

INSPECTION REPORT

WILKES GREEN INFANT SCHOOL

Handsworth, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103308

Headteacher: Mr G Paisley

Reporting inspector: Mr R Cheetham
2592

Dates of inspection: 29th October – 2nd November 2001

Inspection number: 230405

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Antrobus Road
Handsworth
Birmingham

Postcode: B21 9NT

Telephone number: 0121 554 1104

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Matharu

Date of previous inspection: 12th – 15th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2592	Mr R Cheetham	Registered inspector	Mathematics, physical education, English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9003	Mr B Findley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
26219	Mrs P Hatfield	Team inspector	Art and design, information and communication technology, foundation stage.	How well does the school care for its pupils?
15360	Mrs E Randall	Team inspector	English, music, religious education, special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15141	Mr P Burlingham	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, geography, history, equal opportunities.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves part of the district of Handsworth in the City of Birmingham. It is an area with a significant degree of social deprivation and a wide ethnic mix. The school's intake of pupils reflects this rich cultural diversity. Pupils have Indian, Pakistani, White UK, African, African/Caribbean, Somali and African/Asian backgrounds. It is a larger than average school with 318 pupils on roll that includes 60 full time equivalent children in the nursery. Children start school either full or part time in the nursery from the September after their third birthday and start full time in the reception classes a year later.

Pupils' attainment on entry is very wide and broadly matches that generally found. Forty percent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal and this is above the national average. Sixty seven percent of pupils are at varying stages of learning English as an additional language and this is very high when compared nationally. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. Seventeen percent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and this is below average. These needs include: moderate and severe learning difficulties and those associated with speech or communication and emotional and behavioural issues. A high proportion of pupils start at or leave the school at other times than usual. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher, and in the last two years five new staff have replaced those who have left. The school has recently won an award for its development of the curriculum related to Black History and Achievement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wilkes Green Infant School is an effective school that gives satisfactory value for money. Its pupils reach good standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. Pupils are keen to learn and they are taught well. The headteacher and key staff lead the school well. The school is generally successful in catering for the needs of its pupils. It promotes their involvement in its activities and gives most of them equal opportunities to learn and make progress. However, it does not do enough to help all the pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress.

What the school does well

- Helps pupils reach good standards in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects)
- Gives a wide range of rich learning activities that celebrates the backgrounds of its pupils
- Teaches pupils well
- Is well led
- Encourages pupils' confidence, behaviour and relationships very well

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment and progress in information and communication technology (ICT)
- The school's medium term development planning and the way it uses its data on pupils' attainment
- The way governors help in the school's planning and keep a check on its development
- The school's management of staff teaching English as an additional language

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998. For two years after this it did not make enough improvement and pupils' standards of attainment went down. Over the last two years, progress has been better and the school has made satisfactory progress overall on all

the Key issues in the previous report. Pupils' standards of attainment in the core subjects have risen because the school has improved its curriculum and teaching. Children's creative development in the nursery is now satisfactory. Pupils' attainment in art and design and physical education are now satisfactory. Pupils' attainment in ICT has also improved but standards are not yet high enough. Senior staff keep a check on the quality of teaching and help to improve it. The teaching staff's performance is managed satisfactorily and most subjects are well led. The school has followed the auditor's recommendations and school spending is more closely linked to its main tasks. Most staff have clearer tasks to carry out.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	E	C	B	A*
writing	E	C	B	A*
mathematics	E	C	A	A*

Key

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

A* means that the school's results were in the top 5% nationally

This table includes 2001 that has yet to be validated. It shows that seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment have improved significantly since 1999. In 2001, the results were in the highest 5% nationally when compared with the results of similar schools (similar schools means that Wilkes Green is in a group of schools that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal). The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in reading and mathematics improved in 2001 but lower attaining pupils did not make enough progress in mathematics. Pupils achieved very good standards in science. The school has reached the targets it set for pupils' attainment. In the current Year 2, at this early stage in the school year, pupils are making satisfactory progress and reaching satisfactory standards in reading and writing. They are making good progress and reaching good standards in mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils in most subjects but a minority make slower progress in speaking, reading and writing. By the time they are seven, pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and religious education and reach satisfactory standards. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 do not make enough progress in physical education. Pupils make slow progress and do not reach satisfactory standards in ICT. In the Foundation Stage (children under five) most children make at least satisfactory progress. Higher attaining children make good progress in early writing and number skills. In the nursery, higher attaining children progress well in ICT and in developing their skills of movement and balance. In both the nursery and reception classes, pupils make good progress in their personal and social development. By the time they complete their year in the reception classes, most pupils reach the early learning goals in all the areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic about their lessons and want to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons and about the school. They work well together and pay attention to the teachers. There is a high degree of racial harmony.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils carry out their responsibilities well and work and play together well. They reliably complete routine jobs and want to help the teachers.
Attendance	Although this has improved, attendance rates are unsatisfactory.

Pupils are cheerful and increasingly confident. Pupils with special educational needs try very hard. Those learning English as an additional language listen very carefully and are very patient. Other pupils support them very well. Attendance is below the national average. This is due to a few families taking their children for extended holidays overseas and to a few pupils with poor attendance records.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Most lessons are taught well. Throughout the school teachers plan well and know enough about the different areas of learning or subjects to make lessons interesting. This is particularly true of the teaching of English and mathematics. They teach the skills of literacy and numeracy well. Pupils listen very carefully and concentrate on their work. When the teachers talk to the whole class, most pupils answer the questions readily. A minority of pupils who are learning English as an additional language lack the words or the confidence to respond quickly. Classroom assistants help these pupils and those with special educational needs play a fuller part in class lessons and so the school helps all its pupils to learn. Staff point out when pupils are doing things well rather than when they are not. This helps all pupils understand how to behave well and what to do. Small groups of pupils learning English as an additional language are not taught well enough and they make slow progress. In the Foundation Stage (children in nursery and reception classes), staff understand how young children learn best and organise the lessons so that groups of pupils have good support from adults. They do not have enough information before the children start in the nursery to help them plan initially. In the Key Stage 1 classes (Years 1 and 2), staff introduce lessons carefully so that pupils understand what they have to do. Staff do not have enough equipment or know enough about the teaching of information and communication technology and are having further training.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school teaches a varied and rich curriculum that reflects very well the cultural diversity of its pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. Staff use good teaching methods and resources and keep a careful track of their progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The planned provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. This is because the school does not assess the language needs of all these pupils accurately or monitor their progress. However, staff do support pupils satisfactorily by taking opportunities as they arise to build their confidence and translate into their home language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides well for pupils' personal development. Its provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and it provides well for their moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. It has good systems for assessing their progress but does not use all its information on this well enough.

The local community makes a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and this helps to promote pupils' cultural development very well. However, the reading books that pupils take home do not reflect this range of cultures. The school has a very good mixture of extra activities that encourage and interest the pupils. Curriculum planning is good and staff use national guidance well. Staff keep a very careful track of the progress of pupils with special educational needs but do not do this well enough for pupils learning English as an additional language. The school has a good partnership with its parents and they think very highly of it.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is good. The headteacher and key staff have led recent school improvement well by putting in place urgently needed developments. Medium term plans to keep these going and make other improvements are not developed well enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	This is unsatisfactory. Although governors carry out their statutory responsibilities and support the school well, they do not plan closely enough with the school or keep a check on its development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory. The school keeps a close watch on the quality of teaching and the attainment of its pupils. It does not monitor whole school progress well enough.
The strategic use of resources	This is satisfactory. Most of its additional grants are used well. The finance for pupils learning English as an additional language is not spent as well as it should be.

The headteacher and senior staff lead most of their areas of responsibility well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed very well but that for pupils learning English as an additional language is poor. Governors are increasingly involved in the school but rely on it too much for guidance. The school is beginning to develop a systematic way of monitoring its work and progress. The school uses most of its resources well and gets good value from its additional investment in classroom assistants. However, it does not plan to use its resources for pupils learning English as an additional language well enough and does not plan the school's development beyond a year. The school has good levels of staffing and a large minority of classroom staff speak the home languages of the most of the pupils. The school has good levels of staffing and its resources and accommodation are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Pupils are expected to work hard and do their best • Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible • The school works closely with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work pupils do at home

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school. Pupils in Year 2 are given more homework to do than other pupils and most get some reading to do or spellings to learn. This is done consistently and parents and pupils know what to expect. This provision is satisfactory and the school plans to work with parents to make further improvements. A few parents have asked for booster classes but the school is not funded for these.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 When they start the nursery, most children's attainment is around that generally found. Their progress is generally satisfactory and by the time they are ready to start Year 1 most children have attained the early learning goals for children of this age. Children with special educational needs and children for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in most lessons. However, occasionally in the nursery the progress of a few children learning English as an additional language is unsatisfactory because their needs are not clearly identified.

2 Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because the school puts a high priority on this and teaches it well. They learn to make choices, co-operate in group activities, become more independent and relate well to one another. They also make good progress in mathematical development. Some higher attaining pupils in reception classes can recognise and write numbers from 1 to 10 and are beginning to understand how to estimate numbers. In communication, language and literacy, children make satisfactory progress. In the nursery, there are weekly bilingual story sessions that support children's development of reading and language skills and the children enjoy listening to stories and concentrate for sustained periods. In reception classes, some higher attaining pupils are beginning to read independently but some less able pupils have poor reading skills. Their progress is unsatisfactory and they have little idea of how to handle a book. Children make good progress in some aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world because teachers choose many activities to help them to understand their cultural heritage and encourage them to be sensitive to the beliefs of others. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical and creative development. Most have access to an outside play area and their physical co-ordination and confidence is growing. They have a good idea of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Children enjoy taking part in a range of creative activities that includes art and design, music and imaginative play.

3 For two years after the previous inspection, seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics declined and were well below the national average. The school explains that this was due to unsatisfactory teaching and assessment of some higher and average attaining pupils. The school adds that the illness of the former headteacher during this period meant that the school did not give its full attention to raising standards. Over the past two years, teaching and assessment have improved, pupils' attainment has increased and most make satisfactory progress in English and good progress in mathematics. The school sets itself challenging targets in English and mathematics. It has met them in the past and is on course to meet those it currently sets.

4 In English, seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment fell after the last inspection and in the last two years have risen to above average levels. Most current seven year olds are working within the level expected for pupils of this age and are making satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in reading and writing and are reaching standards higher than those expected nationally. Standards of attainment have improved over the last two years because the school has effectively introduced the National Literacy Strategy and improved the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading and writing because they are taught very well. Most pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress because they have appropriate support in class. However, a minority make slow progress in speaking because there are not enough opportunities for them to develop speaking skills. Overall standards of literacy are satisfactory.

5 In mathematics, seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment fell after the last inspection. In the last two years they have improved and have risen to well above average levels. This is mainly due to the way the school has successfully introduced the daily mathematics lesson, improved lesson planning and carefully monitored the quality of teaching. Most pupils in Year 2 are working within the level expected of pupils of this age or beyond it and both average and higher attaining pupils are making good progress. Lower attaining pupils are making satisfactory progress. The school is aware of this difference and is working hard to increase their rate of progress. Most pupils are making good progress in their number work and standards of numeracy are good. In the mental and oral sessions at the start of each lesson, most answer the teachers' questions quickly and confidently. Classroom assistants sit alongside those pupils who lack either the confidence or the words to respond as quickly as their classmates. Pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress in their number work but staff do not take up the chances to develop their general and mathematical vocabularies and so this aspect of their progress is slow. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in using and applying mathematics because the school has put less stress on this than on other aspects of mathematics. However, teachers are now planning more opportunities to learn mathematics as part of other subjects such as science.

6 Since the previous inspection, seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment in science have risen. Standards in the current Year 2 are good and pupils make good progress. This is because science lessons are well planned and taught, pupils enjoy the subject and it is well led. Pupils describe materials, using the words *stretchy*, *bendy* and *squashy*. Higher attaining pupils name parts of the body, including some joints. Most Year 2 pupils understand the concept of a fair test and know that in order to test the speed of model cars, must all run down similar ramps. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language play a full part in lessons because they are well supported. The part of their work pupils need to improve is recording and checking their results accurately.

7 In art and design seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment now match the nationally expected level and they make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils make skilful, detailed observational drawings and pencil sketches of insects using pencil shading to create different tones. Most pupils in Year 2 understand perspective, background and foreground detail. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology and most seven-year-olds reach the national standard for pupils of that age. Pupils, who achieve at a high or average level, have designed an item of clothing, a meal and a pop-up book. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They record their ideas more simply than other pupils but understand the ideas at a similar level. Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography and most seven-year-old pupils reach the level expected of pupils of that age. They develop basic geographical skills and knowledge by using maps and can talk about the geography of their local area. Pupils make satisfactory progress in history and most seven-year-olds reach satisfactory standards. They know about the lives of famous historical figures and higher attaining pupils can describe changes over time to everyday things such as kitchens. Pupils with special educational needs can draw a picture of themselves in a family group and use words such as *yesterday*, *today* and *tomorrow* to describe the passage of time.

8 In information and communication technology (ICT), a few seven-year-old pupils are making satisfactory progress and attaining as expected. Most are working below this and make slow progress because some staff do not know enough about the subject and there is not enough equipment. Pupils in Year 2 use a graphics package to develop visual effects and use simple tools. Higher attaining pupils can open and close a program independently, select icons and save and print their work. Lower attaining pupils need support from an adult

to do this. Most pupils in Year 2 can use the keyboard to write simple pieces of text and most can, with help, use a digital camera. They cannot yet use databases, control technology, or the Internet to find out information. In music, standards of attainment are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards and progress in singing are very good because of the enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator who gives very good guidance to teachers. In physical education most pupils make satisfactory progress in gymnastics but higher attaining pupils do not reach the standards they should because teachers do not ask enough of them. In religious education, seven-year-old pupils reach standards that are in line with expectations for pupils of that age in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and they make satisfactory progress. Most know about festivals in different faiths such as Diwali, Christmas and Easter. They know that different faiths have special books such as the Bible and the Koran.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Pupils respond very well to school life and newly arrived pupils settle in well. Pupils enjoy their time in school and are enthusiastic for all aspects of the work, mainly because lessons, especially English and mathematics, are made interesting and challenging. This is also true of music, where pupils become totally involved in their singing and are keen to do well. In an art and design lesson pupils were excited at discovering perspective. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to work and work very well in groups working away from their class. Most pupils learning English as an additional language are positive about their work and apply themselves patiently. A few lose concentration at times when they are not clear what to do, and at other times when appropriate support is not provided.

10 Behaviour is very good. Pupils quickly learn how to behave towards one another and there is an air of calm about the school. The high standard of behaviour supports the progress that pupils make in their lessons, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils take good care of their environment and leave areas tidy, such as after lessons and during dining and lunchtime play. They respond positively to the guidance from staff and are encouraged by the rewards they get for doing well. There have been no exclusions in the last year.

11 Pupils' relationship with members of staff and each other are very good and are a major factor in pupils' learning. Pupils respond very well to the adults' positive and trusting approach and the helpful support for their work. At playtime, pupils mix together well with boys and girls from a range of backgrounds happily playing together. There is no sign of aggressive conduct or of oppressive behaviour. There is an absence of racist comment.

12 Pupils develop well during their time in school. They learn to respect the views of others and to take responsibility for their own actions. In a religious education lesson, Year 1 pupils listened carefully to information about Hindu and Sikh faiths when talking about Diwali. Progress in personal development starts very early and pupils in the nursery choose activities, ask for help and co-operate with each other in creative work. Pupils also develop a mature sense of responsibility, such as looking after their possessions and in doing tasks for the class teacher.

13 Attendance is unsatisfactory but has gradually improved over the past few years and particularly during the current year. Unauthorised absence is rare. Parents have responded well to recent initiatives to improve attendance. This year's figures are just below the national average. This recent improvement is due to a school pilot project and the work of a recently appointed learning mentor funded from the Excellence in Cities scheme. Extended holidays by families visiting the Indian sub-continent have a small effect on the overall figure, which has also been affected by long-term illness.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14 The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Two percent of lessons are excellent and two percent are unsatisfactory. Twenty eight percent are satisfactory, 47% are good, and 21% are very good. The main reasons for this improvement are staff training for teaching the literacy hour and daily mathematics lessons and better guidance for teachers to help them plan all their lessons.

15 In the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes), most teaching is good and children make satisfactory progress in most aspects of their learning and good progress in their personal, social and mathematical development. One reason why they do not make good progress in all aspects is because teachers in the nursery do not have enough information about children's attainment before they start school. Another is that records of pupils' progress between nursery and reception are not detailed enough. The school is aware of these shortcomings and a current priority is to improve overall Foundation Stage provision. Teachers have a good understanding of the new curriculum for pupils of this age and set out appealing activities to catch pupils' interest. Teachers plan well and are clear about what they want the children to learn. They work closely with the nursery nurses so that the children understand what to do. They ask questions as children are working to get them to think more deeply, and use languages pupils may speak at home to help all pupils make progress. All adults work hard to build pupils' self-confidence and this shows itself in the nursery, when, at this early stage of the school year, children have settled in quickly. Teachers manage lessons well by organising nursery nurses to teach children in smaller groups so that they can, for instance, ask questions if they are unsure.

16 In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), most teaching is good, although one lesson was unsatisfactory and another was excellent. As a result, most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in most subjects. This is particularly true of higher attaining pupils who make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. In subjects where pupils make satisfactory progress such as physical education, the school has not yet had the time to concentrate on improving the quality of teaching in the same way it has in the core subjects. Pupils do not make enough progress in information and communication technology because all teachers do not know enough about the subject to teach it well with the resources they have. The school knows about this and staff training and resource improvements are taking place. Teachers use national guidance to help them plan their lessons well. They match the work to the pupils' levels of attainment well so that they are challenged but not discouraged. Pupils then try hard and concentrate well. They know that they can look for support from classroom assistants who play a valuable role in different parts of the lessons. When the pupils are working as a whole class with the teacher, the classroom assistants work alongside small groups or individuals. They help pupils to keep paying attention and encourage them to answer the teachers' questions.

17 Teachers have developed good systems for assessing their pupils' progress and these work well in the core subjects because they help teachers plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Teachers have not been using them long enough in other subjects for them to be as useful. Teachers have good knowledge of some subjects such as music, English and mathematics. As a result, in these latter two subjects they teach technical terms such as addition and consonants accurately. In music, the teacher's confidence and enthusiasm enlivens the pupils' interest and they make very good progress in singing. Teachers manage their classes well. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and stress that pupils should pay attention and listen carefully. They regularly point out when pupils are doing things well rather than picking out individuals who may not. This sets a good example so that pupils can readily see how they are expected to behave and work. As a result, they try hard to meet the teachers' expectations and lessons are calm and well organised.

18 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. This is because the teachers plan the work very carefully, base it on accurate assessments of pupils' needs and keep good records so that staff regularly review their progress. In class lessons, staff work with small groups of pupils and individuals to support their work and give them confidence to take part in discussions. Where pupils have difficulties with behaviour, staff are quick to help them settle to their work with a minimum of fuss. When staff teach pupils away from their class, they skilfully plan the work to mirror the lesson they miss so that when they go back, they have kept pace with the rest of the pupils.

19 The teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language is satisfactory overall, although some aspects of the school's provision are unsatisfactory. The school does not accurately assess the language needs of these pupils nor keep a detailed record of their progress. As a result, the work planned for them is generally supportive but does not always have the impact that it should. This is because this part of the school's work is poorly managed and it does not use some of its resources effectively. On the other hand, the school is well placed to support these pupils. About a third of the classroom assistants, the learning mentor and three teachers, speak most of the languages the pupils use at home. They support the pupils in developing their language skills but this is done in an unstructured way and teachers' plans do not make clear any specific learning aims for these pupils. However, staff translate for pupils to include them in some parts of lessons and this helps them make similar progress to others as they do for instance in mathematics and physical education. Additionally, staff help these pupils work confidently with others and they gain a lot from watching and listening to other pupils. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils learning English as an additional language to develop their vocabularies through talking about their work. As a result staff do not fully understand the precise nature of their language needs and this slows these pupils' progress in language development. Recently, a visiting teacher has been helping the school by who assessing the language needs of a few pupils. The school intends to use this method of assessing and recording process as it re-organises its support for pupils learning English as an additional language.

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

20 The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for the National Curriculum and religious education that is relevant to pupils' needs and meets statutory requirements. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. A wide range of extra curricular activities and links with the community offer rich learning opportunities for all pupils. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

21 Children in the nursery and reception classes have a broad and balanced curriculum based on national guidance, which has been implemented effectively. This has improved since the previous inspection. This encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning from an early age. The school has worked hard to implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. These are improving pupils' progress and so that standards are now satisfactory in English and good in mathematics. The school emphasises basic skills such as reading, writing and number work. Teachers encourage parents to become involved in helping at home with, for example, reading and spelling. There is good co-operation from parents and this is strengthening pupils' reading skills.

22 Teachers use national guidance to plan for all subjects. This has improved the way skills and knowledge are built on step by step and is better than at the previous inspection. This planning is helping pupils to make progress. Teachers plan well in year groups and share ideas so that all pupils receive the same education. However, provision for pupils with English as an additional language is not planned well enough to make the most of staff expertise. Standards and progress in ICT are unsatisfactory because there are not enough

resources and teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise. There are not enough opportunities for teaching speaking skills. In English, this slows the progress of lower attaining pupils and those for whom English is not the home language.

23 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Staff identify pupils' needs early and give expert help in small withdrawal groups. Pupils make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans. These plans show exactly what needs to be done and how the teachers and pupils will work together to meet the targets. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. The individual education plans provide a good basis for class teachers' planning both for small groups and whole class lessons. Classroom assistants give good support and plan their work closely with the teacher. This provision increases pupils' confidence and develops their skills well in reading, writing and mathematics. The learning mentor works very well with pupils who find behaving well difficult or who do not think enough of themselves. This helps them to make good progress.

24 Teachers set aside time each week so that pupils can talk about their feelings on issues such as school rules and bullying. It is a good opportunity to talk generally about moral and social issues. A good example of this was in a reception class when children thought about the rights and wrongs (and potential dangers) of entering someone else's house and stealing porridge. This led onto a discussion about the role of the police and the teacher skilfully took the chance to challenge some views about their role in society and in particular in helping young children. The governing body has decided that sex education will be dealt with informally as it arises and that education about drugs will be given in science lessons. Personal, social and health education is integrated well into other subjects such as science and religious education.

25 The school has built up very good relationships with the community. There is very good involvement in school activities. There is an extensive range of visits and visitors, which gives relevance to pupils' learning. For example pupils have visited a pizza parlour and then designed their own pizza in a design and technology lesson. The local Baptist Church has made a donation to help pupils with special educational needs. Parents and local sports personalities have visited school and talked about their heritage and achievements. This contributes strongly to pupils' perceptions of black achievement and culture.

26 The school is building up strong relationships with other organisations. There are good partnerships with local colleges and the university. Students frequently work in school and help the pupils in their learning. Pupils enjoyed watching dancers from Mayfield Special School perform in the Diwali assembly and were eager to talk to them afterwards. Links with the Junior School are satisfactory but opportunities to make the most of shared expertise are missed. This is particularly evident in ICT where the Infant School has not made use of the Junior School's expertise.

27 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes a positive contribution to pupil' overall development. The school is a very caring and happy community and this has a good effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

28 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. This has improved since the previous inspection. Daily assemblies, worship and religious education lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. They encourage them to think about important aspects of life. Teachers show that they value what pupils think by listening to them and praising what they say. This encourages the pupils, for example to respect and value the beliefs of others. This was evident in a religious education lesson when the teacher asked Hindu and Sikh pupils to talk about their beliefs and practices and other pupils listened very carefully. In English, science and music pupils are encouraged to think about

the beauty of language, the world and musical sounds. There are not enough opportunities for pupils' spiritual development in other subjects.

29 The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Staff use a number of ways to promote development in these areas. Class rules stress the need to be aware of the effect of behaviour on others. The "Good Book" for lunch times encourages pupils to behave well in the playground. Teachers consistently help pupils to understand what is right and wrong. Giving opportunities to work together and help each other fosters good relationships between pupils. There is a good range of after school clubs such as chess, choir, sewing and dancing. They encourage pupils to co-operate and give them extra chances to succeed. Teachers respect each other and their pupils and this helps pupils to understand that this is important. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own belongings and gives them routine tasks such as clearing away and taking registers. Staff give many opportunities to raise funds for charities such as NSPCC, Age Concern and Doctor Barnardo's. Pupils are encouraged to look after the environment and keep the school clean by, for instance, removing litter. In these ways pupils are effectively learning what it means to be a good citizen.

30 There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development. There is an extensive range of rich learning opportunities. Pupils learn well about their own and other cultures. An excellent example is the work done on Black History and Achievement during the week set aside for this. Pupils learn about African Caribbean food and crafts, toys and hair dressing techniques. Music and dance groups have visited and members of Birchfield Harriers have talked to pupils about their careers and performed some memorable demonstrations. Pupils have talked about the life of Nelson Mandela and have had opportunities to discuss the associated moral and social issues. The school has received a curriculum award for good practice in this area. Another excellent example of pupils' cultural development is the Diwali assembly. Parents and visitors join the pupils in a colourful display of dance, music and worship followed by a range of foods for the visitors. Such activities are part of the wide range the school offers. All reflect the pupils' cultural backgrounds very well and give good opportunities for them to learn about different cultures and practices. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. However, teachers allow pupils to take home older reading books, which do not reflect the different cultural backgrounds well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31 The way the school cares for its pupils has improved since the previous inspection. It now has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, progress and personal development. It does not yet do enough to track pupils' progress or analyse the attainment of different groups of pupils.

32 The school has good arrangements for the welfare and safety of all pupils. Staff make regular checks of the premises and manage procedures thoroughly. Staff are familiar with their responsibilities for child protection and procedures work effectively. There are proper arrangements for welfare and medical needs and there are good levels of expertise in first-aid. At lunchtimes, one of the support staff is on call to deal with any accident or illness.

33 Procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour are good and all members of staff work hard to treat pupils in the same way. Staff have high expectations of the pupils and are very good role models for them. Staff make clear what standard of behaviour they want and pupils are well supervised so that problems are dealt with promptly. This ensures that any concerns about bullying are quickly dealt with. The school has appropriate systems for monitoring attendance and following up absences, but the school's efforts are not effective in coping with a few parents who do not give a higher priority to their child's education. A recent "early bird" project is having a very positive impact and the learning

mentor is very usefully supporting families and encouraging pupils and their families with unsatisfactory attendance records.

34 The school supports pupils' personal development well. Teachers get to know their pupils well because of the very trusting relationships they develop with them. Consequently pupils develop mature attitudes quickly. The school gives awards for sensible behaviour and consideration. Pupils are keen to earn these. The learning mentor is very effective when working with pupils who have personal difficulties that affect their work and relationships with others.

35 The procedures for assessing pupils' schoolwork are good. In the Foundation Stage, staff make detailed assessments of what children can do when they start and leave the nursery. They make further assessments when children start in the reception classes. This helps staff to plan work that closely matches the children's needs. They keep detailed records of children's attainment and monitor their progress carefully. These have not been adapted to allow them to track children's progress against the stepping stones (points of development for children under five) and early learning goals. As a result, Year 1 staff do not use them well enough to plan the next stages in pupils' learning. Teachers base their records on observations of children while they work on planned activities. They have no system for noting children's progress on free choice activities.

36 Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have good systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment. At the end of a section of work, teachers record which pupils have done well and where pupils have had difficulties. They use this information to group pupils and plan what they need to learn next. They are just starting to set targets for pupils' learning, which are displayed in the classroom. The pupils in all classes are not yet familiar with these targets. Teachers do not consistently refer to them and they have not yet made a difference to pupils' learning. The school gives very good educational and personal support and guidance to pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified early and their academic progress is monitored very thoroughly. The same is not true of pupils learning English as an additional language. Assessment of their progress is unsatisfactory and the school does not analyse its assessment data to see how well they are doing. It does not use its assessment information to help them make better progress in developing their language skills.

37 The school uses assessment information well from when children started school to set targets in English and mathematics for their attainment by the end of Year 2. Teachers in Year 2 use a range of tests but they do not use the information to help monitor progress and do not yet have efficient systems for tracking each pupil's progress. They have not yet done enough to interpret attainment data to give an all round view of the attainment of different groups of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38 The school promotes a good and effective partnership with parents. Most of them take a keen interest in their children's education and provide valuable support to the school. Parents think very highly of the school in almost all areas of its work and have few concerns. Almost all are happy with the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and how much their children like being in school. There was also significant support for the levels of work given to pupils and the progress they make, the relationships with parents, the support for responsible attitudes and the school's management. However, a minority of parents are worried about the amount of work pupils are given to do at home and a few parents would like to see more activities outside of lessons. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views and judges that the school provides appropriate levels of homework and a good range of outside activities for the pupils.

39 The quality of information for parents is usually good, particularly through the contact that parents have with the staff. Publications, such as the prospectus, provide essential information and the school uses notice boards and letters to keep parents up to date with current events. The quality of reports on pupils' progress is satisfactory and good in some areas, for example when reporting on key skills in English and mathematics. A minority of reports do not include enough about pupils' progress in some subjects other than English, mathematics and science or about areas they might improve. However, staff discuss pupils' targets with parents at termly consultation evenings and parents feel very well informed. The school also works well with parents of pupils with special educational needs and seeks to involve them at all stages of review. The teacher for pupils learning English as an additional language works alongside class teachers to discuss the progress of some pupils with their parents. However, these links are not a strong feature of the school's work when compared to its work with the parents of pupils with special educational needs.

40 Parental involvement in the work of the school is good and has a positive impact. For example, many make a strong contribution to events such as the celebration of Diwali and the Black History and Achievement Week. There is also a core of regular helpers whose work in classes once or twice a week can be relied upon and planned for by the teachers. They work alongside groups of pupils and help them make progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41 The headteacher and key staff lead the school well. The governors are good supporters of the school and have recently organised themselves satisfactorily. However, they do not plan closely enough with the school or keep a close check on its development. The school monitors the quality of teaching and the attainment of its pupils. It does not monitor whole school progress well enough and does not plan in enough detail for the medium term. The school uses most of its additional grants well but the finance for pupils learning English as an additional language is not spent effectively. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

42 Since his appointment, the headteacher has chosen the right things to do to make sure that the school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Much has been done in a short time. He has worked well with the senior staff to oversee a swift pace of school development and managed the relatively high rate of teaching staff turnover. In particular, the headteacher has managed the induction of new teaching staff well. The school enjoys close links with a local training institute. Some teachers who train at the school successfully apply for posts there and the school does not have many problems with teacher recruitment. Co-ordinators have made sure that both the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented. The headteacher has worked closely with his senior staff to raise pupils' standards of attainment and to put in place several important developments. For instance, most subject co-ordinators work effectively with their colleagues. Those responsible for the core subjects monitor teaching and this has improved the quality of teaching and learning. Others regularly examine teachers' planning and support improvements. The co-ordinators have improved curriculum guidance to help teachers plan their lessons and improved assessment procedures to keep an eye on pupils' progress. The co-ordinators for special educational needs manage this aspect well but the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is poorly managed. The school has shown its commitment to improvement and has the capacity to continue to improve.

43 Acting on a recent school audit recommendation, the governors are now better organised into committees to carry out all of their work without relying as much on the headteacher for information and direction. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They set the budget but do not ask enough searching questions about why spending decisions are proposed, whether there are alternatives and how progress will be measured.

Similarly, they agree the school's development plan but do not use it as the basis for deciding how well the school is doing. This is partly because the plan has some shortcomings. Although this year's priorities are clear and sensibly limited, the plan does not show how all of them will be achieved, who is responsible for the work, and how their success will be measured. However, governors are aware of seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment and how the school has improved over the last two years. They have also been appropriately involved in organising the school's performance management system and set pupils' progress targets for the headteacher that are directly related to recent improvements.

44 The school plans and manages most of its finances well over one year and has made financial predictions over the next three. It has yet to use this as the basis for costed medium term improvement. This would help it make investments in projects such as improving ICT equipment or on simple improvements to the school's accommodation such as better classroom carpeting.

45 Management tasks are generally well delegated and staff with additional responsibilities use their initiative to secure improvements. A good example of this is how readily staff in only their second year of teaching have accepted the responsibility for leading a subject with their colleagues. They have audited resources, produced useful guidance and have a clear view of subject improvement over the next few years. Although the Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced satisfactorily, the school's plan to bring together the provision for nursery and reception is unsatisfactory because it does not show how the improvement will be brought about.

46 The school has actively sought additional finance to support its development and most of these grants are spent well. It has made minor modifications to the building such as creating the parents' room. This is a useful base of the learning mentor and the parent partnership worker. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. The school is well staffed now that it has appointed additional, trained classroom assistants to work alongside teachers and support pupils' learning. This is a good investment and is helping all pupils make progress. Staff are also paid to run some after school clubs that enhance the school's curriculum and encourage pupils to develop different talents and skills. The school employs a learning mentor who makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. She effectively supports small groups of pupils who have difficulty settling to school by counselling them and working with their parents. This keeps them involved in their learning and helps them make progress. By coincidence, she happens to speak a language used by some pupils new to school. She supports some of them, understanding their cultural beliefs and uses her language skills to support their learning. The school has recently employed a parent partnership worker. She provides another connection between school, home and the wider community. Through the courses she organises, parents can learn new skills, gain qualifications and work with their children using computers. The school has good plans to spend its share of national funding to improve its information and communication technology (ICT) provision. This is timely because while most other resources are adequate at least, those for ICT are unsatisfactory and the school does not make the most effective use of the new technology. Some reading books that the pupils take home to read are worn out and should be replaced. The finance for pupils learning English as an additional language is not used effectively. This is because the staff concerned are poorly organised and the finance is not directly supporting pupils' language development in a clearly planned way.

47 The school is beginning to recognise the ways in which it applies the principles of best value. It regularly makes local and national comparisons concerning its pupils' standards of attainment and some of its costs. It consulted widely with its parents over the recent proposals for amalgamation with the Junior School next door. Now that the decision has been made to maintain two separate schools, the way is open to consult with the Junior

School (a Beacon School for ICT) on how further to improve ICT provision in the Infant School. Governors apply a competition rule on the letting of tenders over a certain amount, but it is in the area of challenge there needs to be some improvement. The school should challenge more of its decisions and procedures, such as the historically based funding for many elements of the school development plan.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 1) Improve pupils' attainment and progress in information and communication technology through better staff training and more equipment. *
paragraphs 94-95

- (2) Plan in more detail for medium term school developments and use the data it has on pupils' attainment to check on the progress of different groups.
paragraphs 36-37, 43-44

- (3) Involve governors more in school development planning decisions and make the plan easier for them to monitor.
paragraph 43

- (4) Organise the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language more effectively.
paragraphs 42, 45

In addition to these Key Issues, governors should also include in their action plan steps to:

Continue with the school's recent projects to improve attendance. *
paragraph 13

* Indicates that the school has recognised the need for improvement and is already taking action

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	25	15	1	0	0
Percentage	2	21	47	28	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	60	258
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	180

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR -Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	276

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	76
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	49

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	42	47	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	37	38
	Girls	45	43	43
	Total	84	80	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (75)	90 (71)	91 (75)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	39	41
	Girls	45	43	44
	Total	84	82	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (70)	92 (73)	96 (79)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	40
Black – African heritage	8
Black – other	21
Indian	80
Pakistani	53
Bangladeshi	29
Chinese	2
White	12
Any other minority ethnic group	9

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22:1
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	8.5 (FTE)
Total aggregate hours worked per week	366

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30:1
Total number of education support staff	3.5 (FTE)
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	742,166
Total expenditure	746,375
Expenditure per pupil	2,209
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,909
Balance carried forward to next year	22,700

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	318
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71.0	23.0	3.0	0	4.0
My child is making good progress in school.	54.0	36.0	2.0	6.0	1.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52.0	41.0	1.0	3.0	4.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43.0	25.0	19.0	4.0	9.0
The teaching is good.	62.0	32.0	3.0	0	4.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64.0	24.0	8.0	1.0	4.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66.0	18.0	10.0	1.0	5.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68.0	22.0	1.0	0	9.0
The school works closely with parents.	63.0	25.0	6.0	0	5.0
The school is well led and managed.	67.0	20.0	5.0	1.0	6.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66.0	25.0	2.0	1.0	5.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49.0	29.0	9.0	4.0	9.0

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

48 Children start in the nursery either part-time or full time at the beginning of the year in which they have their fourth birthday. They spend a year in the nursery and then transfer to reception classes in the main school building. Two teachers and three nursery nurses staff the nursery and work effectively as a team with other helpers.

49 Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection. It is now better led and provides good teaching and an interesting range of learning activities. Most children's attainment is around that generally found when they start the nursery. Their progress is generally satisfactory and they make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and mathematics. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 most children have attained the early learning goals for children of this age in each area of learning. Children with special educational needs and children for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in most lessons. However, sometimes in the nursery the progress of a few children learning English as an additional language is unsatisfactory because their needs are not clearly identified.

50 Teaching in the nursery and in reception classes is good, with a higher proportion of very good teaching in reception classes. Teachers' planning is good. Staff know the new curriculum and they have clear expectations of the children and make sure they get the most out of activities. Some teachers and support staff use the children's home language to support children learning English as an additional language and build their confidence. They plan a range of interesting activities to which the children respond with enthusiasm. There is a varied range of visits and visitors to the nursery, which enriches the curriculum. There is a good balance between directed activities and free choice. Staff ask the children questions to find out what they know and understand and this helps them to plan other activities.

51 Before children start in the nursery they have only a short visit with parents. There is very limited liaison with the adjoining playgroup. As a result, staff know do not have a full picture of the children's learning needs before they begin. Teachers then assess children's progress regularly and keep detailed records. However, in the nursery there is no method of noting children's performance in free choice activities so staff do not know as much as they could do about children's development. The records do not clearly identify the children's progress towards the early learning goals, so staff in reception classes and Year 1 do not have enough detailed information to plan the next steps in learning.

52 The nursery area is large, with a satisfactory range of resources. In the nursery there is plenty of space for outdoor play. One reception class has no direct access to outdoor play space. Their classroom is also rather small and both factors combine to restrict their curriculum. Resources for some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world are limited, which also restricts the curriculum. The nursery is building up a range of good quality books which reflect the children's cultural backgrounds. However, the books that the children use for sharing at home are old and need replacing. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has developed the organisation of the nursery staff and the curriculum and is building up a range of resources. However, the school has recognised that links between the nursery and reception teachers are not good enough and has made their improvement a priority.

Personal, social and emotional development

53 The school places considerable importance on this area of learning and staff teach it well. The nursery staff work closely together to promote a calm atmosphere. All the staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they provide a range of interesting

activities to encourage good attitudes to learning and to other children. There is a good balance between activities that the children choose and those that are led by a teacher. This develops the children's ability to make choices. Staff expect children to co-operate in group activities, to share and take turns. A good example of this was in a physical activity when children wanting a tricycle were encouraged to ask politely and the one on the tricycle was asked to let other children have a turn. Lunch is served as a family meal. This organisation encourages their independence and relationships with others. Teachers take every chance to remind children about respect for each other.

Communication, language and literacy

54 The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning with some very good teaching in reception classes. Teachers generally provide well for pupils learning English as an additional language. A number of staff are able to use pupils' home languages. In the nursery there are weekly bilingual story sessions that support children's development of reading and language skills. The children enjoy listening to stories and concentrate for sustained periods, especially when the sessions are active. For example, in a lesson using the story of Goldilocks, the children's interest was quickened by the use of role-play activities. In another lesson, a member of the nursery staff who was bilingual was able to develop children's speaking skills by using puppets.

55 In reception, some higher attaining pupils are beginning to read independently. They know the initial sounds of letters, can correct their mistakes when what they have read does not make sense, and talk about their favourite books and visits to the library. Higher attaining pupils are also beginning to develop early writing skills, demonstrating their understanding of language by using many recognisable, correctly formed letters and correct sounds to communicate meaning. These higher attaining pupils make good progress. However, some less able pupils have poor reading skills and have little idea of how to use a book. They were unable to tell the story of the book, partly because it was uninteresting with unimaginative text and pictures. Their progress is unsatisfactory. There are a number of good opportunities in the nursery for children to practise writing skills. A more imaginative role-play area would improve these further.

Mathematical development

56 Teaching is good and children make good progress in this area of learning. Some higher attaining pupils in reception are already, at this early stage of the school year, able to recognise and write numbers from 1 to 10 and are beginning to understand how to estimate numbers. Staff make sure that what children learn means something to them. A good example of this was an activity involving five currant buns, where the children counted the buns, recognised the numbers and paid for them. Teachers are also good at developing mathematical vocabulary by encouraging children to use words such as 'taller than' and 'bigger than' correctly. They ensure that shy children and children for whom English is an additional language are encouraged to develop and use mathematical language. Although higher attaining pupils in the nursery have a good understanding of the relationship between one number and a corresponding object, most others do not understand the idea as well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57 Children make good progress in some aspects of this area of learning and are beginning to understand their widening world. Teachers choose many activities to help them to understand their cultural heritage and to encourage sensitivity to the beliefs of others. They are beginning to talk about how things work. One boy in the nursery described how to take a photograph, explaining, "You need to turn this and then press that." The children are introduced to technology, using a listening centre and computers. One higher attaining boy in the nursery was able to write his name on a computer, selecting the correct icon to change the font size and delete existing text. A small group of children was excited by a new robot and quickly learned how to control its movements. Teachers make activities

interesting for the children and the quality of teaching is good. For example, the children were helped to understand words such as *behind*, *at the side of*, by going on a 'Bear Hunt' in the outside play area. This was fun for the pupils. In another lesson, the children used a range of materials to design a chair for a bear in their story. They laughed when the bear fell off the chair but learned how to improve the design of the chair.

Physical development

58 Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and the quality of teaching is satisfactory. They have regular access to a good range of large play equipment in the outside area of the nursery and teachers plan well for its use. Sometimes the children are allowed to play freely and select their equipment and staff frequently work with a group of children to improve their skills. Consequently most children are well co-ordinated in their movements. The children are closely supervised to ensure their safety. Teachers are good at explaining to the children how their bodies work. In a warm up activity the children were told, "We are getting our bodies ready to do exercise." The children use equipment such as building materials, pencils, pens, brushes and clay to develop their manipulative skills.

Creative development

59 The children make satisfactory progress in their creative development, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers plan a range of creative activities that includes art and design, music and imaginative play. In the nursery, children use a range of materials to explore different textures. They talk about how things feel. They are taught a range of songs and join in with the words and movements. They have good opportunities to explore the sounds different instruments make and are encouraged to listen well. The role-play area in the nursery is not used well to develop children's imaginative play. Children do not have enough opportunities to mix colours and paint freely.

ENGLISH

60 Recent test results have been good and last year seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment were above the national average and very high when compared to similar schools. At this early stage in the year most pupils in Year 2 are working within the level expected for pupils of this age and are making satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in reading and writing and are reaching standards higher than expected nationally for pupils of their age. Standards of attainment have improved over the last two years because the school has effectively introduced the National Literacy Strategy and improved the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading and writing because they are taught very well. Most pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress because they have appropriate support in class. However, a minority make slow progress in speaking because there are not enough opportunities for them to develop the skills. Overall standards of literacy are satisfactory.

61 Pupils' standards of listening are good and most make good progress. In literacy lessons they listen attentively to teachers and classroom assistants. This helps them to understand what they have to do and they learn more about reading and writing. For example, in one lesson a teacher used the word "sat" to explain how using sounds and changing first letters could help spell a new word. All the pupils could then make new words such as "fat", "hat", and "mat". During the Diwali assembly, the pupils listened very attentively to the story of Rama and Sita and to the prayers and music of other pupils. Average and lower attaining pupils do not speak clearly enough. Teachers do not give them enough opportunities to learn how to do this and they make slow progress. There are some opportunities for speaking in groups and to the class during the literacy lessons. However, teachers do not plan enough to teach pupils the skills of speaking clearly, increasing vocabulary, extending short answers and taking turns in discussion. A significant minority of average and lower attaining pupils lack the confidence to express themselves in discussion.

62 Standards in reading are satisfactory and most pupils make satisfactory progress because teachers show pupils how to improve. Pupils are taught how to use sounds and pictures to help them to read. Teachers give them good opportunities to read in class and encourage them to read at home. During the Literacy Hour, pupils read with their teachers and talk about their reading to show what they understand. Pupils listen carefully when the teacher reads with them, particularly when the teacher uses the bright, new books the school has bought recently. Many of these books reflect the different cultural backgrounds of the pupils very well, which increases their interest. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. "Look!" said one pupil in the library, "this book has Indian writing as well as English. That's good!" The majority learn well from the teachers' examples, copying expression and talking about what they are reading. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils very enthusiastically read "My Family and Me". They enjoyed putting expression and action to the poem, which helped them to read accurately and with understanding. This also helped them to write interesting pieces afterwards about their own family. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in reading fluently and with understanding because teachers ask probing questions to make them think more deeply about what they have read. Most pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about their books. Most are keen to read at home and this helps them to improve. They are very keen to read the comments that teachers and parents write in their reading diary. "I love reading at home," one girl said, "every time, I try to get something good written." Lower attaining pupils are beginning to use sounds to build words they cannot read. They know that this can help them. However, they make slow progress because they do not know all the sounds yet. This means that they cannot read all the words and cannot fully understand what they have read. Many of the books which teachers give to pupil to read at home are shabby. This dampens the enthusiasm of the lower attaining pupils, so that they are not keen enough to read.

63 Standards of writing are satisfactory and most pupils make satisfactory progress. An increased proportion of higher attaining pupils are making good progress because teachers have identified more precisely what they need to learn. For instance, they are teaching pupils to add more detail and interesting vocabulary to their writing and showing them how to build up their stories more carefully. In literacy lessons, teachers read examples of good writing to the pupils to show them how to make their work more interesting. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher read the poem "Fireworks" with the class. She showed how the poet used comparisons to make the poem more descriptive. Pupils saw how descriptions such as "like felt tips scribbling" and "roar like a lion" made the poem sound more lively and colourful. The pupils then used more interesting words in their own writing. One changed "dangerous" to "dangerous as a wild beast". In this way pupils are raising their standards of writing. All pupils learn how to use capital letters and full stops correctly. Average and lower attainers often forget to use them when writing independently. Higher attainers frequently use question marks and commas, which makes their sentences longer and more interesting. However, they often do not vary the start of their sentences enough and rely too much on "and" instead of other possibilities.

64 Teachers make sure that pupils know that writing is for someone to read. They encourage pupils to read to their class and each other, which helps them to understand this. Staff display pupils' writing prominently to show they value it and to encourage pupils to try hard. The displays show different kinds of writing and writing in other subjects and they make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' progress in literacy. This helps pupils understand that there are different ways of writing and that it can be for different reasons. Pupils generally present their work neatly. The standard of handwriting is good. Teachers show pupils how to form their letters correctly and give them time to practise, which helps them to present their work well. As a result of this good teaching, standards of writing have risen over the last two years. More pupils are attaining above the nationally expected levels and this has improved since the previous inspection.

65 Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly from regular sessions in small groups taught away from the main class. In these the teacher focuses very well on their particular difficulties. The teacher makes sure that each pupil is helped to learn to read, spell and write by setting a wide range of tasks such as sound games in interesting ways. Pupils concentrate well and are fully involved in their work. In class lessons pupils make satisfactory progress because the class teachers know what the teachers of pupils with special educational needs have done and they match work to this. Classroom assistants give good support and help the pupils to concentrate and develop confidence. However, when the classroom assistants are not working with them, these pupils lose concentration and make slower progress. A specialist teacher supports about five pupils in each class in Years 1 and 2 who are learning English as an additional language. Sometimes they are grouped with pupils with special educational needs and the work set for them all is too general because it is not based on accurate assessment of their language needs. They are making satisfactory progress in learning the sounds that letters make but are not practising speaking skills enough and make slow progress in learning new words and developing longer answers to questions.

66 Most teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and are clear about what they want most pupils to learn. They carefully match stimulating activities to pupils' needs and helps to keep their interest and enthusiasm. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used the poem "Hurricane" to encourage the pupils to read certain words expressively. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the actions and sounds to describe the wind. They learned that writing could be made more interesting by using different words. Lessons are well organised with a balance of group and individual work and teacher demonstration. This means that pupils learn new skills and have time to practise them. An example of this was when pupils were learning how to build up new words and then investigating how many different ones they could make by changing the first and last letters. All teachers teach pupils how to use sounds to build up words to help them to read and spell. They pay particular attention to this and do it well. This is helping to raise the standard of reading and writing and the quality of literacy teaching is good. Teachers question pupils well to see what they have learned and they correct mistakes to help pupils to improve. They write comments on pupils' progress in their plans and keep clear records of what pupils can and cannot do. This helps them to plan work that is well matched to needs and helps pupils to make progress. Teachers do not make enough use of ICT and it does not make a strong enough contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers do not plan in enough detail for pupils learning English as an additional language. The library is a new development and has not been in use long enough to have had a significant impact on pupils' learning.

67 Classroom assistants play an important part in helping pupils with their lessons. They explain things to them quietly when the teacher is talking and this helps them to keep up and gives them the confidence to answer questions. When pupils work together they concentrate well. They enjoy their lessons and try hard to improve. In one lesson, the teacher used the time at the end of the lesson for role-play in which they acted out their writing about the family. The pupils had great fun pretending to be a father or a sister who "snored like a lion" or "growled like an angry bear". "That's just like my Dad," said one pupil "and he snores like a hippopotamus." However, a few pupils in Year 2 find it difficult to concentrate when the teacher does not give clear enough instructions about what to do.

68 The school has recently appointed a new co-ordinator for English. The very good liaison between her and the former co-ordinator means that there is continuing strong leadership in the subject. This good quality leadership has helped to raise pupils' standards of attainment over the last two years. The teachers receive good planning guidance and have been helped considerably in the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The co-ordinator has a good view of pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of teaching because she observes lessons, checks planning and pupils' work and examines test results.

She recognises that the school is not making enough use of information and communication technology in the subject and is considering ways to improve this with the subject co-ordinator. She is also aware that pupils need to use the newly refurbished library more so that it makes a stronger contribution to pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

69 Seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment have improved over the last two years. In 2001 they were well above the national average and very high when compared with similar schools. This is mainly due to the way the school has successfully introduced the daily mathematics lesson, improved lesson planning and carefully monitored the quality of teaching. Most pupils in Year 2 are working within the level expected of pupils of this age or beyond it and both average and higher attaining pupils are making good progress. Lower attaining pupils are making satisfactory progress. The school is aware of this difference and is working hard to increase their rate of progress. To do this, teachers match work to the different levels of attainment in each class and make sure that the classroom assistants know what to do when working with a small group. The school also intends to change the way that for part of the week it groups Year 2 pupils by their level of attainment. Instead of making three groups of higher, average and lower attaining pupils, the three groups will be: higher attainers in one group and then two groups of similar attainment. The school plans that this will help all pupils make better progress because each group will have in it pupils who can help others.

70 Most pupils are making good progress in most aspects of mathematics and particularly their number work. In the mental and oral sessions at the start of each lesson, most answer the teachers' questions quickly and confidently. Classroom assistants sit alongside those pupils who lack either the confidence or the words to respond as quickly as their classmates. The assistants sometimes translate what the teacher has asked into pupils' home language or they encourage the pupils to try their answers out first with the assistants before offering them to the teacher. This builds up their confidence and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Those learning English as an additional language also make good progress in their number work but staff do not take up the chances to develop their general and mathematical vocabularies and so this aspect of their progress is slow. Most pupils make only satisfactory progress in using and applying mathematics because the school has put less stress on this. However, teachers are now planning more opportunities to learn mathematics as part of other subjects such as science.

71 Most teaching is good and the best is lively and challenging. In these very good lessons, teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and they respond very well. They are interested and so well motivated that they continue busily with their work and complete it proudly while the teacher is working with another group. Teachers plan very well so that pupils learn the basic skills of numeracy well over a period of time. They get the chance to revise what they have done but teachers are not encouraging them enough to practise their skills in other subjects or asking the higher attaining pupils to make some choices from different equipment. Instead the equipment is laid out for the pupils and there is little discussion about alternatives. In a similar way, pupils are not using computers enough in the subject because of shortage of equipment. The school is aware of this. Staff training is planned this year and additional equipment is on order. Teachers have good systems of assessing pupils' progress and recording it. This gives them a good view of pupils' progress and helps them set the right level of work. Teachers also set learning targets for groups of pupils. This is a good feature although it has not been in place long enough for results to show through. Teachers set some homework but this does not have a strong effect on pupils' progress.

72 Teachers organise the classes well and plan regular changes of activity to keep pupils interested. During a few lessons, their interest and progress slows when they are

kept doing the same thing for too long. This is partly because pupils sit on small, carpeted areas and when the teacher asks some to demonstrate to the class, moving to the front takes too long. However, most pupils are patient and willing to keep trying and generally, they put a lot of effort into their work in class lessons or in groups. An example of this was in a Year 1 lesson when pupils were learning about even numbers. With the teacher, they built “towers” of even numbers using plastic blocks. Quickly they spotted a pattern developing and used the idea to say which even numbers followed on. One pupil the pattern of blocks was, “Just like going upstairs.” In a Year 2 lesson, both the teacher and the classroom assistant made sure that pupils sat facing them to maintain their concentration on the main points of the lesson. They then asked a series of challenging questions such as, “Are you sure? Can you check that?” so that pupils had little time to think of other things. The result was that pupils were very involved in the lesson and helped each other to learn. For instance when the teacher asked them to count in doubles beyond 10 one pupil said, “We can’t because we’ve only got 10 fingers,” another responded, “Yes we can, you can have some of mine.” Although the level of teachers’ questioning is good, they should give pupils more opportunities to explain how they worked things out in their heads.

73 The subject is very well led and the co-ordinator has benefited from working in the school alongside a colleague from the local education authority. She has led teacher training and helped improve subject planning. She is planning to improve the use of information and communication technology and the library in the subject since this is currently unsatisfactory. She monitors the quality of this and the quality of teaching. She then works with individual teachers and the whole staff on points for improvement. This has helped improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection when there were some unsatisfactory lessons.

SCIENCE

74 Since the previous inspection, seven-year-old pupils’ standards of attainment have risen. Standards in the current Year 2 are good and pupils make good progress. This is because science lessons are well planned and taught, pupils enjoy the subject and it is well led.

75 Pupils settle quickly to their work. In a lesson on electricity pupils were so keen to carry out a survey of electrical appliances in school that they clapped eagerly when the task was explained to them. They describe materials, using the words *stretchy*, *bendy* and *squashy*. Higher attaining pupils name parts of the body, including some joints. Most Year 2 pupils understand the concept of a fair test. For example, they know that, in order to test the speed of model cars, they must all run down similar ramps. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language play a full part in lessons. There are several reasons for this. Classroom assistants work with them at the right pace to give them confidence and occasionally translate for those who need it. Teachers sometimes encourage pupils who find writing difficult to record results in other ways. They also help children who are not confident by encouraging them and giving clear explanations using simpler language. The part of their work pupils need to improve is recording and checking their results accurately.

76 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make good use of national guidance on lesson planning. Plans show what teachers want pupils to learn in each lesson and list key questions for pupils to find out about. Teachers get lessons off to a good start by telling pupils what they want them to learn and how they should work. Pupils behave well because they know what to do and they get lots of encouragement. Teachers use science lessons to improve pupils’ writing skills. For instance, the writing target for one group of pupils is to use full stops correctly. These pupils were expected to use full stops correctly as they wrote about light.

77 Teachers have high expectations of pupils. For example, during a lesson about light pupils were expected to behave sensibly when the classroom lights were switched off and different lights were demonstrated. Pupils respond well. Teachers introduce scientific words and ask pupils what they mean, in order to find out what pupils already understand. They answer confidently because they know that the school encourages everyone to try, even if sometimes they get things wrong. A group of Year 2 pupils was introduced to the idea of mains electricity in this way. They compared electrical appliances that use mains electricity with others that use battery power. The teacher showed an old transistor radio so that pupils could see where the batteries are stored. Pupils were interested to see what the old radio looked like. They then walked round the school and looked at other electrical appliances. This helped them to understand how modern appliances use information. However, pupils did not visit the school office to see computers and fax machines. The teacher did not show pupils how they could save the results of their observations using a computer. This example illustrates the fact that the school generally does not develop information and communication technology well enough through science.

78 Science has been well led since the previous inspection and this has helped the school to improve pupils' standards of attainment and progress. The co-ordinator manages resources and works with the head teacher to make improvements. She recognises that pupils do not make enough use of the library to support the subject because it has only recently been refurbished. She checks on pupils' standards of work by looking at their books and teachers' records. She also advises teachers, gives them good ideas for planning and encourages them to be flexible in it. For instance, Year 1 pupils did some work on the eclipse soon after they experienced one. In this way science becomes more interesting, challenging and relevant to pupils' lives.

ART AND DESIGN

79 The quality of art and design work has improved since the previous inspection due to a well-planned curriculum, good teaching and leadership by the co-ordinator. Seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment now match the nationally expected level and most make satisfactory progress over time.

80 The school's curriculum covers the range of skills pupils need to develop in using different media. Higher attaining pupils make skilful, detailed observational drawings and pencil sketches of insects using pencil shading to create different tones. Most pupils in Year 2 understand perspective, background and foreground detail. They have explored the use of ICT to investigate shape, colour and pattern, comparing the work of the artist Mondrian with the effects they can achieve in a graphics package. This is a good feature of the school's work. The work for Black History and Achievement Week displays drawings and paintings using a range of media and styles that reflect pupils' cultural backgrounds. Other displays show techniques such as chalk drawings, marbling and fabric dying. Overall, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

81 Two lessons were seen during the inspection, one was good and the other was very good. Teachers now use national guidance to plan their work and use satisfactory assessment systems to record how well pupils are learning. Where teachers give very clear instructions to pupils, the pupils know exactly what they are expected to do and produce good quality work. They use resources well, as in the Year 2 work on viewfinders. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject and this leads to pupils being excited about their work. Learning support assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language. Occasionally teachers do not give clear instructions and a few pupils make slow progress because they do not have the confidence to ask for more help.

82 The co-ordinator has only been in the school since the beginning of term and provides satisfactory leadership. She has a clear view of the way she wishes to develop the subject. For example, she plans to introduce visiting artists to the school. She is aware of the need to develop her own subject knowledge and plans to monitor the curriculum through an analysis of assessed work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83 Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology and from an analysis of their work most seven-year-olds reach the national standard for pupils of that age. Pupils, who achieve at a higher or average level, have designed an item of clothing, a meal and a pop-up book. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They record their ideas more simply than other pupils. The school has made satisfactory progress in developing design and technology since the previous inspection.

84 The teaching of design and technology is satisfactory. Although it was not possible to inspect a lesson during the inspection it is clear from teachers' plans that pupils carry out a satisfactory range of work, including activities that build on what they have done before. For instance, pupils design a coat, using paper to make a pattern. They then use this to cut material, which they colour with dye. Pupils join the material in different ways such as by sewing and using staples. They make good use of computers to design different fabric patterns for their coats. Ideas in pupils' workbooks indicate that they enjoy design and technology. For example, one pupil designed a pop up book in which all of his friends stand up and wave. They talk about their work with interest, describing the part of the project that they enjoyed most. Pupils have opportunities to test the things they make and think about how their work could be improved. For instance, some Year 1 pupils designed and made bags with sewn on handles. They then tested them to find out whether the handles were strong enough. If the fixings broke they fixed the handles on again using staples. In some lessons, teachers help pupils to organise their ideas well. For instance, when designing a fruit salad, pupils are asked to show how to make it by drawing a set of pictures. Teachers use design well to show pupils' thoughts and feelings. For example, each leaf in a display of a large paper tree is used to write the pupils' talents. This talent tree helps all pupils to be confident in themselves and aware of one another and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

85 About two years ago pupils visited a local business. They went to see a pizza parlour, found out about how to make pizzas, then designed their own. Pupils would benefit from more such opportunities to see design and technology in the business world to give them fresh ideas and examples of design and technology in everyday life.

86 The co-ordinator is new in post this term and her management of the subject is satisfactory. She manages resources and finds out about what teachers and pupils do by looking at teachers' lesson plans and records. During the year she plans to attend a training course to find out more about improving design and technology in school.

GEOGRAPHY

87 Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography and most seven-year-old pupils reach the level expected for pupils of that age. Teachers help pupils to make progress by setting work, which is matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils in the class. Seven-year-old pupils develop basic geographical skills and knowledge, by using maps. They also express their feelings about the geography of their locality. For instance, during a study of Handsworth one pupil said that her favourite place is the local library because there is a good selection of books. Pupils whose attainment is average can compare occupations in Handsworth with those in a rural location. Pupils with special educational needs can draw simple weather symbols. They make satisfactory progress, because classroom assistants give them support. Pupils learning English as an additional language also make satisfactory

progress. Classroom assistants also support these pupils by speaking to them in their home language.

88 Teaching in the one geography lesson seen during the inspection was satisfactory. Pupils enjoy geography because teachers make it interesting. They do this by giving pupils opportunities to learn from the school site, the local area and from people. For instance, pupils begin to learn mapping skills by using a plan of the school site, showing rooms and corridors. Pupils colour in their own classroom and the school hall. Then they draw a line on the plan to show how they go from their classroom to the hall. Pupils develop their mapping skills further by using a street map, showing the roads where they live. They colour in drawings of special buildings, cut these out and glue them onto the map. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. In the lesson about the weather, most pupils listened carefully while the teacher spoke to the class. Pupils' concentration wandered at the beginning of the lesson because they spent too long sitting together on the small, carpeted area before starting the group tasks. A good feature of the lesson was the last part when pupils looked at suitcases containing clothes, which they matched to different kinds of weather. Teachers develop pupils' reading skills well in geography by reading together from big books such as those about the weather.

89 The curriculum co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has revised the school policy for geography, updated the scheme of work and purchased big books to help pupils improve their reading as they learn about geography. She monitors the quality of teachers' planning. She was born in St Lucia and helps pupils to learn more about the island by showing them photographs of her family and home. During Black History and Achievement Week she also arranged for a friend from South Africa to tell pupils about how some South African children's toys are made from recycled materials. Overall, the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils make satisfactory use of the library and good use of displays.

HISTORY

90 Pupils make satisfactory progress in history and most seven-year-olds reach the level expected for pupils of that age. Teachers help pupils to make progress by setting work, which is matched to the abilities of different groups. All pupils have been introduced to well known people in history, such as Florence Nightingale. They can tell about her home life, the people she helped and the way in which she improved standards of nursing care. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 know how home life has changed over time and can describe changes in kitchens between Victorian times and the present. Average attaining pupils have a simple understanding of the idea of family history. Pupils with special educational needs can draw a picture of themselves in a family group and use words such as *yesterday*, *today* and *tomorrow* to describe the passing of time. Teachers help and encourage pupils who attain at a lower level to make sure that they are involved and make satisfactory progress. For instance, when one child said, "I don't want to do this. It's too hard," the teacher reassured her by explaining the work again clearly. She told the pupil that she could draw her results instead of writing, and offered to give more help.

91 The quality of teaching was good in the one history lesson was seen during the inspection. Pupils enjoyed the lesson and settled down quickly to work. The teacher helped pupils to improve their historical skills by putting events on a time line. This was successful because pupils had used a time line earlier in the term and already had some skills to build upon. Pupils arranged themselves with their events cards in the order in which they happened. Then they used their numeracy skills to estimate how long ago the events took place. They used their literacy skills to read the information on the cards. The teacher asked pupils to explain why some dates on a time line are close together, while others are further apart. This made the higher attaining pupils think more deeply and a few offered some good suggestions.

92 During Black History and Achievement Week, pupils learn about food, clothing and other aspects of the cultures of ethnic groups. They find out about famous people in history, such as Nelson Mandela. Parents work very closely with the school and much of the week is organised and provided by them. This event promotes pupils' personal and cultural development very well and the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

93 The co-ordinator has held the post since the start of this term, her management of the subject is satisfactory and she has examined some teachers' planning. She has audited of the history resources and recognises that they are limited. Her priorities include purchasing more resources, attending a training course and finding out more about how history is being taught in the school. The co-ordinator is planning to take pupils to visit to the local museum, which has a history department for young pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

94 Developing the information and communication curriculum has been a school priority following the previous inspection. Some progress has been made in developing the curriculum and provision. However, this is against a background of increased national expectations. A few seven-year-old pupils are making satisfactory progress and attaining expected levels. However, most are working below this level, make slow progress and overall standards of attainment are unsatisfactory.

95 Pupils in Year 2 use a graphics package to develop visual effects and use simple tools. Higher attaining pupils are able to open and close the program independently, select icons and save and print their work. Lower attaining pupils need support from an adult to do this. Most pupils in Year 2 can use the keyboard to write simple pieces of text and most are able, with help, to use a digital camera. They cannot yet use databases, control technology, or the Internet to find out information. A few seven year olds can review their writing on screen and make changes.

96 Pupils behave well and enjoy the subject. They look forward to having their turn on the computer and are good at helping each other and taking turns. A few higher attaining pupils are able to work independently. However, most pupils need adults to help them with their work. They sometimes waste time because they don't know what to do and they do not get enough help.

97 The quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory, with weaknesses in some teachers' knowledge of the subject and their use of time and resources. The co-ordinator has organised training since the previous inspection and most teachers have satisfactory basic skills. The staff are shortly to have more training using New Opportunities Fund finance to increase the use of ICT in other subjects. Further training is planned for next year. Teachers plan using national guidance and to make sure that all the work is covered during the year. However, the work is not covered in enough depth with all pupils because there are not enough computers for them all to make sufficient progress. Lower attaining pupils make satisfactory progress when they are taught specific skills but this does not happen often enough. When teachers demonstrate a program to the class some pupils cannot see the screen properly and lower attaining pupils and some pupils with English as an additional language make slow progress.

98 The co-ordinator has developed the subject since the previous inspection and manages the subject satisfactorily. The curriculum is now planned more thoroughly and there are good links with other subjects such as art and design. The co-ordinator monitors planning and oversees the assessments that teachers make of pupils' work. However, she has not yet had time to work with teachers in classrooms and so does not have thorough

knowledge of teaching methods. She recognises that pupils' work in other subjects makes an unsatisfactory contribution to the progress in ICT. She has devised an effective system for recording attainment in the nursery and reception classes.

MUSIC

99 Music continues to have a high profile in the school and is led very well. Seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. Standards and progress in singing are very good because of the enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator who gives very good guidance to teachers. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

100 Pupils sing with verve and enthusiasm and enjoy their music lessons. They listen well to the teacher and know that they are performing when they play and sing for others. They explore making different musical sounds because teachers encourage them to experiment with the wide range of instruments, by clapping and using different kinds of voice sounds. They know that doing this gives different effects and can make music more enjoyable to listen to. Teachers make sure that the pupils watch and listen carefully and understand the reasons for changes in tone and volume. This helps pupils to respond well to a conductor and following signs to tell them to sing more loudly, quietly or hold notes longer. This is particularly evident when the choir sings the school song as a round.

101 Teaching is good. Teachers are increasingly confident and know what they need to do. Planning is good. The long-term plan helps teachers to organise for day-to-day teaching. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and by asking questions and watching carefully they correct errors and help pupils to improve. Twice a term they record what the pupils have learned and this helps them to plan their next set of lessons. All teachers expect pupils to do their best and constantly encourage them to improve. Most demonstrate well and use pupils to show good examples. This helps other pupils to improve. They give praise and encouragement so that pupils feel they can try new ideas and develop their music. This makes the pupils more confident and helps them to learn. Most teachers use resources well. In a few lessons, classroom assistants are not used well enough to help groups of pupils who need support. This means they make slower progress.

102 The co-ordinator gives very good leadership. She is enthusiastic and committed to raising standards. She is clear about what needs to be done to achieve this. She supports teachers very well by identifying where they need help. She has given each teacher a good teaching pack to help them organise their lessons. She monitors standards and teaching by checking plans and records. She gives time to talk to teachers and pupils to find out more. Her expertise and enthusiasm encourages teachers, builds up their skills and knowledge and inspires pupils. This is maintaining high standards in singing and beginning to raise standards in other aspects.

103 The school has a very good choir and pupils are given the opportunity to learn the recorder. Irish Musicians and a Steel Band are examples of the many visitors the school invites to work with the pupils. Pupils enjoy these activities and the subject makes a good contribution to their social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

104 During the inspection it was only possible to inspect gymnastics. In this part of physical education, most pupils make satisfactory progress and are working within the level expected of them by the age of seven. However, there is a minority of boys who are strong and agile and a similar proportion of girls who have poise and a marked lightness of step. These pupils are not reaching a higher standard in gymnastics because teachers do not ask enough of them. Pupils are learning to set out and put away the equipment safely. This takes up time in the lessons, and while it is important for pupils to do this, teachers should

find ways of increasing the amount of time pupils are active. They carry out the teachers' instructions quickly and move across the benches and practise landings from different heights with increasing confidence. They have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies, and in the warm up part of the lessons move with freedom and control. They have only a limited understanding of how to improve their techniques.

105 In the two lessons seen, one was good and the other was satisfactory. A minority of teachers have a good understanding of the subject and set some challenging targets for individual pupils. Some are well qualified to teach swimming and report that pupils in Year 2 make good progress from low starting points. Most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge but do not coach more able pupils to refine their techniques. Teachers pay a lot of attention to pupils' safety and ensure that pupils need to be aware of other pupils' movements. Teachers plan well and make good use of national guidance. This helps them to set clear aims for the lesson. They tell the pupils what they are to learn and expect them to try their best. Pupils like this clarity and try hard to improve. Classroom assistants and the learning mentor do valuable work in physical education lessons. For instance, the assistants take responsibility for teaching small groups and this gives all pupils more individual attention and support. In one lesson, the learning mentor worked very sensitively with a girl who lacked confidence. Over a few weeks, the mentor had persuaded her to take a full part in the lessons. She did this by helping her overcome her reserve at taking off her headscarf to make it safe to take part. Teachers supervise pupils well and give clear instructions so that they move to different activities with little fuss. However, once at the activity, up to 30% have to wait for a turn and have little to do. This slows the pace of their learning.

106 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and teachers now have better planning guidance. The school has some good physical education resources and has altered its timetable so that more pupils can use them. The subject co-ordinator is looking to increase the amount of time for the subject during the summer months when classes can use the playground. She has been in post only a few weeks and is leading the subject satisfactorily. She has monitored teachers' planning and has given them some good ideas for warm up and cool down activities. This has improved the quality of teaching. She has good plans to develop the subject further and to improve staff expertise.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

107 Seven-year-old pupils reach standards that are in line with expectations for pupils of that age in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress because teachers plan appropriately from the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school links assemblies, personal, social and religious education well. In this way, the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The contribution to pupils' spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The school's aims and values are reflected well through the subject. For example pupils learn how to care for others and know the importance of tolerance and good behaviour.

108 Discussions with seven-year-old pupils show that they know about festivals in different faiths. For example, Diwali, Christmas and Easter. Pupils are beginning to understand that those different faiths have different ways of celebrating special things such as New Year. However, they tend to confuse country with faith. They know that different faiths have special books such as the Bible and the Koran. All the pupils can explain that people need to be kind to each other and that we need to care for the world. Most pupils are beginning to notice that some beliefs are the same and some are different and that people refer to God in different ways. "Who do you think made the world?" asked one pupil. "God,

of course. " said another. "Some people call him Allah," said the first pupil. Work shows writing about some important people in different faiths such as Noah and Mohammed.

109 In the one lesson observed, pupils listened very carefully when Sikh and Hindu pupils talked about what they do at Diwali. Prompted by the teacher, others recognised that light can be a symbol of worship. One pupil said, "Churches have candles too but they are not called Diwas."

110 Teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson seen. Plans show that teachers use the Locally Agreed Syllabus to provide the pupils with balanced learning opportunities. Teachers help pupils to learn satisfactorily about and also from religions such as Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. For instance, they write about special clothes and food and about feeling gratitude for people who care. One piece of work is "I am grateful to my Mum for." Most pupils write simply but with understanding about how their mother cares for them. Teachers use a good range of resources well. These are displayed prominently. Pupils are encouraged to talk about them and this increases their interest and understanding. Visits to the Mosque and the Gurdwara help pupils to find out more about different faiths in an interesting way. Visitors from Age Concern and the NSPCC come to talk to the pupils about how they can help people. Parents and helpers share festivals with the pupils. A good example of this is the Diwali assembly when the parents, pupils, staff, visiting older students with special educational needs, and an adult packed the hall to see and take part in performances. In this way pupils learn about faith, beliefs and caring for others. The school has improved this aspect of provision since the previous inspection.

111 The co-ordinator leads the subject satisfactorily and checks teachers' planning and pupils' work. A good curriculum plan guides teachers in what they need to teach pupils so that they can build on their learning step by step. The co-ordinator has built up a good range of resources for teachers to use to interest the pupils.