection meeting these highly positive views were also stated. In the questionnaire a few parents did not feel that the school provided an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum, but the inspection team judged this area to be very good and a strength of the school.

36. The school has made very effective links with parents; these ensure that all parents are given the opportunity to become involved in the education of their child. The quality of information they receive is good. The prospectus and the annual report to parents from the governing body are well produced. Parents receive an annual report on the progress of their child that is detailed, gives

areas for improvement, and meets requirements. It is discussed with all parents at the parents' evening in the summer term. Parents are informed about the curriculum each child will undertake, and are invited to meetings on a range of topics including secondary transfer and national tests. There are many staff at the school who are able to provide verbal translations for parents when necessary. These staff attend meetings with parents and ensure letters are understood. All staff are highly approachable, and parents are appreciative of this.

37. There are regular parents' meetings that are well attended. Many parents hear their children read at home and ensure homework is completed. Parents have many opportunities to come into school; they attend assemblies and concerts. The school has involved them in parenting skills classes. Parents help in school in a variety of ways, for example, during the inspection two parents gave a violin and piano recital and another helped with nursery story time reading, translating the text into Pushtu as the nursery teacher read it in English. Fundraising events, such as the Christmas and summer fairs, are well supported. Parents make a significant impact on the work of the school and the staff values their contributions.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear educational vision for the school. She strongly believes that all pupils should have the opportunity to attain their individual potential in all subjects and benefit from a broad range of experiences and performing arts. As a result she has a strong impact on raising standards. The deputy headteacher has positively accepted the responsibility for monitoring the attainment of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. He is also successfully covering for the long-term absence of the special educational needs co-ordinator. The active involvement of governors and members of the senior management team makes a positive impact on school improvement and on raising standards.

39. In the last inspection, the school's management was judged to be sound, but there were several legal requirements that were not being met. Collective worship and religious education were unsatisfactory. The management of the curriculum was only satisfactory. All of these have been significantly improved, particularly the impact of members of staff who have key roles for the co-ordination of English, science, information and communication technology, and the Foundation Stage. They are now having a particularly successful impact on the development of their specialist areas because they monitor teachers' planning and the quality of pupils' work on a regular basis. For example, the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science use all available data to analyse attainment and to track pupils' progress and ensures that all teachers set literacy targets for their pupils. Co-ordinators also effectively monitor the teachers who are new to the school. All these measures are having a direct positive impact on pupils' achievement.

40. The governing body is good, and the governors know their school well. They have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chair of governors has a very good understanding of the importance of good governance. Other governors are enthusiastic and anxious to support the school. Since the last inspection, the finance committee has been appropriately involved in financial planning and strategic planning. All statutory requirements are successfully met. The school very successfully achieves its aims and values, and it provides a rich ethos where pupils are made to feel truly valued.

41. Staff and pupils are well motivated and committed to their school. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The school has managed the appointment of temporary teachers well. Temporary staff have no detrimental effect on pupils' standards. Teachers feel truly valued and agreed targets for their performance have been appropriately set as part of the school's performance management policy. The quality of teaching and learning is suitably monitored and, as a result, this is good. The school is committed to staff development and ensures there is a good programme of training, which includes local courses. Induction procedures are successfully in place to support newly qualified teachers.

42. The two-year building programme has adversely affected the school's plans for improvement. For instance, the headteacher had only just moved into her office at the start of the inspection. The school has successfully applied the principles of best value to its work, using data provided by the local education authority. Assessment outcomes and pupils' progress towards targets are suitably recorded. Results of tests and ongoing pupils' progress are appropriately monitored, and additional support is suitably adapted to meet individual needs. The school copes well with bureaucratic demands, and the headteacher spends as much time as possible being involved with pupils' learning.

43. The school now has good accommodation with a number of very good features. These include a well-resourced computer suite, staff resources room and a music room. There are three adequately sized halls. The building is well maintained. The accommodation is well used and valued by pupils, who appreciate the improvements. Resources are adequate in all subjects except in design and technology where there are insufficient mechanisms and materials for making models. A resource room means that resources are well maintained and accessible. The school has flexible timetabling arrangements at dinnertime because it has only limited playground space. The Reception classes spend time playing indoors until the playground is free. Although the range of activities available to the Reception classes is well managed by staff, the quality of the outside facilities and equipment is barely adequate. For instance, the staff resort to making skittles by filling plastic bottles with sand or suspending tubing from a wall. They do their best to ensure activities are promoting learning. They make imaginative use of the space by, for instance, choosing a child to be traffic controller so that children with bicycles and trucks have to stop and wait while other children cross. The Reception children have no covered area for sheltering in inclement weather and no variety of surfaces or levels to play on. The school has appropriate organisation and management of its resources.

44. The school fully complies with statutory requirements regarding pupils with special educational needs, and its provision for these pupils is good. When teachers have initial concerns about lack of progress, the special educational needs co-ordinator is informed. Action is immediately taken to assess the nature of the pupil's needs. Individual education plans meet legal requirements. These have appropriate targets for improvement that are reviewed at least once per term. The school involves parents as fully as possible in these reviews, and maintains close links with outside agencies. Pupils with educational statements of need are well supported. Classroom assistants and other support staff are appropriately trained and help pupils and teachers effectively.

45. The school is efficient and earmarked funding is well used. This is enabling the school to move forward. The specific grants and funds to raise standards are very efficiently used and funding for pupils with special educational needs provides good levels of support. There was a significant fund reserve carried forward to the present financial year. Much of this money was intended to purchase computers and other equipment for the new suite, and this could not be spent until the work had been completed. The school held a large reserve until the refurbishment was complete. The computer suite is now fully furnished and is having a very positive impact on the quality of provision. The large fund reserve was spent wisely and predicted figures show a small amount will be carried forward this year. The very good provision for pupils who are at an early stage of English, and for those who are refugees, is a direct result of the additional funding that is allocated to the school. The learning mentor scheme is already proving beneficial and individual pupils who benefit from this initiative are gaining more confidence to learn. Pupil expenditure is successfully used to benefit pupils and to provide them with a wide range of opportunities. Taking this into account, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. In order to raise the school's standards further, and to sustain the very good provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Raise the standards of English by:
 - ensuring there are greater opportunities for narrative and extended writing both in English lessons and in other subjects;
 - improving the fluency of pupils' handwriting through regular and consistent practice;
 - ensuring effective marking takes place and that good examples are used as an effective model and disseminated across the school;
(Paragraphs; 1, 3, 5, 51, 59, 76, 79, 93, 100.)

2. Improve the arrangements for children's outside play in the Foundation Stage, to provide:
 - a variety of surfaces and levels for children to play on; such as tarmac, paving or sand;
 - a good range of play resources for young children;
 - well-organised storage facilities that are accessible to staff and children;
 - a covered area for play in inclement weather;
 - planning documentation to support the quality of outdoor play;
(Paragraphs; 12, 28, 35, 43, 44, 52, 55.)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Improve the quality and range of resources for design and technology by:

- providing tools, materials and opportunities for pupils to work with mechanisms and resistant materials, particularly in the oldest classes.
(Paragraphs; 3, 34-38, 43.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

85

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	13	47	22	0	0	0
Percentage	4	15	55	26	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40	506
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16	260

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	183

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	306

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	103
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	97

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	30	33	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	26
	Girls	30	30	32
	Total	53	52	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (80)	83 (84)	92 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	25
	Girls	31	31	30
	Total	55	56	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (78)	89 (85)	87 (80)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	39	28	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	25	30
	Girls	20	19	23
	Total	38	47	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (61)	71 (69)	82 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	89 (88)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	28	30
	Girls	21	19	23
	Total	44	47	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (N/A)	71 (N/A)	82 (N/A)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	90
Black – African heritage	58
Black – other	7
Indian	75
Pakistani	55
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	10
White	98
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	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)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	578

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40
Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	1,467,406
Total expenditure	1,416,556
Expenditure per pupil	2,799
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,043
Balance carried forward to next year	102,893

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	506
Number of questionnaires returned	254

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	16	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	74	25	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	34	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	38	2	0	7
The teaching is good.	77	22	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	28	0	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	18	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	69	30	0	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	74	25	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	29	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	25	5	1	21

Other issues raised by parents

- The school strongly promotes pupils' awareness.
- The site manager does a very good job.
- Pupils' confidence has been boosted by the school through performances and other outside activities.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. The last inspection judged the nursery provision unsatisfactory, while the Reception class was satisfactory. The school has made significant improvements to its provision and both age groups now benefit from a good range of activities that cover the stepping-stones for the early learning goals for this age group. In 1998, the nursery support staff were not effective. This has been successfully rectified, and the good quality of the support staff is now having a very positive impact on children's learning. From their first days in the nursery, children are skilfully assessed and individual targets are identified to make sure there is no risk of them falling behind their peers. The activities in the nursery and the two Reception classes are well organised and children have easy access to a wide range of resources to promote their learning in class.

48. Many children join the nursery or Reception classes with a poor understanding of number or literacy. Many cannot understand English, and some find it difficult to mix socially. Despite this, children make good progress and successfully learn a wide range of skills. Good learning opportunities in the nursery and Reception classes provide a positive foundation for learning, and children attain appropriate standards in personal, social and emotional, creative and physical development and in developing a knowledge and understanding of the world. However, by the end of the Foundation Stage, their standards are still below the national expectations for their age group in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Nonetheless, their achievement is good compared with their very low standards on entry to the school.

Personal, social and emotional development

49. In the nursery and Reception classes, good quality teaching successfully promotes children's personal, social and emotional development. This is a strength of the provision. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. In the nursery, the children are encouraged to take turns and share. There is a particularly calm working atmosphere. A wide range of activities is planned, which encourage the children to play in small groups or alone with an adult. Sometimes a child chooses to work entirely alone at a table, for instance, a boy chose to paint a picture quietly alone. A member of the support staff gently reassured him, demonstrating how he could create a different shade by adding white paint. In the Reception classes, children develop an awareness of themselves and others. They observe their own features and think about their place in the family. They compare similarities and differences in each other, and this provides a good basis for the early development of tolerance. In all the nursery and Reception classes, the warm personalities of the staff encourage children to recognise they are valued as individuals.

50. Throughout the Foundation Stage, support staff quietly work with different groups or individual children, as seems appropriate. Prompt action is taken to address any unacceptable behaviour, and children's behaviour is good. Even those who have a tendency to be anti-social, and find it difficult to take turns, have a clear sense of right and wrong. For instance, the nursery children quickly learn that misbehaviour means 'timeout' sitting on a rug. The teacher makes the children responsible for monitoring their timeout, using a sand timer. In the nursery and Reception classes, children play well together, share resources fairly and most take turns appropriately when using the equipment. The children treat the school's equipment with care and willingly tidy up at the end of a session. For instance in the Reception classes, the children know the routines for changing to different activities. The group who played in the 'accident and emergency department' quickly tidied away their equipment and nurses' outfits. Children's cultural and racial awareness is successfully enhanced through special events such as the celebration of festivals. In the nursery, parents will often read from dual-language storybooks alongside the teacher. The wide cultural backgrounds of children and staff are an additional benefit to the school's provision.

Communication, language and literacy

51. A high priority is given to promoting communication skills in the nursery and Reception classes. The good quality teaching ensures the children make good progress. By the time they move to the Year 1, most have made good progress towards the early learning goals for communication, but their writing lacks control. Words are often unrecognisable and have to be explained to the staff. Children willingly join in repetitive songs, rhymes and stories. The most confident English speakers express their own ideas and feelings. The children who are learning to speak English also achieve well. They become increasingly confident to communicate in familiar simple words and gestures. All children benefit from skilful individual support and lots of encouragement from nursery nurses and other learning support staff. Activities, such as role-play or talking about books and looking at pictures, are carefully planned to enhance children's levels of communication. All adults are skilful at asking questions and they give thoughtful responses to promote children's confidence. In the nursery, the children make cards and write letters to Santa. They enjoy looking at non-fiction books on topics such as the weather or the autumn. In the Reception classes, teachers focus on early literacy skills and most children recognise frequently used words in their reading books. Due attention is given to teaching children letter sounds. Children talk about their favourite parts of the story, and discuss the pictures in their books. They have many opportunities to express themselves by mark making. They write under the teacher's script and the most able form letters appropriately and spell simple words.

Mathematical development

52. The good quality teaching and provision in the nursery and Reception classes successfully promotes children's mathematical development, although few attain the early learning goals for this aspect of the provision. Staff continually ask children questions: "How many are there?" "What happens if we take one away?" or "Have we got more than or less than?" Regular sorting activities, number games and counting using a number line are successful strategies for promoting children's learning. The teachers have other imaginative ideas to enhance mathematical development. For instance, as part of a Christmas project on the 'Jolly Postman', nursery children learned that some parcels were heavier than others. They also considered the length of a winter scarf. In the Reception classes, they thread 'Cheerios' to make a necklace, and talk about and recognise simple patterns in numbers. Most recognise numbers to 10 and they have a developing awareness of greater numbers through daily class registration. However, few are confident to calculate without assistance or to use language to compare numbers. They add several small numbers together, but generally their understanding of addition and subtraction is at an early stage and they still need a lot of support. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to solve simple problems. They recognise mathematical shapes and enjoy matching shapes in a puzzle. They are interested in building models with construction materials, and they make judgments about the shape of everyday objects. In their play they discuss their needs, for instance: "We need a larger shape to balance on that one." Staff encourage children to talk about shape, position and measure. As children make models or draw shapes in shaving soap, they model mathematical language in their discussions. Outside in the nursery playground, a climbing frame gives children a limited experience of seeing the inside of a box.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

53. In both the nursery and Reception classes the good quality teaching successfully promotes children's knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most attain appropriately in relation to the early learning goals. When children first start in the nursery many have a very limited general knowledge. The nursery provides a stimulating environment where children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm is enhanced through carefully worded questions, which promote learning. Children are encouraged to express their feelings and staff talk about and show interest in their lives. They encourage role-play of special events. Children have a good introduction to religious education. The school often invites them to performances and special assemblies and consequently nursery and reception children have a

breadth of different experiences such as watching older pupils perform. This has a significant impact on promoting a knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are familiar with very diverse role models such as elderly people, those with disabilities and those from culturally diverse backgrounds. Parents are regularly welcomed into the school and, children often listen to stories in different languages or they try tasting food from other cultures. In the Reception classes, children investigate and take responsibility for watering cress seeds and they are encouraged to consider cause and effect. Their senses are stimulated through smelling or tasting fruit, curry powder, vinegar and disinfectant. They use a magnifying glass to observe texture and pattern. All children begin to gain an understanding of time as they celebrate birthdays and special events. They observe changes in their environment, and they recognise the changing seasons. Stories are effectively used to introduce a sense of time and of people from the past. Children have an increasing understanding of modern technology as they regularly use computers. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are increasingly confident in using a computer keyboard and mouse.

Creative Development

54. The nursery and Reception classes very successfully promote children's creative development through good teaching and a wide range of creative activities. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children attain good standards in relation to the early learning goals. Children have many opportunities to experiment with textures and colours. For instance in the nursery, they make their own models and decorate them with coloured paper. Staff effectively introduce new vocabulary to the children for instance describing materials as 'shiny', 'bumpy' or 'patterned'. In the Reception classes children touch fabric of different textures and hold transparent paper up to the light to see the effect of light hitting the surface. Throughout the Foundation Stage, they regularly paint and, from a very early age, create quite delicate patterns. Creativity is developed through a range of good activities, for instance, dancing to music. Supportive suggestions and good use of praise assist the children to represent and develop their creative ideas. In the Reception classes, they observe natural living things and make detailed drawings and paintings of, for instance, shells, feathers, snails and insects. The staff support children in expressing their opinions, and show appreciation for the creations. All the children learn songs by heart, including many with actions. They have a good sense of rhythm. Their creative development is effectively enhanced through participating in school performances.

Physical Development

55. The nursery and Reception classes successfully promote children's physical development through good teaching and a range of carefully planned activities. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children attain appropriate standards in relation to the early learning goals. The nursery children appropriately use the outdoor play area to practise physical skills such as climbing, balancing, cycling, running, pushing a truck and sliding down the slide. The staff make the most of the limited resources and outside facilities by providing drawing materials and dressing-up clothes. Nursery children are free to choose activities outside or in the class throughout the day. They benefit from having hall sessions for physical development and dance. In these lessons, they develop an awareness of space, and the most agile children practise physical skills such as kicking a ball or running at speed. Reception children have access to an outside area, but for one Reception class, this means going through the other classroom. The teachers in the Reception classes organise a range of appropriate activities to promote the children's physical development in hall lessons and a daily session in the playground. Staff successfully promote children's confidence, and teach them to be independent when they change their clothes for a lesson. Another example is allowing children to direct the traffic in the centre of the playground. In the classroom, children have increasing confidence to use tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and glue spatulas. Staff use these opportunities to develop the children's vocabulary by introducing words such as 'squeeze', 'prod' or 'stir'.

ENGLISH

56. Standards overall in English are below average. However, results have steadily improved since the last inspection, and in speaking and listening and reading the standards attained are close to the level expected by the ages of seven and 11. On entry to the school, pupils' standards in English are very low. The progress they make during their time in school is therefore good, and most are achieving well. The high number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, are making good progress. Higher attaining pupils are also achieving well. Though there has been some fluctuation between the results of boys and girls in recent years, there is no overall pattern that shows one group is performing better than another in English.

57. Speaking and listening skills are developed well across most classes. Pupils make good progress from a low base when entering school, and the standards attained are generally in line with the level expected. By Year 2, most pupils listen carefully to what others have to say and show increasing confidence in speaking. By Year 6, many pupils talk and listen with confidence, are keen to make contributions, are able to develop their ideas and to give much thought to their answers. The opportunities frequently provided for paired discussion followed by reporting back to the class, role play, and the discussions that arise from the study of texts during the literacy hour provide good, varied opportunities to encourage pupils to speak. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils worked in pairs to construct questions they thought a tabloid journalist would ask, based on a scenario related to previous work; they then acted as interviewer and interviewee, and reported the interviews back to the class. This led to good quality spoken contributions by all pupils. The Shakespeare Club also provides a rich and excellent experience for pupils, enabling them to develop their confidence to listen, to explore character, and to speak with expression to an audience. Teachers provide good role models for pupils to follow in valuing and respecting the ideas and opinions of both pupils and adults. Additional adults supporting in the classrooms make an effective contribution to the good progress made by pupils. When working with groups or individuals, they clarify questions, explain new vocabulary and encourage pupils to offer answers. Speaking and listening skills were less well developed in one or two lessons seen where a small number of pupils, chatting amongst themselves when others were speaking to the class, meant that the contributions made by the speakers were not sufficiently valued.

58. Standards in reading vary quite considerably across the school, though they are broadly in line with the levels expected by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in all classes read regularly, seem keen to read and to enjoy reading. The progress made in reading is good and sometimes very good. By Year 2, pupils are building on their recognition of familiar words and are developing sound strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Many have a good understanding of the books they read. Some pupils are reading fluently for their age, and the better readers can predict the next stage of the text. Lower-attaining pupils need considerable help with their reading however, and frequently struggle with letter sounds and sometimes with the alphabetical names of the letters. By Year 6, pupils have developed the confidence to read, understand and appreciate a range of texts, to understand the significant points from a story and are, for example, building well on their knowledge and understanding of texts by Shakespeare. Throughout the school, there is considerable opportunity for pupils to read and appreciate a range of poetry. The majority of pupils understand the structure of books and know about the contents, index, author and illustrator. Pupils' skills of inference and deduction are developing in Years 5 and 6, though these skills are not yet secure. The guided reading sessions and the study of particular texts that have been established during the literacy hour are used well by teachers to provide a regular opportunity for pupils to build their confidence as readers, to read a range of texts and to develop their understanding of those texts. The development of reading is also supported by a well-structured approach to teaching phonics. This enables pupils to build successfully their phonic knowledge and to extend their range of strategies for decoding unfamiliar words. It marks a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when phonic skills were considered poor. Teachers ensure that books are taken home regularly, and this provides further important opportunities for reading, while emphasising the value the school places on it.

59. The standards in writing are below average throughout the school. Much hard work goes into improving the quality of pupils' work, and in most classes sustained and often good progress is

made. The well-managed introduction of a structured and well-taught literacy hour is having a beneficial effect on pupils' writing, and has increased the breadth of writing opportunities since the last inspection. Pupils are developing well their understanding of the grammatical functions of words and of the structure of sentences. Older pupils are also building on their understanding of how to attempt to write more complex sentences and the purpose of paragraphs. Pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to write in a range of forms including play scripts, reports, instructions, reviews and commentaries. Particular strengths include poetry writing and letter writing. Older pupils, for example, use their knowledge of letter writing to write to pen friends in Cumbria. Pupils make good progress with spelling. They build well on their knowledge of spelling conventions and patterns, and are confident at using dictionaries. However, the knowledge and skills gained through the work on grammar and sentence structure are not sufficiently transferred to, or embedded in, pupils' independent writing. This is partly because there are not sufficient opportunities for extended writing, including narrative writing, in English and in particular, across the curriculum. The standard of handwriting is inconsistent throughout the school. When pupils write a final draft, it is almost always well presented and the writing is neat. However, writing in books varies widely. Pupils regularly rub out their work. By Year 6, some children still need to practise letter shapes and joins, and a number of older children continue to print rather than join their letters. This affects the speed and fluency of their writing. Handwriting therefore needs to be taught and practised regularly and consistently, from Year 1 onwards.

60. The teaching of English and the quality of provision have improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good overall in both infant and junior classes. Teachers plan work effectively and provide clear objectives for learning in each lesson. The literacy hour is well structured and follows a successful model in all classes. Work is inclusive of all; it is targeted at the appropriate level for all children, including those who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language who struggle with their English. This is evident in the good explanations given when teaching new ideas, in the appropriate yet challenging questioning in most classes, and in the tasks set to consolidate learning. Pupils are supported and challenged well during guided reading sessions, and this contributes significantly to the progress made in reading. In the better lessons, a very good pace is maintained; in several lessons for example, regular time reminders were given when pupils worked individually or in pairs; this focused attention well and ensured in each case that tasks were completed effectively. The class computer is used well in most lessons. Two pupils are generally assigned to carry out an activity, matched to the lesson objectives, during the group or independent work. All teachers manage pupils well; occasional challenging behaviour is handled sensitively and does not affect the general good pace of the lesson or the pupils' opportunities for learning. Support assistants and language support teachers in most classes give good support. This enables the pupils with special educational needs and those who have difficulties with their English to keep up with the rest of the class and to make good progress. The marking of writing is good in some classes; teachers' comments relate clearly to key objectives for learning, and help the pupils to improve their work. Marking is not consistent across all classes however, and is weak in some.

61. The good and sometimes very good teaching in many lessons has a direct impact on the attitudes and behaviour of the children. In most lessons, children are keen and enthusiastic to learn, clearly enjoy being in their class and have considerable respect for each other. This is particularly evident when pupils work in pairs: they co-operate well and support each other, whether through discussion or when helping with writing and spelling.

62. A sound range of both fiction and non-fiction books in all classrooms enables pupils to have ready access to the books they need for day-to-day work. Two libraries, one in the Middle Building and one in the Okeburn Building, are well stocked, particularly with non-fiction books. These provide a useful additional source and a valuable resource for promoting referencing skills.

MATHEMATICS

63. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were at the national average. This is a similar position to that in the last inspection. The school has made good improvements since

2000, when results were well below average. However, in comparison with similar schools, the school achieves well above average standards. This has been achieved largely through the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and the improvements this has brought to the quality and range of the mathematics curriculum together with better teaching.

64. At the end of Year 6, the results in the national tests in 2001 were just below average. This was caused by slightly fewer pupils achieving the higher Level 5 than schools do nationally. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the national expectation of Level 4 and above was similar to the national average. In addition, if the results of pupils new to the country were not included, the school would have achieved above the national average. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls over time. Standards have remained broadly similar since the last inspection, but the improved curriculum and teaching that has come from the National Numeracy Strategy is now proving beneficial.

65. Inspection evidence showed that the standard of work attained at the end of Year 2 is also close to the national expectation. These pupils can largely understand the language of number and most can count, order, add and subtract numbers when solving problems up to 10 objects. Many are now using mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10, and they are beginning to understand the place value of each digit and use this knowledge to order numbers to 100. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand multiplication through repeated addition. For example, they know that five rows of six make 30. They are beginning to gain a firm grasp of mathematical vocabulary because teachers emphasise this language during lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils use the term 'mass' to describe the objects they are weighing. Most are able to apply mathematical procedures well when they solve simple problems. They sort objects and classify them. For instance, they sort two and three-dimensional shapes whilst higher attaining pupils describe the properties of shapes, including the number of sides and corners. The younger pupils are getting in the habit of recording and presenting their work tidily because teachers expect this to happen. Pupils' strengths in mental and oral mathematics are improving because of the positive emphasis teachers place on these skills during the Numeracy Hour.

66. Pupils aged 11 in Year 6 have a firm understanding of place value and can multiply and divide whole numbers by 10 or 100. They are able to demonstrate a range of mental methods of computation of the four operations during oral and mental mathematics sessions. Higher attaining pupils can now reduce fractions using common factors, and can change percentages to fractions and vice versa. These pupils can also demonstrate a sound knowledge of mode, median and mean, and can calculate averages quickly. Pupils can also collect data and record this using a frequency table. They can construct and interpret a variety of graphs. The majority of pupils can apply their knowledge to solving problems. Overall, the progress pupils make throughout the school is good, and this is an improvement on the last inspection.

67. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language attain average standards across the school. They find mathematics accessible because of the care of their teachers and support teachers who find ways to make mathematical themes and topics relevant to them. Together with other pupils, their progress is satisfactory. Pupils who have special educational needs also attain standards in accordance with their abilities, largely because of the good support they receive in class from the teaching assistants. These support staff ensure that pupils cover similar work and help them understand throughout the lesson.

68. Only limited use of information and communications technology in mathematics was observed during the inspection. However, pupils do use data handling programs to construct pie charts from which they are able to interpret data.

69. In view of the very low standards these pupils have when they enter the school in the nursery and Reception classes, pupils' achievements by Year 2 are good. This is largely due to the consistently effective teaching that takes place throughout the school. Teachers have a clear understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and they know how to teach mathematical concepts. The successful implementation of the strategy ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and

understanding progressively build up over time. By Year 6, good achievement is maintained and even though many pupils did not start school in the Reception class, this has not had an adverse impact. The achievements of Year 3 pupils are particularly good, and this is reflected in their work. The school has identified higher attaining pupils who are taught in a small group in Year 6. Their achievements are also particularly good. Good use of Numeracy Strategy planning is assisting the development of mathematical skills.

70. The achievements of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are good. Teachers and support staff ensure these pupils are included in all areas of the mathematics curriculum. They support them well during mental and oral sessions by rephrasing and interpreting teachers' questions. They support them during independent activities by working with them in their groups and keeping them on task and, for those pupils with emotional difficulties, they help moderate their behaviour.

71. The quality of teaching is good. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Teaching is effective throughout the school, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Teaching is often good, and occasionally excellent. This consistently good teaching is impacting well on pupils' learning which, as a result, is always satisfactory and often good. Teachers' subject knowledge has been improved by their experiences of the National Numeracy Strategy. Many have undergone intensive training, and this has impacted on their teaching. Planning is good throughout the school. Teachers plan carefully for lessons, and ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils work confidently on their tasks and make good progress. Teachers use the strategy's objectives well and share them with their pupils. They employ a range of teaching methods to ensure that all pupils get the most from lessons. For example, they use varied strategies for ensuring good participation in the mental and oral starter sessions at the beginning of lessons; they use number fans and cards and individual white boards. This impacts well on pupils' learning, as they all participate with enthusiasm. The management of pupils is good. Teachers and support staff work together well to ensure that all pupils feel secure and confident in their work. Given this good support, little time is lost dealing with behaviour issues and pupils' learning is often good. Teachers' use of support staff in lessons is very good.

72. The very best lessons are characterised by the teacher demonstrating good subject knowledge that enables pupils to be challenged by open-ended questions. The pace is rapid, with an effective use of support materials such as an overhead projector. The activities are well planned and structured, and meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. A successful plenary session at the end enables the teacher to assess fully what pupils have learnt and what they need to do next to improve.

73. Where there are some weaknesses in lessons this is because teachers plan activities that are clearly beyond the intellectual capacity of the majority of their pupils. An example of this occurred where teachers attempted to develop further the concept of division through an extension of repeated subtraction. Because pupils did not grasp the concept, their learning was not as good as it could have been. However, teachers were quick to recognise this and adjusted short term planning accordingly.

74. Pupils' interest and concentration assist their learning. They are enthusiastic and have a sound grasp of self-knowledge about their learning. For example, pupils in the upper set for mathematics in Year 6 apply their knowledge well to a range of problems. They demonstrate interest and enthusiasm. They know what is required of them to achieve the higher levels and will willingly work towards this through additional homework.

75. Planning for numeracy occurs within year groups. This ensures that all pupils have an equality of opportunity and meets the needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs. This joint planning enables teachers to share their expertise and ideas, and ensures that pupils receive suitable work well matched to their prior attainment. The good support pupils receive in the classrooms from teaching assistants and support teachers also assists their learning. Pupils learn the basic skills thoroughly, and these

skills are built upon as they progress through the school. Good teaching throughout enables pupils to experience good gains in their learning overall.

SCIENCE

76. Pupils' attainment in science is broadly average throughout the school. An average percentage of seven-year-olds attained the national expectation in the teacher assessments in 2001. The percentage of 11-year-olds who attained the national expectation is above average when results are compared to similar schools. This is a great improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be variable. Pupils' work indicates that standards in Year 2 are similar to the test results, but their written work is weak. This is because many pupils cannot write down their scientific findings or express themselves in English. However, the rate of progress throughout the school is good and, by Year 6, pupils attain in line with expectations for their age group. These results are average when compared to similar schools.

77. In Year 1, pupils recognise living and non-living objects. They can identify natural and man-made materials in the world around them. By Year 2, they know a range of criteria to use when making decisions. For example, they know that living things feed, grow and reproduce. Pupils know the names of the main external parts of plants, and the functions of the roots, stems, leaves and petals. They predict the results of their experiments, although their written comments are often immature; for example a higher attainer wrote, 'my predication is that the corn will go big because it will pop and the heat is making it pop'. Many pupils find it difficult to write about their work. They rely on drawings and diagrams to describe their investigations. Through practical investigations they know which materials are magnetic.

78. By Year 5, pupils have a good understanding of vibration and know the impact this has on the inner, middle and outer ear. Their investigations have taught them how well sound travels through different materials. By the time they are in Year 6, they relate their good understanding of the functions of the human eye to their investigative work on light. They recognise the need for fairness in scientific investigations, and they conduct a wide variety of experiments and understand parallel circuits. Pupils are thoroughly taught all aspects of the science curriculum with the emphasis on practical activities to develop a questioning approach that deepens their understanding. This was a significant weakness of the pupils' attainment in the last inspection and it is now much improved. Pupils are given many well-planned opportunities to carry out their own experiments, and they learn effectively through a practical approach. By the time they leave the school, all pupils achieve well and those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress.

79. Out of seven lesson observations, one was excellent, four were good and two satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and they share the lesson objectives with their class to enable pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of their own learning. The school monitors teachers' planning to ensure that all pupils have similar coverage of the curriculum. Teachers use the correct scientific vocabulary and most have a good subject knowledge. They manage their pupils well and create a purposeful working atmosphere. Where there is learning support, it is successfully impacting on pupils' learning. Many lessons start with a lively introduction by the teacher, which immediately captures pupils' attention and makes them very receptive to the planned learning objective. The follow-up work is often less successful and there are missed opportunities to promote pupils' fluency in writing. One example was a good lesson in Year 4 where the teacher was introducing reversible and non-reversible changes to the class. The lesson introduction was strong and the teacher had very high expectations of the class. She skilfully recapped previous work to remind pupils what they had already learned. It was clear from pupils' lively responses that they had successfully learned that, for instance, boiling an egg is non-reversible. However, the follow-up activity was a work sheet that all pupils had to complete. This lacked challenge or interest, especially for the higher attainers in the class, because it only required pupils to draw a number of reversible and non-reversible objects. Pupils often have good attitudes to their work and they respond well to the good teaching. The oldest classes particularly enjoy investigation and discussion. Their behaviour is often good because they find the topic interesting. Presentation of work varies in quality. In some of the younger classes, work is left unfinished and writing is poor. In

Years 5 and 6, work is very neat and there are good examples of detailed diagrams that are neatly labelled. Science makes an appropriate contribution to improving pupils' speaking and listening skills, but their writing is often printed and brief. The library has a useful range of scientific books that pupils can use for research. Use of the Internet is not fully exploited.

ART AND DESIGN

80. Standards in art are good throughout the school and above the standards expected for the pupils' ages. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be in line with expectations for seven-year-olds, and above expectations by the time pupils are 11 years of age. Since that time, there have been major changes to the curriculum and it is a significant achievement to have further improved standards. From their early days in the school, pupils are given opportunities to paint and draw what they see and imagine, using a range of materials and media. They experiment with colour, and pupils use their knowledge to produce attractive illustrations, often to support their work in other subjects. Year 4 pupils for example, produced very attractive designs of Islamic prayer mats, as part of their religious education studies. Younger pupils use the computer to produce colourful patterns, developing their awareness of both pattern and colour whilst gaining familiarity with the functions of the computer.

81. The quality of observational drawing is a strength. Pupils are taught to practise and refine specific techniques using their sketchbooks, and most produce work of high quality. Another strength is pupils' bold and imaginative use of colour. From a young age, pupils are encouraged to experiment with their use of colour and to seek the exact shade to create the desired effect. Three-dimensional work is also of good quality. Year 6 pupils for example, have produced high quality African masks from clay. The school places high value on art, and pupils' paintings and drawings are displayed carefully. The quality of these displays does much to create a warm and colourful environment. Appropriate emphasis is given to the enjoyment to be derived from art, and many pupils unhesitatingly name it as their favourite lesson.

82. In addition to their practical work, pupils also learn about famous artists and use examples of their work for inspiration. Year 5 pupils produced paintings in the style of Monet, and Year 5 pupils produced work exploring shape and the use of colour after studying the work of Paul Klee. Other artists whose work has been used as a source of inspiration include Kandinsky and Mondrian. The range of artists studied makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development.

83. Teaching is good, and as a result pupils of all abilities progress well. Year 2 pupils for example, progressed well in their ability to make clay coil pots, as a result of the teacher's good subject knowledge and clear teaching of technique. There is suitable emphasis on the teaching of technique, and pupils are challenged to attempt increasingly demanding tasks. Teachers insist that pupils observe closely, which develops skills that are valuable in other subjects, such as science. Very effective use is made of the computer to explore shape, colour and themes, such as repeating patterns. Teachers also encourage pupils to evaluate their work and to modify and improve it.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with national expectations across the school. By the age of seven, pupils make simple models using a range of materials including paper and card. By the age of 11, they create models with working electric circuits. Pupils complete the cycle of 'design', 'make' and 'evaluate', and they have evaluated ready-made products such as torches. Progress in the subject across the school has been maintained since the last inspection, when standards were also found to be in line with national expectations.

85. It was not possible to see lessons in design and technology in Years 1 and 2. However, teachers' planning for the subject is satisfactory. Much of the teaching is linked to other subjects such as literacy or history. In the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 the teaching was good. The

teachers know their pupils well, plan appropriate activities, and manage them well. Good support from classroom assistants successfully impacts on learning. One lesson was a continuation of work already started in history and mathematics lessons, where pupils were looking at Tudor houses. In this lesson, they created a roof for a house from a flat sheet of card. They evaluated the work they had completed, and related it to mathematical ideas such as nets and three-dimensional shapes. The teachers were effective in using design and technology in the context of other subjects, for example to develop literacy or science skills.

86. Achievement in design and technology is satisfactory, not only in the lessons seen but also in evidence based on work in books and on display. The pupils across the school had planned things they were going to make, and had learned to use labelled diagrams and lists of materials. They constructed and decorated their models, and evaluated them with suggestions for improvements. The pupils had learned to work with a range of materials including paper and card, and textiles. However, although they can design and evaluate their models effectively, their making skills are less well developed. This is mainly because there are not always enough opportunities to develop skills in constructing mechanisms or in using materials such as wood. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, made the same progress as others in their classes.

87. The pupils enjoy their work. Good behaviour is sustained, and interest levels are maintained. Pupils talk with interest about the models they had made, and suggest improvements. They also remember work they had done in previous years in the school, including extra-curricular activities where they had cooked cakes as a part of a fund raising project.

88. The quality of resources is unsatisfactory and the range is quite limited. There are no facilities for working with wood or other resistant materials, or for making models with mechanisms such as wheels or motors. In some classes, space is limited, making it difficult for tasks to be effectively undertaken with a whole class at once, and there is no specific facility for working with food: this limits pupils' experiences. This means that pupils do not have the opportunity to work at a more challenging level, such as constructing models using sophisticated mechanisms. Pupils use computers to help them carry out their design work but a gap in their experience is in control. The gaps in their experiences explain why standards are not higher.

GEOGRAPHY

89. Standards are in line with national expectations throughout the school. Standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The school provides a broad and stimulating curriculum with an appropriate balance between the development of skills and factual knowledge. Pupils study the geography of their locality and learn about countries around the world. In addition, they learn the skills to be able to use maps, globes and reference books to further their knowledge. The annual residential visit gives pupils an opportunity to experience an area very different from their own. Close links with a school in Cumbria, in a largely farming community, provide further opportunities for the study of a contrasting locality.

90. Pupils learn the fundamentals of map making, and they are introduced to the use of symbols to represent particular landmarks and features. They make simple maps, both real and imaginary, and describe what they are doing using appropriate geographic vocabulary. As they move through the school, pupils build on and develop their skills and knowledge. They are able to pinpoint features on a map by specifying coordinates, and most know the common symbols to be found on an Ordnance Survey map. Older pupils explain how settlements came into being, and they discuss the impact of pollution on the modern world. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make sound progress throughout the school.

91. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their work. They work with enthusiasm and concentration and take pride in what they produce. They co-operate well in groups and make effective and sensible use of the available resources.

92. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In over half the lessons observed during the inspection, it was good. In these lessons, pupils progressed well. However, progress over time is more variable. In some of the past work examined, too little had been produced and this was not always of consistently high quality. These shortcomings were not apparent in the teaching seen during the inspection.

93. Teachers make good use of educational visits to widen pupils' experience. These include field trips to study the locality. Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and adopt a range of strategies suitable to ensure that the objective of the lesson is achieved. Work is planned to reinforce pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. For instance in a Year 1 class, pupils prepared 'passports' with simple factual writing on each country they 'visited'. Older pupils reinforce their knowledge and understanding of scale through map work. Effective use is made of questioning to probe and deepen pupils' understanding. Learning Support Assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress.

HISTORY

94. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected for the pupils' ages. This means that standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Through their work in history, pupils develop a good sense of the passage of time. They can distinguish between events that took place in the recent past and those that happened long ago. They are beginning to develop an understanding of why people in the past acted as they did. They make good use of the school library to develop research skills. Pupils use a range of books and pictures to discover more about people and events in the past and, by the time they leave the school, they can distinguish between historical fact and legend. They can relate stories that they have heard, for example about Henry VIII, and they understand that the world in which he lived was very different from their own. Pupils develop a good factual knowledge of the periods of history that they study. They learn how we study the past and distinguish between primary and secondary sources. In addition to learning about British and world history, pupils also study the history of their locality.

95. Literacy skills are promoted well through work in history. In learning how to effectively carry out historical research, pupils are taught the skills of 'skimming' and 'scanning' to locate specific information, and the techniques of note-taking to record what they learn. Teachers plan activities that are particularly relevant to pupils. Older pupils, for example, utilized their research skills to prepare work on 'Famous Black Achievers'. The subsequent presentation of this work resulted in an informative display of significant black personalities of recent history, including Muhammad Ali, Nelson Mandela, Roberta Flack and Oprah Winfrey. The use of information communication technology is being increasingly developed for research. Pupils present their written work carefully, taking a pride in its content and appearance.

96. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. The curriculum is well planned so that knowledge and skills are developed systematically as pupils progress.

97. At the time of the previous inspection, there were weaknesses in the quality of teaching. These have been eradicated and the quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall, and often good. Lessons are well prepared, and teachers strike an effective balance between the direct teaching of facts and pupil activity. Teachers make good use of available resources, and ensure that lessons have a lively pace that holds pupils' interest. Good use is made of visits to support learning, such as to Wandsworth Museum. Special events are organised, such as a Tudor Banquet, which excite the pupils and help to bring the history they study to life. Teachers plan well, often making links that help pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils gain insights into life in Elizabethan times through their study of Shakespeare. A variety of artistic techniques are used to produce portraits of leading figures from Tudor times. Inviting elderly local inhabitants to talk about changes they have experienced during their lifetime enhances the study of local history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

98. Standards are in line with national expectations across the school. By the age of seven, pupils write and correct short passages using a word processor, and they use a computer to create pictures. By the age of 11, they word process effectively, choosing the style of appearance of their text by selecting fonts, alignment, and other features. They use desktop publishing to create work using text and pictures. At this stage of the term, pupils attain well in lessons but, because the computer suite is a relatively new facility, pupils have not yet had time to develop high levels of skills. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in standards for pupils up to seven, and for pupils up to 11 there has been a satisfactory improvement.

99. Teachers use technology both for specific lessons in the computer suite, and for supporting other subjects in classes. The quality of teaching was good or very good in all observed lessons. The teachers know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. Their planning is good, and the work matches the needs of the pupils. Teachers are generally confident with using a range of applications on the computers. However, not all teachers have yet been trained to use the technology, due to disruptions caused by the building works in the school. When pupils are working on the computers, the teachers monitor and support them well. Support teachers and classroom assistants are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language.

100. Across the school, the pupils' learning is good or very good. The organisation of the computers into a suite as well as in classes has provided excellent opportunities for access, and this is evident in the skills being developed with a limited range of applications. The pupils had no anxieties about using the technology. They could log onto computers and access work done previously. Classes of Year 6 pupils are learning to present writing for a specific audience, by creating a multimedia presentation about the Second World War. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language learn at the same rate as the other pupils. In some classes, there were opportunities for computers to be used specifically to support those pupils.

101. Pupils' attitudes to computers are very good across the school. Behaviour is good or better in all the lessons seen. Pupils concentrated well and carefully listened to their teachers before getting on with their work. They obviously benefit from opportunities to use computers and enjoy their time on them.

MUSIC

102. Attainment in music at the end of Year 2 is broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6 it is above national expectations. This is a similar judgement to that of the last inspection. The tuition provided by the visiting specialist teachers in violin, guitar and steel pans, together with the recorder lessons, further enhances the provision for older pupils. This enables older pupils to achieve well. Pupils aged seven to 11 all have the opportunity to play musical instruments, and they attain particularly good standards in reading music, playing and performing. Music is a strength of the school.

103. All aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are taught, with a good balance between musical appreciation, composing and performing. By Year 2, pupils recognise and explore how sounds can be organised. Some are able to order sounds and explore simple patterns, and higher attaining pupils are able to express sounds as symbols. They are able to listen and appraise one another's work and show their appreciation. These younger pupils sing well in assemblies with due regard to rhythm and phrasing.

104. All pupils between seven and 11 learn to play the recorder, violin, guitar and steel pans. Apart from the recorders, the instruments are taught by visiting teachers. This tuition is in addition to class lessons during which teachers follow the National Curriculum programmes of study. This

very good provision ensures that pupils attain standards above national expectations. By Year 6, most pupils can explore the way sounds can be combined and the relationships between sounds and different intentions. They can improvise melodic and rhythmic phrases and play a variety of tuned and untuned instruments accurately with a strong sense of rhythm and understanding of the mood of the music. Pupils who continue with their instrumental tuition are often able to read notation and play accordingly. For example, pupils learning to play the guitar can read notation and play a range of melodies keeping a correct sense of rhythm and intonation. Pupils playing steel pans have a good sense of rhythm and are able to play complicated syncopated tunes correctly.

105. Attainment is enhanced by these opportunities for all pupils. Every pupil in the upper school has these opportunities. They all have a minimum of six weeks as a starter, and those who show willingness and enthusiasm continue throughout the rest of the time at the school. Consequently, many pupils achieve a good standard of playing and continue after they have left the school.

106. Music is an important feature of the school. It figures prominently in all assemblies where pupils come into the halls to the accompaniment of the piano. They appreciate music well, as was demonstrated by the visiting violin teacher giving a short recital of tunes from all over the world to the older pupils. The emphasis the school places on music is reflected in the number of teachers who are musicians themselves. These teachers regularly play and sing with pupils. Pupils sing well in class and assemblies. They are able to learn new songs quickly and sing them tunefully.

107. In the few class lessons observed, teaching and learning was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge; they prepare resources for lessons thoughtfully with clear objectives in mind and plan activities to meet the needs of all pupils. Their expectations are generally high. For example, in a Year 1 class the teacher planned for pupils to sing a song in two parts with a simple bass rhythm. They managed to achieve this. Class lessons are conducted with a good pace, and this helps maintain pupils' enthusiasm. Teaching by the visiting instrumentalists is invariably good. They quickly pass on their enthusiasm and expertise. They comment instructively on pupils' playing and offer positive encouragement. This is reflected in the level of pupils' enthusiasm and their very good attitudes to the subject. Pupils want to play and perform, and are keen and eager to practise their skills. The high number of performances given by the various musical groups enhances pupils' skills. During the inspection, the guitar players performed for a group of parents. The school steel pan band regularly performs within the local community. But what makes this provision good is the level of involvement of all pupils. For example, when performing a number of songs for the rest of the school, it is quite common to see a different pupil on each instrument for each song. This enhances pupils' self-esteem and strongly promotes inclusion.

108. The good provision and teaching establishes a good level of achievement for all pupils. They achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2 so that this prepares them for the good opportunities available between seven and 11, where their achievements are good. Because of the inclusive nature of the provision, pupils with English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs achieve well and make good progress alongside their peers.

109. Pupils benefit in many ways from the provision for music in the school. This provision makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, cultural, moral and social development of pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. This subject is a strength of the school, particularly the quality of dance. Standards in physical education are good for pupils up to the age of seven, and very good for pupils up to the age of 11. However, only three lessons were seen during the inspection, so it was not possible to judge the whole range of activities. The improvement in the subject across the school since the last inspection is very good, and represents a considerable achievement for the teachers. Pupils have the opportunity to undertake a range of activities including gymnastics, dance, and games. The older pupils go swimming, and have access to coaching and after-school clubs for sports such as football. One group of pupils up to the age of seven were undertaking a lesson at developing ball

control skills, where their attainment was good. Most could throw and catch a round ball satisfactorily, and they also learned how to control a rugby ball. Another class of pupils up to the age of 10 were involved in a dance lesson. They participated in this with great enthusiasm, and were able to remember a lengthy sequence of movements. A group of 11-year-old pupils delivered an Asian dance performance to a group of visitors. This was of exceptionally high quality with a lengthy set of movements being delivered by both boys and girls in costume, including pupils with special educational needs.

111. Teaching of pupils up to seven years old is good. The teachers plan their lessons well, have very good relationships with their pupils and are able to stimulate them effectively. The lessons start with a warm up routine (in one case, this was a dance routine that the pupils knew well), and then progress on to learning skills. The teaching of pupils up to 11 years old was very good in the one lesson seen. The teacher taught a dance lesson with poise and confidence; she knew her pupils well and matched the activities clearly to their interests and abilities.

112. The pupils learned well or very well from the activities they were given, particularly in view of the low standard of attainment when they enter the school. In the case of one outdoor lesson, seven-year-old pupils had learned to throw and catch a rugby ball by the end of the lesson. In a dance lesson, they learned a substantial dance routine; they could move effectively and fit their movements to a theme.

113. The pupils' attitudes were good or very good in two of the lessons seen. They clearly enjoyed the activities they were given, concentrated well and put in a lot of effort. There was no evidence of bad behaviour. However, in one lesson the challenging behaviour exhibited by a child with special educational needs caused some disruption for the rest of the class.

114. The school provides very well for physical education, with a full range of activities. There is no evidence that any pupils are missing out, and those with special educational needs are well supported. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language learn well, often by copying their peers. Pupils up to the age of 11 learn to swim and undertake athletics in the summer term. They enjoy a wide range of games, including football, quick cricket, netball and junior versions of lacrosse and hockey. The pupils have the opportunity to participate in competitions against other schools. Access to these games is inclusive, with both girls and boys participating with enthusiasm. The pupils also have opportunities to undertake outdoor pursuits. There are events during the school year arranged to encourage participation in sports. These include after-school clubs in football, netball and athletics, and competitions against other schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. This subject is a strength of the school. Standards in religious education are above local expectations for pupils up to the age of seven, and very good for pupils up to the age of 11. By the age of seven, pupils know about the main festivals of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. By the age of 11, they have also learned about Judaism. They write about their personal beliefs, and are able to talk to others about them. Progress in the subject across the school has been very good since the last inspection, when standards did not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In view of the very low standards in attainment when pupils arrive at the school, the high standards of work represent a considerable achievement for both teachers and pupils.

116. Only one lesson was seen in religious education with pupils up to the age of seven, where the teaching was found to be good. The teacher had planned her lesson well and brought in a range of artefacts such as an Advent Calendar, and a Christmas stocking to demonstrate preparations for Christmas. Four lessons were seen with pupils up to 11 years old. The teaching seen varied from satisfactory to excellent, being good overall. The teachers know their pupils well, had planned appropriate activities, and managed them well, with good support from classroom assistants. One lesson was an introduction to Advent. In this lesson, the teacher made an Advent wreath and talked about the symbolism of the candles, giving excellent explanations.

117. Learning in religious education was good for pupils up to the age of seven, not only in the lesson seen but also from evidence based on work in books and on display. These pupils knew stories about Diwali; they had learned about Ramadan and Eid, and had done work about their own personal celebrations such as birthdays. The pupils aged up to 11 had learned a range of the parables of Jesus and the story of Holy Week. They had also learned about Jewish festivals such as Passover, and compared these to festivals such as Easter. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language made the same progress as others in their classes. Some repetition in subject matter across the years was noted, in most cases this led to the subject being covered at greater depth.

118. The pupils enjoyed their work in the lessons seen. Good behaviour was sustained, and interest levels were maintained. In some cases, their attitudes were very good or excellent, the pupils being transfixed by the effective communication from their teachers. They could talk with interest about the work they had done, and relate it to work learned previously.

119. There was no evidence of use of the use of information communication technology to develop the subject. Display is used to good effect in the subject, with exciting displays about Diwali and Muslim prayer mats being seen, as well as about the religious beliefs of Aztecs. The school exudes an atmosphere of understanding and tolerance for the wide range of religious beliefs amongst its pupils.