

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE ORION PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Grahame Park, London, NW9 5FN

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 131970

Headteacher: Mr C Flathers

Reporting inspector: Mr P L Evans  
20737

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 230654

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lanacre Avenue Grahame Park London
Postcode:	NW9 5FN
Telephone number:	(0208) 205 9324
Fax number:	(0208) 905 9429
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Maund
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20737	Paul Evans	Registered inspector	Science Physical education	How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
7813	Kevin Wood	Team inspector	English Design and technology Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils?
5565	Bimla Thakur	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language Art History	
29063	Judy Keiner	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Information and communication technology Music	How well are pupils taught?
27426	Terry Aldridge	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
28200	Paul Stevens	Team inspector		Staffing, accommodation, resources for teaching and learning

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd  
7 Hill Street  
Bristol  
BS1 5RW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House

33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>8 - 10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>10 - 13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>13 - 15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>15 - 17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17 - 19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21 - 24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>25 - 42</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Orion Primary School opened in January 2000 after the closure of Grahame Park Infant and Junior schools. It is a larger than average primary school providing education for a total of 361 children from 3 to 11 years of age. Forty-four children attend the school's Nursery part time, 21 in the morning and 23 in the afternoon. The majority of pupils live on the housing estate adjacent to the school. The estate is made up of council, housing association and temporary housing. A small minority is privately owned. Unemployment in the area is high and the number of pupils identified as being eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. There are 92 pupils on the special needs register which is well above the national average. There are three pupils with statements of special educational needs, which is average. The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above the national average. The most common languages of the families of these pupils are Somali, Arabic, Albanian and Portuguese. Children's attainment on entry to the school's Nursery is well below average.

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

Since its amalgamation in January 2000, the school has established a good team of teaching and support staff led by the very good headteacher who gives excellent educational direction to the school. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, overall. When compared to the results of similar schools, the standards that pupils achieve in national tests are below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards which are well above average in English, mathematics and science, compared to similar schools. The level of care that the school provides for the welfare and personal development of all its pupils is good, overall.

The Orion School has been established for less than two years. Taking into account the context of the school, the quality of education and support that it offers to all its pupils and the money that it spends, the overall effectiveness of the school is very good. The value for money offered by the school is good.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school.
- The standards that pupils achieve, in English, mathematics and science, by the age of eleven are well above average compared to similar schools.
- The relationships that pupils form and their enthusiasm for school are both excellent.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- The headteacher provides excellent educational vision for the school.
- The level of teamwork of all staff and the shared commitment to improve are excellent.

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

- The overall balance of the curriculum in Years 1 to 6.
- The quality of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language.
- The overall quality of teachers marking of pupils' work.

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

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

The Orion Primary School opened in January 2000. This is the first time, therefore, that the school has undergone an inspection.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The Orion Primary School is a new school, so no comparison will be made between the school's results and national test results over time. This report will not contain any reference to the school's improvements since the last inspection, as, being a new school, this is the first inspection of The Orion Primary School.

In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds the school's results were well below the national average in mathematics and in the lowest five per cent nationally in reading and writing. Standards in science, according to teacher assessments, were well below the national average. When compared to the results of similar schools, standards in mathematics are average. Standards are below average in reading and well below average in writing.

The school's national test results for eleven-year-olds in 2001 were average in English and science and above average in mathematics when compared to the results of all schools. The school's results, when compared to similar schools, were well above average in all three subjects.

Inspection evidence confirms the results of the 2001 tests. However, inspection evidence also shows that pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 are in line to reach average standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of the year. Inspection evidence also shows, that standards in singing are good at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in all other subjects are in line with expectations except in information and communication technology and Religious Education, which are below average throughout the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are very keen to attend school and are enthusiastic about the work they undertake.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils' behaviour in and out of classrooms is almost always good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There are excellent relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is below the national average.

The great majority of pupils are very keen to attend school. The very good management of the behaviour of all pupils enables the development of good levels of behaviour throughout the school. The level of relationships, between pupils and between them and all the staff is excellent. Attendance is below



average. The school has good procedures for promoting good attendance. However, while there are genuine reasons for some absences, there is also a lack of support from a small minority of parents.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. It is also good in each area of the school. A total of 87 lessons were observed throughout the school. The quality of teaching was excellent in two lessons. It was very good in 21 lessons and good in 41. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in 18 lessons and less than satisfactory in only three. Two further lessons were observed for too short a time to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. Two less than satisfactory lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 and another in a Year 5 class, all in different subjects. The overall good quality of teaching and the consistent application of the very good behaviour policy of the school combine to produce good learning in almost all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress. However, the provision for pupils with English as an additional language is inconsistent and these pupils do not always make sufficient progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, overall. The appropriate curriculum is in place. The very good provision for extra-curricular activities enhances the provision and contributes well to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good throughout the school. The needs of these pupils are very well supported in classrooms.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. However, this provision is not implemented consistently in all classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The management of behaviour and procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, overall.

The partnership between the school and parents is good. The statutory curriculum is fully in place. The delivery of English mathematics and science is good. However, there are weaknesses in the delivery of Religious Education, information and communication technology and the provision for gymnastics. The care that the school offers pupils both in their personal development and in developing good behaviour is very good. The assessment of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is good and this information is well used to plan future lessons. However, the school has yet to fully develop and implement assessment procedures in other subjects.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The very good headteacher gives excellent educational direction to the school. The very strong teamwork of the senior management team and the whole of the staff is a strength of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is supportive of the school and fully understands the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The evaluation of the school's provision is very well used to guide future plans for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The headteacher and the governors have a very good understanding of the principles of best value.

The number, training and experience of teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum are good. The school buildings and grounds provide very good areas for teaching and learning. Overall, there is a good supply of good quality resources for teaching and learning.

The headteacher gives excellent educational direction to the school. He delegates well and successfully fosters strong teamwork throughout the school. The governing body gives good pastoral and moral support to the school. However, more governor training is needed for governors to play their full part in the partnership in management of the school. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fact that their children like attending school.</li> <li>Parents feel that the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>They are comfortable to approach the school with any questions or problems.</li> <li>The high expectations the school has for their children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of work their children have to do at home.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence fully supports the views of the parents who responded to the parents' questionnaires and attended the parents' meeting. Parents were concerned about the amount of homework that their children receive. However, inspection evidence shows that pupils of all ages receive a satisfactory amount of work to complete at home and that this is appropriate to their ages and abilities. In this area, inspection evidence does not support the views of a minority of parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. On entry to the school's nursery, the overall level of attainment of children is well below what is expected for their age. By the time that they enter the reception classes, children have made significant improvement, but their levels of attainment are still below average. Almost all children in the Foundation Stage achieve the targets set in the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development. A significant number exceed these targets. In their knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development, most children meet the expectations set in the national Early Learning Goals. However, most children do not reach the expected levels in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development or in creative development. In these areas, their levels of attainment are below average when they enter Year 1.
2. In January 2000, Graeme Park Infant and Graeme Park Junior schools amalgamated to form The Orion Primary School. No judgements, therefore, are made in relation to a previous inspection report or trends over time.
3. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2, the school's results were in the lowest five per cent nationally in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments of pupils' standards in science were below average. However, this masks the real improvement that the school has made since 2000. In reading, the average improvement per pupil of one point five national curriculum points exceeded the national improvement of nought point one per cent. Similarly, in writing, the average improvement per pupil was nought point seven points compared to a national gain of nought point one points. The greatest improvement was in mathematics where the average points gain for pupils in the school was two point five against a national gain of nought point two points. In science, teacher assessment of the percentage of pupils reaching level 2 and above rose from 49 per cent in 2000 to 81 per cent in 2001. This shows significant improvement since The Orion School opened. Inspection evidence confirms that this level of improvement is set to continue this year.
4. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6, standards in English and science were in line with the national average. Standards in mathematics were above the national average. When considering the well below average levels of attainment of pupils on entry to the school and the low levels of achievement when the school opened in January 2000, this shows a very high level of improvement.
5. When compared to the results of similar schools, The Orion School's results in the end of Year 2 national tests in 2001 were below average in reading and well below average in writing. In mathematics, the results of the school were average. The end of Year 6 test results in 2001 were well above average in English, mathematics and science when compared to the results achieved in similar schools. Once again, this is a very high level of improvement.
6. Teacher assessments of the number of pupils who would reach average and above average levels at the end of Year 6 were accurate in English, mathematics and science. The school sets challenging, but realistic, targets and has developed very good strategies for attaining those targets.
7. The school has enabled the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science through staff training and well focused subject leadership. The development and implementation of "The Orion Literacy Strategy" has had a significant impact on pupils' learning in English and literacy. Inspection evidence shows that standards in science have improved significantly and that many pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are now in line to reach average standards in national tests. The level of pupils' achievement in mathematics, at the end of Year 6 has also improved significantly and many pupils are in line to reach above average standards in the national tests in 2002.

8. On entry to the foundation stage, many of the pupils for whom English is an additional language are in the early stages of acquiring English. Many of these pupils make good progress and their attainment when they leave the school is equivalent to their peers. However, the school's provision for pupils with English as an additional language is inconsistently implemented and this has the effect of slowing learning for some pupils.
9. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage to ensure that their individual needs are met. Most make very good progress in the Foundation Stage as they receive very good support. Most pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress in relation to their identified needs and achieve well in English, mathematics and science. All pupils receive very good support from class teachers and additional learning support staff. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem grow which strengthens their willingness to tackle tasks.
10. Standards in singing throughout the school are now good. The headteacher provides high quality teaching of singing for all pupils and this has raised the quality of pupils' learning and achievement. Standards in art and design, design technology, history, geography, music and physical education are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. While Religious Education is taught to all pupils, the level of provision varies between classes across the school. Religious education is taught together with Personal Social and Health education and this dilutes the levels of pupils' knowledge and understanding in Religious Education. Consequently, standards are below expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The school has developed a good information and communication technology suite and now has the equipment to teach all areas of the subject, including modelling and control technology. This area is in need of significant development, as, so far, it has not been taught in sufficient depth. Standards in information and communication technology are below expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
11. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls. The school focuses well on target setting in English, mathematics and science. These targets are well supported by the school's good assessment in these subjects and the good system for tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school. It has yet to develop a programme of thorough assessment of pupils' progress in other subjects.

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

12. The attitudes displayed by pupils of all ages to school life are very good and they very much enjoy coming to school. This is verified by parents as an extremely high number of those who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children like coming to school. From the youngest children in the nursery, right through the school, pupils show an exemplary enthusiasm for their lessons and take pride in their work. For example, a child in the nursery was very eager to show the excellent animal paintings he had done. Older pupils approach tasks such as proportional drawing in art and making music with different types of instruments with a great level of enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are eager to improve their work. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils' fair copies of a piece of descriptive writing about a character from the novel "The Fantastic Mr. Fox", were seen to be much improved as pupils responded positively to the teacher's constructive comments. Pupils can concentrate well for long periods particularly when lessons are stimulating and challenging. They show a high level of interest in school life in general, with many involved in the breakfast club and after school activities such as dance, football and science.
13. The behaviour of pupils, overall, is good and the great majority of parents agree with this judgement. The school has a clear behaviour policy that is used very consistently by all adults and this, coupled with the very positive approach to discipline by highlighting good behaviour, means that there is very little disruption to lessons. Pupils also behave well in assemblies, in the dining hall and outside in the playground. They are very concerned not to lose the much-valued weekly Golden Time and they also realise very well how their behaviour can impact on others. Consequently, the incidences of oppressive behaviour such as bullying, racism or sexism are very low. The number of exclusions during the last reported year is satisfactory when compared to similar schools and is declining this term, with only one pupil given a short exclusion.

14. Excellent relationships are seen throughout the school at all levels, amongst adults and pupils. Consequently, the school has an extremely happy, friendly atmosphere. In classrooms, relationships are fostered by the consistent use of “pairing and sharing” and pupils work productively in small groups. Pupils were seen to assist each other by translating for their peers and older pupils take much pride in being selected to be a part of the “Caring Squad” to assist those younger than themselves. All adults treat pupils in a very caring yet mature way that leads to an excellent level of mutual respect being shown. Assembly themes such as friendship do much to foster the excellent relationships seen. Pupils are also extremely polite, friendly and open in their dealings with visitors for example, welcoming them to the school and holding doors open. Pupils also show a very high level of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This was evident when pupils were asked to suggest how the work of others could be improved in an art lesson. They did this sensitively and constructively. Pupils are frequently encouraged to think about how others feel and because of this, combined with the excellent role models provided by adults, they accept each other regardless of background, race or special needs.
15. The extent to which pupils show initiative and take on responsible roles is good. There are opportunities for older pupils to take on whole school, rather than just class based responsibilities. These include duties such as operating the sound equipment during assemblies, becoming a member of the “Caring Squad” and reading out prayers in assemblies. Two Year 6 pupils operated hand puppets very effectively in one assembly seen during the inspection. There is a school council, with an elected representative from each class, but this is still developing and largely adult led at present.
16. The personal development of pupils is also enhanced by the many educational visits arranged, such as to Gunnersbury Museum and London Zoo and the variety of visitors in to school, including the BBC Orchestra. The residential visit undertaken by Year 6 pupils also does much to enhance their personal development.
17. The attendance figures at the school are currently unsatisfactory largely due to the comparatively high unauthorised absence figure. This is partly as a result of pupils moving out of the area and the school not being informed. Unfortunately, another factor is that a persistent minority of parents who, despite the school’s best efforts, do not get their children to school on time and are not rigorous in ensuring their attendance. Morning and afternoon registration takes place according to statutory requirements, but, on very rare occasions, registers are not completed correctly.
18. Most special needs pupils have a very positive attitude to school and are usually interested and very enthusiastic in their lessons. They are fully involved and included in the range of activities that the school provides. Those pupils identified with behavioural problems are well supported and procedures are effective in modifying their behaviour. Most pupils with special educational needs show very good respect for each other’s work and feelings and are positive about each other’s efforts. Most relate very well to others. They are willing to talk about their work and most are developing confidence in speaking, reading and writing.

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

19. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and includes many very good features. The high proportion of very good teaching builds on common approaches used across the school and is a major reason why pupils enjoy school so much and standards have improved so dramatically. A total of 87 lessons were observed across the school, during the inspection. The quality of teaching in 23 lessons was very good or excellent and in another 41 lessons it was good. Eighteen lessons were satisfactory. Only three lessons were unsatisfactory. Two further lessons were observed for too short a time to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is good.
20. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, in all areas of the school. In the Foundation Stage, three lessons were very good, eight were good and in four lessons the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, five lessons were very good, 12 were good and seven were satisfactory. In two lessons, the quality of teaching and learning was less than

satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, two lessons were outstanding, 10 were very good and nine were satisfactory. One lesson was unsatisfactory.

21. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are satisfactory, overall. They are good in English and mathematics. In all classes in Years 1 to 6, there is good knowledge of how to teach phonic and number skills, which helps pupils to make good progress in the foundation skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory in science, design technology, history, geography, art, and music. There are weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of PE, which result in less effective teaching of gymnastics. Teachers do not yet have enough knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology. The school is about to commence further training for teachers and is aware of the need to extend this further and offer further training for support staff.
22. Teachers' planning is generally good. In almost all lessons, teachers specify clear objectives, structure the use of time well and provide for the different levels of ability in their class. In an outstanding Year 5 history lesson, careful planning enabled the teacher to draw together resources showing Victorian teaching and learning methods. This was presented as a lively, dramatised model Victorian lesson, with the teacher convincingly playing the authoritarian Victorian schoolteacher. Her thorough planning of the use of support resources then enabled the teacher to come out of role and guide the children in working very successfully, in groups, researching historical documents. These showed ways in which the Victorian school day differed from the one the pupils are familiar with. Teachers usually enable support staff to contribute to teaching plans and brief them in good time for what support is needed. However, they do not always plan the right tasks for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. There is sometimes too little planning of the small steps needed to help such pupils. For example, in one otherwise very successful English lesson focusing on using speech marks and speech bubbles to present dialogue, such pupils were expected to do a simplified version of the same task, although their knowledge of English was at too early a stage to be able to understand the speech in the dialogues or the teacher's very clear instructions about how to place speech marks. Despite good support from a classroom assistant, some of the pupils found the extended task very frustrating. There are also weaknesses in planning some subject elements in integrated activities periods in Years 1 and 2, where three subjects, such as science, design technology and information and communication technology may be taught alongside each other, with one subject being the main focus for teacher input. In one such lesson, where the focus was on science, no plans were made to involve the teacher in the work on information and communication technology. This was unrelated to the science topic, despite the fact that the science topic of making a block graph about foods would have been ideal for a parallel information and communication technology -based graph creation task. The information and communication technology task was not introduced to the class, no clear objectives for extending pupils' knowledge were specified and no plans were made for the pupils to save or print their work. Pupils did not report back to the teacher or the class on what they had achieved.
23. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are good in most lessons, particularly in English, mathematics science and music. For example, there are very clear expectations in the Year 1 and 2 singing lessons that pupils will very rapidly assemble in the hall, join in all the songs and hand actions and learn new ones very readily. These expectations are well reinforced by the enthusiastic participation of all the class teachers who support the headteacher who leads the teaching. Pupils respond to this equally enthusiastically and sing with great gusto and enjoyment. There are weaknesses in the lower years in the standards of presentation which teachers expect. For example, although pupils in Year 3 are learning joined writing, the lower achieving groups are not expected to use it in their class work. There are also weaknesses in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in using information and communication technology, both in the specific information and communication technology lessons and in the ways that computers can be used to support pupils' learning in other lessons. For example, when teaching the use of computer paint programs, teachers rarely use the work of artists, such as Mondrian and Klee, in the way that they would in art lessons, using paint and paper. Where teachers do not know the pupils well in the class they are teaching, for example, when they are covering to release a subject leader for subject improvement tasks, they sometimes do not have enough knowledge of what to expect of the pupils, particularly those with lower abilities. This results in behaviour weaknesses either where

pupils have completed work for which extension tasks have not been provided, or where pupils are expressing frustration and restlessness over tasks which are too difficult for them.

24. The school has rightly focused on establishing high quality teaching and has a very clear teaching and learning policy which guides the successful methods and the very good pupil management seen. Teachers make sure from the start of each lesson that pupils know exactly what they have to do in order to be successful, usually through writing up the lesson objectives on the board. This results in pupils in most lessons being able to tell observers what they are doing and why the work is helping them learn. Teachers use the same simple signals, such as the Orion Eye, an O shape made with the fingers, across the school to focus children's attention rapidly. Shared chants are used very effectively to motivate and encourage the children to think of themselves as successful high achievers. Key vocabulary is carefully repeated in different sentences and questions the teachers use, so that pupils, including those with Special Needs and those at the early stages of learning English, rapidly learn and understand it. This results in almost all pupils being very strongly motivated to learn and doing their best to succeed at the tasks they are set. Teachers use a good variety of grouping strategies, including very good pupil pairing, sharing and discussion tasks to ensure that the pupils help each other learn and have opportunities to exchange and talk through ideas. Plenary sessions are used very well at the end of the lessons to enable pupils to sum up what they have achieved, to recognise good work and to point to how to improve or what the pupils will be doing next. English lessons use all these techniques particularly well and add helpful key features across both Key Stages. For example, teachers always have ready displayed on the wall the key words and phrases which are going to be used in each English lesson. The stock of display words is always displayed as a "word wall" in exactly the same place so that pupils know where to look to find the spellings they need. Support staff work very effectively in most English lessons to ensure that less able pupils and those with English as an additional language make good progress.
25. Teachers' very good pupil management is underpinned by their consistent enforcement of clear rules about behaviour, well backed up by the way in which all the staff constantly remind pupils of the rules they must follow. These are promoted very positively through praising pupils who are sitting ready to learn, who help others and who remember to raise their hands when asking or answering questions. Teachers intervene very promptly when pupils divert from the task in hand, often using a question about the task to refocus them. They issue two clear warnings before imposing a sanction. They use the sanction of requiring a pupil who does not respond to lose a specified number of minutes of "Golden Time". Because this system is so well understood by pupils and they value their Golden Time, losing it chastens any pupil to whom it is applied and others strive to avoid this penalty. In a small number of otherwise satisfactory lessons and in some unsatisfactory lessons observed there is a weakness when teachers do not have a strategy for managing pupils whose regular learning partner is absent.
26. Teachers give a satisfactory standard of feedback to pupils, overall. In lessons, they readily acknowledge and praise pupils who volunteer appropriate ideas and answers and those who work well together. They sum up what the class has learnt in a review at the end of lessons. They also use these reviews well to enable pupils to compare what they and the class have learnt. For example, very good feedback was seen in a Year 3 mathematics review session when the pupils in pair groups told each other what number they would need to add to another to get a certain total.
27. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work. Some very good examples of marking were seen, for example, in some Year 3 pupils' English workbooks, where teachers commented on what they had enjoyed in the stories the pupils had written and added a comment saying what improvement they would like to see next. Good marking was observed in a scrutiny of workbooks for the other core subjects. However, some teacher comments on pupils' written work consist almost entirely of ticks and brief comments praising good work, without any guidance on how to improve their work.
28. Teachers make sound use of homework. Pupils are regularly set mathematics and literacy homework, including reading and, for older pupils, written tasks which are effective in helping them make progress towards their targets. Reading homework books are provided, for parents to write comments on how their children are progressing. However, little use is made by teachers of these books to provide written recommendations on good books to read or advice on how to develop

reading. Teachers do not regularly set homework in other subjects, although a good example was seen in a Year 5 class, where pupils had a homework task designed to help them to develop a database project.

29. Teaching is good for children with special educational needs in the Foundation stage as activities are matched to the individual needs of children and they receive appropriate support. This positively affects their learning and progress.
30. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is good in English and mathematics. Activities are well matched to pupils' needs in literacy and numeracy activities and pupils receive very good support from teachers and support assistants. However, pupils with special educational needs do not always receive a differentiated and relevant curriculum in other subjects. As well as good teaching of specific strategies to improve skills, emphasis is appropriately placed on increasing their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are fully included in all school activities. Regular termly reviews and assessments take place so that their needs are regularly updated.

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

31. The curricular provision in the foundation stage is good, overall. Provision is good in the reception class and very good in the nursery, where outdoor play facilities are excellent. Planning is generally good and very good in the nursery; activities are designed to promote the early learning goals in all areas of learning.
32. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is soundly established and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education. There is a good range of visits provided and good use of visitors to the school, which successfully extends the curriculum beyond the classroom. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education, is very good.
33. There is a clear, special educational needs policy, which is to be reviewed when the new code of practice is published. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties in the Foundation Stage is good, as their needs are appropriately supported. In Year 1 through to Year 6, curriculum provision is very good in literacy and numeracy lessons. In other subjects, it is satisfactory because not all teachers provide an appropriately differentiated curriculum. The school complies with the recommended Code of Practice and devises detailed programmes of work and support to meet pupils' individual needs. Pupils' progress towards the objectives outlined in their individual education plans is reviewed very rigorously at least every term. There is good provision for the three pupils who have statements of special educational needs. The co-ordinator provides very good support and advice to teachers so that the curriculum needs of pupils are met. They ensure that pupils have relevant individual education plans with specific targets so that teaching and learning can be effective.
34. Although the curriculum is broad and relevant and there are some good links developed between subjects, it is not sufficiently balanced. Since the school opened, there has been a major focus on raising standards in literacy, numeracy and pupils' personal and social development and this has been very successful. However, this has meant that insufficient time has been spent on some subjects, in particular religious education, which alternates on the timetable with personal, social, and health education. Currently, there is an over-emphasis on personal, social and health education with some activities duplicated in other subjects, such as science, physical education and 'circle time' (where pupils sit in a circle to discuss issues concerning relationships and behaviour). This has meant that religious education is not given sufficient teaching time to cover the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and this has affected standards. Insufficient use is made of information and communications technology in the teaching of other subjects.
35. Clear subject policies have recently been developed in English, mathematics and religious education, but have yet to be completed in other subjects. Planning and guidance in all subjects are soundly based on national frameworks. These are in the process of being adapted to ensure



that they meet the specific needs of pupils in the school. Teachers make good use of the guidance to plan effective lessons. All subjects have a designated, diligent co-ordinator who monitors termly planning to ensure that it meets national requirements. The achievements of pupils in national tests in English, mathematics and science are carefully monitored by gender, ethnic background and prior attainment, to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to their needs and is adapted as necessary. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of those pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils in their class and is very good, overall.

36. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been effectively introduced and both are well established. The school gives high priority to developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy and this is helping to raise standards. Pupils are effectively grouped by ability in Year 3 to Year 6, which ensures that activities are more closely matched to pupils' needs and this is successful. However, greater emphasis needs to be placed on presentation and handwriting skills to raise standards throughout the school and across all subjects.
37. The school has a very clear policy for the inclusion of all its pupils. This is well applied with regard to the gender, race and varying levels of ability of its pupils, including those with special educational needs. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory, overall. However, the inconsistent application of this provision means that some of these pupils do not have complete access to the whole of the curriculum.
38. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities such as art, computer, dance (different styles), homework and music. These are supplemented with seasonal activities such as football (older and younger boys and girls) and cricket. All activities, although mainly for older pupils, are well supported and popular and involve many members of staff. A good range of visitors and educational visits, for example to museums and other places of interest, further enhances and enriches the curriculum provision outside the classroom. Pupils in Year 6 also have the opportunity to attend a residential visit, which further promotes their personal and social development. However, the school does not make sufficient use of the wide range of faiths and cultures within the school and the community. The school does not take full advantage of the opportunities available through the Internet in developing pupils learning, for example in English, art and history.
39. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and a strength of the school. The high priority that is placed on personal, social and health education has been instrumental in promoting the very good relationships throughout the school. This is a school where all are valued. Behaviour systems are strong and consistently applied. Provision is very good, because pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on the part they play in making the school a friendly and supportive community in lessons and 'circle time'. The school council, although in the early stages of development, provides a good platform for pupils to air their views and suggest improvements to school life. There is very good provision for drugs and sex education, involving the local authority, police and health visitors. Parents are consulted and informed of their right to withdraw their children, if they wish. A very successful Health activity week involving outside agencies, staff, pupils and parents raised awareness further. The school plans to be involved in the Healthy Schools initiative and has undertaken a thorough audit of its current provision.
40. There are good links with the community that make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. For example, the school has been supported by the Barnet Business Partnership and by visitors from the local Metropolitan Police Training College. The local Anglican priest leads assemblies regularly. The school also becomes involved in local events such as the Grahame Park Festival as well as a local Arts Festival. The caring ethos of the school is emphasised by links such as the distribution of Harvest Festival goods to a local charity for the homeless and by regular contributions to other charitable causes. The school makes good use of the local environment, to enhance learning. For example, the nursery children have visited a near-by supermarket. The school also has good productive links with the local secondary schools to which Orion pupils transfer and with the main pre-school establishment that some pre-school children come from. Such links ensure a smooth transition for pupils across the different stages of their education.

41. Overall, the school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Spiritual development is very good and is inherent in the whole school ethos of ensuring that pupils feel special and cared for. There is the opportunity for a daily act of collective worship that includes a short time to reflect or pray. Pupils are particularly enthralled by the content of some of the assemblies such as when a “friendship cake” was miraculously baked from normal ingredients such as flour and eggs plus glittering ingredients such as caring and sharing. In lessons too, there are elements of awe and wonder as when a spotlight and white sheet were used to show a pupil’s shadow in an art lesson. The art displays in some classrooms and throughout the school, such as the Starry Night display and the Divali tableau also contribute well to the provision for spiritual development.
42. There is very good provision made for pupils’ moral development. From the earliest time in school, pupils learn to tell right from wrong and to be polite and kind. They are expected to listen to each other and to help each other. Older pupils look after younger ones very well and on several occasions pupils of different ages were heard asking a friend if they were alright after a bump or a scrape. All this is fostered by the excellent role models provided by adults and by the way the behaviour policy of the school is applied consistently across the school. The emphasis on doing things “the Orion Way” in relation to rewards, consequences and responses is very effective in ensuring very good moral development and that pupils have a pride in their school and feel special.
43. The provision for social development is also very good with the consequences being seen in the excellent relationships that are evident throughout the school. Older pupils mix comfortably with younger ones at lunchtimes. In addition, in all lessons, the school’s system of “pairing and sharing” has a positive impact on social development as pupils learn to work co-operatively and productively together. Social development is also enhanced by the sessions of personal, social and health education and by the regular use of circle time that foster an understanding of how to react sensitively and sensibly to the opinions of others.
44. The provision for pupils’ cultural development is good, overall. Cultural elements in music and in art are strong. For example, music is played as pupils enter and leave the assemblies, although the name of the composer or the origin of the music is not always highlighted. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments, including steel drums and the trombone. They have also had the benefit of visits from orchestras and they take part in local music festivals. Art works such as the Starry Night display show an appreciation of European artists, and visits to museums, for example the Bethnal Green Toy Museum and the Raggedy School, also aid cultural development by showing pupils how life has changed. The pupils in the school come from a very wide range of different cultures and, although there is an attractive Divali display and a local dance group has been invited to perform at the school, there is still scope to make more use of and to further celebrate this rich cultural mix. For example, places of worship for other religions such as the synagogue or mosque are not on the regular list of visits for pupils.
45. Overall, the school has good and constructive links with other schools in the area, which include visits for staff to observe the teaching of others to improve their practice. There are good and constructive links with local playgroups. Relationships with the nearby secondary schools are positive and this effectively aids the transition of pupils at age eleven. The school has strong links with the local colleges and is used for student training. Teachers also meet regularly with colleagues from other schools through regular, curriculum co-ordinator meetings to develop and extend their knowledge.

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

46. Overall, the staff at the school make good provision for the care and welfare of pupils. There are good levels of adult supervision at play times and pupils benefit greatly from the services of a full time welfare officer, in addition to other staff trained in first aid. There is a first aid room where pupils can be treated or supervised. The school has a very good health and safety policy and the site supervisor is very active in ensuring that the buildings and grounds are kept in good order. However, there has been no recent fire drill.

47. The procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The policy is very good, but the school needs to update it to take account of the change in the designated co-ordinator. There is also a need to specify one person for this role so that all staff and external agencies are clear as to who is responsible within the school and to whom to report any concerns.
48. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is very good, overall. The school has good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good attendance. The parent liaison officer makes regular checks of the registers and contacts parents by telephone on the second day of absence. Daily checks are made of a small, targeted group of pupils with poor attendance and punctuality records. A system of letters and, finally, referral to the education welfare officer follows if there is no satisfactory response from parents. Although this is effective in many cases, there is still a small minority of parents who do not ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive promptly in the mornings, hence the relatively high unauthorised absence figure of the school. Good attendance is promoted, using stickers for pupils and reminders in newsletters to parents.
49. There are very good systems in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and consequently the school has been very successful in reducing oppressive behaviour to a minimum. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the "Orion Way" in relation to behaviour and high standards are promoted by the consistent application of the behaviour strategies of the school by all staff. Whole school themes, such as "follow instructions", are emphasised during assembly and constantly referred to throughout the school day. Good behaviour is richly praised and the use of weekly Golden Time as an incentive is very effective in promoting good behaviour, as are the stickers and points awarded. Incidences of bad behaviour are recorded and this can lead to a pupil being given a specific target sheet for behaviour, a behaviour plan or ultimately a temporary exclusion. This is very effective in monitoring and promoting good behaviour.
50. The care that the school offers to all its pupils is good. The statutory requirements are met concerning the reporting of results of national assessments to parents at the end of each key stage. Parents receive Annual Reports that meet this need. There are effective systems in place for assessing pupils' attainments for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Their use in the planning of future work is good. Day to day assessment in the Nursery and Reception classes is systematic. It includes base-line assessment and analysis soon after pupils' entry to school and the results are used on an individual basis. Staff keep careful records of attainment for each child. New skills are noted as they are acquired and records dated and expanded. Activities in the Nursery and Reception are generally planned to match pupils' attainment.
51. Throughout the school, teachers effectively use assessment data, drawn on weekly planning sheets, in core subjects to plan work to meet pupils' needs. This is good practice and supports learning and progress. The school carefully assesses the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers share their learning objectives with pupils and mark their work accordingly. However, the school's marking policy is inconsistently applied. At one extreme, it does little to encourage pupils to improve their work; and at the other, it is supportive and developmental. Individual target setting in the core subjects is effective in supporting learning and progress. The targets can be tracked and fresh ones set as necessary. Assessments feed planning and critical information is passed from class to class, giving guidance on the level of pupils' attainment and their targets. There is a close match, for example, between teachers' assessments and the results of national tests at ages seven and eleven. After staff changes, the management and co-ordination of assessment are currently overseen by the headteacher. He has inherited a very good organisation with coherent action planning. Assessment in non-core subjects is in the early stages of development. The school recognises the need to raise expectations of assessment in this area. The gathering together of pupils' work-samples, appropriately levelled and possibly moderated, would help the school to achieve this objective. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good.
52. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are very good across the school in English, mathematics and science. However, procedures in other subjects are less well developed. Procedures are well supported by appropriate help from outside agencies, such as

speech and language specialists, the medical services, educational psychologist and behaviour support services. Provision for pupils' with statements and arrangements for annual reviews is good. Although the main focus of special needs support is for literacy and learning difficulties, there is also good support for pupils who have behaviour difficulties.

53. Baseline assessment takes place for Foundation pupils and results are used well to identify those pupils with learning difficulties. Regular assessments in English and mathematics are undertaken on all pupils and the information is carefully analysed and used to identify pupils with learning difficulties, provide suitable support and monitor progress. The school makes effective use of the learning support service to undertake formal assessment procedures when necessary.
54. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good, overall, and the great majority of parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. It is clear that staff, both teaching and non-teaching know the pupils very well and show a very caring attitude towards them. One of the support teachers in the school runs a weekly surgery for pupils who would like the opportunity to talk over any worries or concerns. Circle time and personal, social and health education lessons are used to monitor personal development and the annual pupil progress report is used to give a summary of social development.

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

55. The evidence from the pre-inspection questionnaires and the parents' meeting, show that parents have very positive views of the school and are supportive of the work done. For example, the vast majority state that their children like school and feel that teaching is good and that the school is well managed and led. The one area where some parents are dissatisfied is in relation to homework. Inspection evidence shows that the use of homework is satisfactory, overall, and there are separate and progressive timetables for each year group. However, there is some scope for more consistency in the setting of homework and the constructive use of teachers' marking across the school.
56. The headteacher and his staff have worked hard to develop good and effective links with parents. The school has a specific member of staff whose role it is to liaise with parents in relation to uniform, homework, attendance and any other concerns. Links with parents begin at the earliest stage with a home visit from the nursery teacher before the child starts at the school. All staff are accessible and approachable. There is a home school agreement in place that all parents or carers, pupils and the school are expected to sign. Parents have the opportunity to attend three consultation evenings with a "meet the teacher session" early in the first term. This is followed by a progress meeting in the spring term and a celebration of work by means of a "trail" around the school plus the option of a formal meeting in the summer term.
57. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. Not many come in to help on a regular basis, but very high numbers attend school productions and the parent consultation evenings. In addition, there is an active parent teacher association that organises social activities such as discos as well as fundraising events, for example a summer fair, the proceeds of which have gone towards the purchase of sound equipment. It is evident, from the pupils' reading record books that many parents regularly listen to their children read and support other homework tasks. Consequently, the contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is good, overall.
58. The quality of information that is provided for parents is good, overall. However, the prospectus omits the rates of authorised and unauthorised absence. The governors' annual report to parents does not give information about school security, a summary of the school's and national results for Year 6 tests or the official targets of the school for pupils at the end of Year 6. There are weekly newsletters, that give parents notice of forthcoming events and some basic information for parents has been translated into other languages. The annual progress report that parents receive for their children is satisfactory. It gives good information about progress in English, mathematics and science and states how the pupil is doing in relation to national expectations, although the use of targets is not yet developed. For all other subjects, the statements are only descriptions of what the pupil has learned and there is little variation from pupil to pupil regardless of ability. Parents of

pupils with special educational needs are generally kept well informed of their children's progress. Procedures, for involving parents in the identification, assessment and review of those pupils with special educational needs are good. Parents are given the opportunity to be involved in the review procedures during termly parent-teacher consultations. However, if they do not attend they are not informed of new targets and this is an area for improvement.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

59. The headteacher and senior staff form a very good team that provides very good leadership and management of the school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, is complemented by the very high level of teamwork between him and the deputy headteacher. Both are highly respected by staff, pupils, parents and governors. As a team, they provide an excellent level of educational direction for the work of the school. The further raising of standards and school improvement is a priority not only of the school's management, but also of all staff and governors. This commitment to raising standards further is shared by the whole staff and the teamwork between teaching and non-teaching staff is a major strength of the school. The inspiration and motivation of staff is an essential priority for the leadership of the school and the headteacher and senior staff set very good examples. The management team share an extremely keen commitment to school improvement and the further raising of pupils' standards. All staff have very high expectations of what the school can achieve. The management team is aware of the school's priorities for further development. The headteacher's delegation of management responsibilities to staff is very effective and all staff have fully accepted their delegated roles.
60. The governing body is good at supporting and monitoring the work of the school and ensuring that their statutory duties are fulfilled. Governors are very proud of the achievements of the school since it opened. There is a positive relationship between the headteacher and the governors. The governing body clearly understand the strengths, weaknesses and priorities of the school. They fully support and share the commitment of the school team to improvement and the further raising of pupils' standards. However, further training must be provided for governors to enable them to fulfil their role as true partners in the management of the school.
61. The school makes very good strategic use of its financial resources, grants and other funding. The extra resources provided through the "Fresh Start" initiative have been and continue to be very well used to raise the standards that pupils' reach. The school purchases its financial support from the local education authority. This means that the audit trail is highly secure and that the financial information available to the senior management team and the governing body is good. Updated financial information is regularly provided and this supports the school's financial planning well.
62. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes to improve the quality of learning. The school monitors the effectiveness of its spending well. For example, from its opening the school has aimed to maintain high levels of staffing. This has been achieved and there is clear planning in place to maintain this during the next four years, at least. Another example of the high level planning is seen in the school's investigations into possible ways of countering the well below average standards of children's attainment on entry to the school. The school knows that if it can provide its own pre-nursery experiences then children's standards will be raised on entry to the school. Funding has been identified, an area of the school site has been proposed for the new buildings and governors and the senior management team are now refining the plans for this high quality project.
63. The principles of best value are a very high consideration in school spending. The school compares its costs and effectiveness to other schools very well. Subject co-ordinators are required to monitor resources for their subjects, justify their spending and review the impact that it has on the quality of learning. Spending on staffing is very well monitored. For example, it was decided to employ an expert consultant in literacy and numeracy, when the school opened. This has had a significant effect on raising pupils' levels of achievement in both these areas. At the beginning of this year, it was decided to deploy this teacher as a class-based teacher for part of each week. The remainder of her time is given to class teacher support and the provision of exemplar lessons. This is combining to raise the standards of pupils further and to provide staff training and support of the highest level. This is a very good example of applying the principles of best value very well.

64. The special needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages special needs provision well. Governors soundly discharge their responsibilities for special needs through the headteacher. There is currently no special educational needs governor, but the vacancy is to be filled at the next full governing body meeting. The special needs co-ordinator uses information and communications technology soundly to manage the special educational needs register. However, there is insufficient use made of information and communications technology to support pupils' learning. There are sufficient teaching and learning support assistants to cater for the number of pupils on the special needs register. There is effective use made of external support, such as the educational psychologist, medical services and behaviour support services.
65. Overall, staffing levels and qualifications are good. They are well matched to the number of pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers of pupils with special educational needs are well qualified. In particular, support is good for pupils where English is an additional language or they have special needs. The school involves learning assistants in planning for these pupils, so that they are included in all aspects of the curriculum. There is a very clear management structure and all teaching and non-teaching staff have job descriptions. Where co-ordinators do not have any special qualifications from their initial training, they attend in-service training courses. However, staff have not undertaken external courses in leadership and management. The school makes good use of the expertise of a literacy consultant. Properly trained staff closely monitor behaviour at break times. Appropriate cover from well-qualified staff addresses any staff absence in order to ensure continuity of learning.
66. The accommodation of the school is very good. The nursery is an excellent area in which children work and play securely. Teachers can allow children to develop their independence while being properly supervised. There are special areas for reading, construction, being creative and role-play. As in other classrooms and corridors, teachers have made the children's environment interesting and attractive. All areas in the school are bright. Classrooms vary in size, ranging from small to spacious. However, there are very good rooms for computers, art and design, design and technology and music. There will soon be a spacious and well furnished library for independent research. Special educational needs pupils normally receive support within the classroom, although some are withdrawn for additional literacy language support in the spacious accommodation. Disabled pupils and adults have good access and there are improved toilet facilities. Outside, there are very good areas for developing physical skills. The school is appropriately considering developing the pond area to extend pupils' learning in science. The site manager and his staff maintain the buildings very well indeed, so that pupils work and play in a clean and attractive school.
67. The quality and quantity of resources are good and continuously improving. For science, music and the nursery children, they are very good. For many subjects, the co-ordinators have organised resources so they are easily accessible to teachers and pupils. Moreover, they have established boxes or other collections that are especially relevant to the schemes of work, such as in English where they are tailored to the week's plan for literacy. There is scope for further development of resources so that they are relevant to different faiths and cultures. Good beginnings have been made in music, for example where there is a range of percussion and steel band instruments. There are sufficient resources to support pupils with special educational needs. However, the school is inadequately recognising the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school makes very good use of museums such as Verulamium, the Gunnersbury Museum for history and the National Gallery for art. Moreover, pupils make good use of places such as the Moat Mount Assault Course and London Zoo.
68. A number of pupils were interviewed during the inspection. They commented very favourably on many aspects of staffing, accommodation and resources. Their views showed that they were very proud of their school and appreciative of the range of improvements.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards even further the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- i. Improve the balance of the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 by:
  - a) teaching religious education as a separate subject ensuring that pupils knowledge and understanding are improved;
  - b) reviewing the use of the information and communication technology suite. Providing training for all staff and ensuring that information and communication technology is regularly used to teach other subjects;
  - c) raising the standards that pupils reach in gymnastics;
  - d) developing and implementing a system of teaching high standards of presentation, including handwriting throughout the school.

*(paragraphs 10, 21, 22, 23, 34, 36, 64, 107, 109, 116, 122, 123, 130, 135, 137, 144, 148, 155, 160, 162, 164 )*

- ii. Improve the quality of provision for pupils with English as an additional language by:
  - a) revising the timetable of the specialist English as an additional language teacher to ensure equality of provision and support throughout the school;
  - b) providing training in support techniques for English as an additional language both for teachers and support staff;
  - c) improving the quality of the assessment of pupils with English as an additional language at whatever point they enter the school.

*(paragraphs 8, 22, 37, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 102, 122, 127, 145)*

- iii. Raise the quality of teachers' marking and its use as a tool for the raising of pupils' standards, to the highest quality seen within the school.

*(paragraphs 27, 51, 115, 124, 162)*

The governors may also wish to include the following minor points in their action plan:

- provide further training for governors to enable them to undertake their full role as partners in the management of the school; and
- rectify the minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	87
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	21	41	18	3	0	0
Percentage	2	25	48	21	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	317
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	160

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	109

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	198

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	73
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	113

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.9



National comparative data	5.2
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	29	19	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	20	27
	Girls	15	13	15
	Total	32	33	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (47)	69 (51)	88 (67)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	26	25
	Girls	15	14	14
	Total	36	40	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (37)	83 (67)	81 (49)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	25	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	15	18
	Girls	20	23	24
	Total	29	38	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (53)	88 (67)	95 (77)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	12	17
	Girls	18	20	24
	Total	26	32	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (33)	74 (79)	93 (72)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	23
Black – African heritage	52
Black – other	42
Indian	15
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	3
White	118
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*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	1	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	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 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5
Average class size	25.3

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1093157
Total expenditure	1076736
Expenditure per pupil	3131
Balance brought forward from previous year	51334
Balance carried forward to next year	67755

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	340
Number of questionnaires returned	92

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	20	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	68	23	4	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	34	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	30	12	5	2
The teaching is good.	71	26	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	30	5	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	23	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	15	3	1	10
The school works closely with parents.	67	25	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	72	26	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	28	5	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	33	5	1	7

Please note that not all columns add up to 100 due to rounding and the fact that not all parents respond to every question on the questionnaire.

### Other issues raised by parents

Inspection evidence fully supports the views of the parents who responded to the parents' questionnaires and attended the parents meeting. Parents were concerned about the amount of homework that their children receive. However, inspection evidence shows that pupils of all ages receive a satisfactory amount of work to complete at home and that this is appropriate to their ages and abilities. In this area, inspection evidence does not support the views of a minority of parents.

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

### **PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS REACHED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

69. Provision for pupils learning English, as an additional language, is satisfactory, overall. Pupils who have been in the school since it opened generally reach the same standards as those of their monolingual peers, by the end of Year 6. However, this is not always the case in relation to pupils who are admitted at other times. The school's policy, regarding equality of opportunity, includes bilingual pupils in all aspects of school life, from the Nursery onwards, although the focus on inclusion was less obvious during the teaching practice observed. For example, in a literacy lesson in a Year 3 class, and in a Year 4 science lesson, tasks set were too difficult for some bilingual pupils and the teachers concerned did not have sufficient information about pupils' prior attainment. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from additional support from the specialist staff funded by the 'Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant' programme (EMAG). However, pupils in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 do not have the benefit of this additional support. This is in spite of the fact that according to the English as an additional language register, the need in these classes is much greater. This has a negative impact on standards in literacy for these younger pupils.
70. The co-ordinator for English as an additional language has good skills, knowledge and understanding of this area. However, there are limited opportunities for her to share her expertise with staff, for example, to influence their lesson planning or to influence decision-making at the whole school level in important ways. The co-ordinator at present does not have a role in monitoring those bilingual learners, giving cause for concern. Consequently, she is unable to assess whether they also have special educational needs and could be helped further by being placed on the school's register for special educational needs. There is a management plan to support the EMAG programme, which recognises that provision in school for ethnic minorities and bilingual learners needs improving. Strategies for doing this have also been considered, although the plan lacks a clear time scale for activities and the targets need to be more specific and measurable. The co-ordinator meets with the deputy headteacher in her capacity as line manager to review the progress of the action plan and to target further support as necessary. However, this is at an early stage of development. Procedures for assessing bilingual pupils' language and literacy needs and for tracking their progress on a regular basis are not fully established. The lack of detailed individual pupils' records means it is difficult to track pupils' progress over time.
71. The school recognises and gives value to pupils' home languages. There are examples of bilingual books, posters and other resources, which are helpful in enhancing pupils' self esteem. There are some bilingual staff in the school, who are in a good position to comfort and support pupils at the earliest stages of acquiring English. Support staff try their very best and give useful support to bilingual pupils in their group. They are not supported through additional guidance from the co-ordinator, because her time is not well used to provide training for staff in appropriate support techniques for these pupils.
72. The school has not yet had an opportunity to provide any structured in-service training, for teachers and support staff. The role of the co-ordinator in affecting classroom teaching and learning, in order to raise the achievement of bilingual pupils effectively, is an area for development. At present, much of the co-ordinator's work involves supporting class teachers by taking whole class lessons and releasing them for their 'non-contact' time. In these situations, the quality of teaching is consistently good and pupils with English as an additional language benefit from the teacher's specialist input, for example, through an increased emphasis on developing their subject specific vocabulary. This was evident in a numeracy lesson observed in a Year 1 class and also from lesson plans seen in physical education, history and in personal, social and health education. However, this leaves less time than specified, for focused support for class teachers in assessing and making suitable provision for bilingual learners on a day-to-day basis. A small number of

pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 are withdrawn for additional support; this is usually targeted at pupils who have arrived recently in the country and have limited knowledge of English. However, this support is not always matched to meeting pupils' specific needs in language and literacy, or in helping them to access their class work more fully. There is generally a low emphasis on working alongside teachers in classrooms and influencing lesson planning to ensure that lessons are suitably modified for the benefit of bilingual learners.

73. The role of the co-ordinator at present does not have sufficient impact on establishing partnership with bilingual parents. For example, in checking the extent of pupils' needs, finding out about their learning experiences at home, giving parents information about pupils' progress in their class work, and showing where more support is needed.

## **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

74. There are 31 children attending the nursery in the morning and 29 children attending in the afternoon. There are eleven children with English as an additional language in the morning group and eighteen in the afternoon group. Four children have been identified as having possible special educational needs. There are twice as many girls as there are boys at present in the nursery.
75. There are two reception classes, one of which is taught by a newly qualified teacher. There are currently 26 children in one reception class and 25 in another.
76. There is a staggered intake into the nursery, to help children with the settling in period. Parents are encouraged to stay in class to settle their children and they leave when they are ready. This good practice helps children to achieve a smooth transition from home to the nursery. There is good liaison with local playgroups; this has been useful in identifying more accurately the individual needs of children with special educational needs.
77. Attainment on entry into the nursery class is well below average. During their time in the Foundation Stage, the level of achievement of children is good. The initial assessments of children are completed within the first seven weeks of their admission into the reception class. Children enter the reception class with below average attainment in all areas of learning, particularly in communication, language and literacy, although they make good progress during the year. This is because of consistently good teaching in all areas of learning and the good promotion of literacy. Early indications are that by the time that they are ready to start in Year 1, many children will reach the early learning goals in most of the six areas of learning. The exception to this is in the area of communication, language and literacy, where expectations are much greater.
78. The curriculum in the foundation stage is good, overall. Provision is good in the reception class, and very good in the nursery, where outdoor play facilities are excellent. Planning is generally good and it is very good in the nursery. Activities are designed to promote the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Children in the reception class benefit from the more structured activities of their literacy and numeracy sessions. The time given to activities is adjusted to take account of their ages and their concentration span. The curriculum in the foundation stage provides a good basis for future work in Year 1.
79. There is good liaison between staff in the reception classes and in the nursery through very good co-ordination by the foundation stage co-ordinator. The quality of teaching is consistently good in all areas of learning and, consequently, children make good progress. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, there is a balance of teacher-directed activities and child initiated activities for both age groups. New assessment procedures have been introduced recently throughout the foundation stage, which are linked to the early learning goals. Records are kept of children's assessments and of their progress. The resulting information is generally used well to advise future teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation on a regular basis is the next step for development by the school to ensure that there is consistency of practice. The use of assessment information in planning future work and meeting the individual needs of children is a part of the co-ordinator's action plan. There is a close working relationship between reception class teachers and their support assistants in planning, preparation and in

organising activities in and outside the class. This benefits all children in accessing the full range of activities that are on offer, particularly children with special educational needs.

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

80. Most children enter the nursery class with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave the reception class, they are achieving the early learning goals in this area. Teaching in this area is particularly good and expectations of behaviour and responses to learning are high. Children's personal, social and emotional development occurs within all areas, but especially through 'circle time', which contributes well to their good attitudes and behaviour. Staff in the nursery use 'snack time' and 'circle time' well to help children share things, to take turns and to listen to what others have to say. This was observed both in the nursery and in the reception class, where activities were stimulating and useful in developing children's confidence and speaking and listening. Children with special educational needs require extra individual attention at times and they are well supported by support assistants and make good progress. Children who have English as an additional language are included in all activities and are encouraged to develop their confidence in speaking up during group activities.
81. Through well-established classroom rules, children in the foundation stage are developing a good awareness of what is right and wrong. These rules are displayed on classroom walls and show that adults have high expectations of children's work and behaviour. Teachers remind children frequently of the class rules and encourage them to be on their best behaviour and earn merit stars.
82. Children of both age groups respond well to stories. They listen attentively to stories that are read or told and often join in. They concentrate well and persevere in both teacher-directed and self-chosen activities. Children in the reception class learn about self-care and about health and hygiene through day-to-day activities. Children in the nursery are becoming aware of safety aspects, for example, through their visit to the supermarket, they learn about using the traffic light system and, on return, rehearse their experiences by using toy traffic lights in the nursery.
83. Children mix and play well with others from a different ethnic background. The adults provide good role models for the children, sharing work as a team and treating children with respect. This helps children form good relationships with one another and with adults. There are opportunities to celebrate children's birthdays and religious festivals, such as Christmas, to which they respond enthusiastically.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

84. Attainment on entry to the nursery class is well below that expected for children of this age. Teaching is mostly good and at times very good, leading to good progress for all children, including those learning English as an additional language and children with special educational needs. In view of the language and learning needs of a significant number of children, attainment, overall, is expected to be below expectations at the time of transfer to Year 1. A small number of children, however, should do better than this and are likely to reach the early learning goals before beginning in Year 1. By the time that they enter Year 1, pupils' attitudes to school are very good.
85. A print-rich learning environment is created in both the nursery and the reception class by using labels for pictures and objects. Children enjoy listening to stories from their 'big books' used for literacy learning and are beginning to be aware of the authors of familiar stories. They are encouraged to act out stories and to retell their favourite parts of the story. During regular slots, they are encouraged to look at books and pictures and make up their own stories. Good strategies are used to develop skills in speaking and listening in many contexts. Reading areas and the listening and speaking areas are well equipped. Children frequently use them to read and hear stories, often supported by adults.
86. Children are developing appropriate early reading skills. Most realise that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. The pointing stick used by teachers is helpful. Even children in the nursery try to use it well to point at words in their right sequence. More able children in the reception class can read simple repetitive text with pictures, making sense of the print and using their knowledge of letter sounds to read the beginnings of words. Some children are beginning to read by sight some common words that are displayed on walls. Children take their reading books



home for their parents to support their reading at home, although this is a newly established practice and parents have not yet started writing comments in their children's reading diaries.

87. Children realise that writing can be used for many purposes. In the reception class, they are encouraged to make up and write simple sentences in their books. Many recognise their own name and some manage to write it. They learn to hold their pencils correctly and practise writing letters and writing-patterns on a regular basis. Reception class children pretend to write letters and post them. Children in the nursery 'scribble' purposefully in role-play situations, for example, to make their 'shopping lists'. Most see writing as 'making marks' on paper. Children are beginning to link letter names to sounds, although very few can as yet recognise many letter sounds.

## **Mathematical development**

88. Standards are satisfactory, overall, and indications are that most children will reach the early learning goals for mathematics by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good, with a good emphasis on practical activities and on developing mathematical language. Themes, such as 'Goldilocks and the three bears', are used well to teach children the comparative language of mathematics and to use mathematical ideas in interesting ways. There are many real life opportunities for children in the nursery to use mathematics. For example, they learn to use numbers in their shopping activities. Teachers provide good levels of support in both directed and child-initiated activities.
89. In the reception class, most children count reliably to ten, using everyday objects, some count well beyond 20. Most recognise numerals 1 to 5, some to 10, and all use them to label sets of objects. Children are learning to understand the order of numbers through counting activities and through practical activities, such as ordering the teddy bears on to the number line. They learn what is one before and one after a chosen number. This was observed during a brief mental and oral session, designed for this purpose. Some children are able to say what the missing numbers is on a number line, and some can correct the sequence of numbers beyond ten. Children frequently sing number songs, thus consolidating their learning and their grasp of mathematical ideas.
90. Children in the nursery and in reception class have good opportunities to explore colour, number, shape and sizes in a variety of contexts. Through using shapes in their play activities, children in the reception class develop a good awareness of the properties of familiar shapes and they make good efforts at describing some of these shapes. Teaching is good and activities are made interesting by using games, such as the 'Feely-Bag Activity' so that children learn to use the right mathematical language to describe a shape, before the shape is taken out of the bag. The majority of pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics when they join Year 1.

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

91. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and pupils gain sound standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of the reception year, most should reach the expected early learning goals in some aspects of the curriculum.
92. Through their cooking activities, children in the nursery class develop the language of cooking, for example, 'rolling', 'mixing', 'squashing' and 'cutting'. Children in the reception class learn through practical activities and investigate different smells, flavours, sounds and materials, through using their senses. They are encouraged to describe what they smell, taste, hear and feel. They also have opportunities to cook, for example, porridge oats, and use this experience to talk about what they had for their breakfast.
93. Through role-play, children in the nursery are developing good awareness of their own culture and of other cultures represented within the school. There are fewer opportunities, for children in the reception class to learn about people from other cultures and beliefs. However, they do benefit from multi-cultural resources and displays that are on view throughout the school, reflecting the cultural diversity of the school.

94. Teachers' medium term planning shows that there are some opportunities provided to talk about families and personal events that are important to children in their daily lives. However, it is not clear from the plans how children will have the opportunity to learn about the passing of time, and to learn about places in their immediate locality.
95. There is generally good attainment in information and communication technology. The nursery children are familiar with their computer and have a good idea how it operates. For example, they know how to click the mouse and can use the print command to get their pictures printed - with some help from adults. They use a graphics program to draw lines and to create their pictures. There is a computer in the reception class, which children use frequently during their free activities. Children's confidence and skills are developing well through using the computer. They also use the computer to support their learning in other areas; for example, they match letters and sounds to aid lessons in literacy. Reception class children also have opportunities for class lessons in the computer suite, which is useful in extending their classroom activities. Children respond well and enjoy working with others or by themselves. They are eager to print their pictures and talk about their work with a sense of achievement.

### **Physical development**

96. Children's physical development is satisfactory. Most are in line to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good in promoting this area in structured ways. Children in the nursery have very good opportunities to make use of the excellent outdoor space and resources. There are regular opportunities for both age groups to take part in structured physical activities in the school hall, which helps to develop their spatial awareness, body control and co-ordination. Children are encouraged to co-operate and participate well in their planned activities. Adults support less confident children and those who have special educational needs. Teaching is at least good in this area and often better. Teachers establish the importance of warming up before they ask children to work together and take part in the planned activities, for example, the 'parachute' activities. Cooling down after physical activities is given due importance at the end of lessons.
97. Children in the reception class have access to a small out door space, where they play with sand and water and learn their properties. Here they have access to a small number of toys and building blocks and they also use the space for painting. Children have access to toys with wheels, which they use when weather conditions are suitable. Opportunities are greater in the nursery to extend the outdoor curriculum, where children also have sheltered outdoor provision. The school intends to provide access to the reception class children to use the nursery outdoor facilities on a more regular basis.
98. Within their classroom, children from both age groups develop their fine motor skills well by using tools and equipment, such as scissors, pencils and glue sticks; for example, to make beds for their 'three bears', they use re-cycled materials. Their motor skills are also improved through the use of colourful play dough to mould and make different shapes.

### **Creative development**

99. Standards in the reception class are satisfactory, especially with regard to drawing, painting, music making and singing. Teaching is good and all children make good progress in their creative development. Most are in line to reach the early learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1.
100. Achievement is particularly good in the nursery, where teaching in this area is very good. Nursery displays show that children experience a wide range of creative activities, including art and imaginative play. They access a range of resources, tools and materials to explore their ideas and in line with the planned content of lessons. They draw, paint and print their pictures with enthusiasm. Their pictures are used for providing attractive displays around the room, making the learning environment colourful and stimulating. Children use a range of materials to explore colour, shape, texture and form in two and three-dimensions. Opportunities are provided for children to express their own ideas and feelings, most notably through imaginative play. There are role-play areas in the classroom, which are well equipped and which children clearly enjoy using.

101. Children in the reception class enjoy singing and sing familiar action songs. They sing simple songs from memory and some begin to match movements to music. There are good opportunities to sing counting songs, such as 'three blind jelly fish' or 'five little ducks'. They make patterns of sounds with a range of musical instruments. Teachers ask pupils what sound a musical instrument makes and encourage them to listen carefully and repeat a sound pattern.

## ENGLISH

102. The standards that pupils reach at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average. The good and very good progress made by pupils is attributable to the good, often very good, quality of teaching, the positive impact of the Literacy strategy, and the pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 the school's results, of the percentage of pupils reaching level 2 and above, were well below the national average and below average when compared to similar schools. Test results, at the end of Year 6 in 2001, of the percentage of pupils reaching level 4 and above, were average compared to all schools and well above average when compared to similar schools. Inspection findings show that standards for speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Standards for reading and writing are average. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) generally make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are enabled to make satisfactory progress, though they receive less than effective support in some lessons. No discernible difference in the attainment of boys and girls was observed. Different groups of pupils are fully included and enabled to participate in literacy lessons. Thus, from a low base on entry, there is very good improvement throughout the school. Inspection evidence shows that the school is likely to meet its targets for the standards reached by seven and eleven-year-olds in 2002.

103. Teachers provide good, sometimes very good opportunities for pupils throughout the school to develop their speaking and listening skills. They often set up the introductory part of lessons so that pupils have time to 'pair and share' what they know and have learnt and they acquire and use the specific language associated with the topic. A very good example of this was seen in Year 1, where pupils enjoyed a familiar story 'Where's my Teddy?' quickly picking up and mimicking the bears' funny voices. Similarly, in Year 2, pupils responded well to the language in 'Farmer Duck', voicing and clapping the strong phonemes in 'Moo', Quack' and 'Cluck'. Pupils in Year 4 acted out small sketches to dramatise their story; 'The chicken gave it to me'. In Year 6, pupils enjoyed discussions of the house rules in 'The Diary of Anne Frank', for example 'softly singing, but only after 6p.m.' Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils working in pairs or small groups to discuss their work with each other. Often, they consider each other's views. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on teaching correct terminology, as in a Year 3 information and communication technology lesson when pupils understood the key vocabulary associated with 'font', 'colour', 'size' and 'type'. Similarly, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 focus on singing words, enunciating them well. They both review known songs and learn new ones. The shared text on the overhead projector of amusing songs, positively promotes the pupils' oral and listening skills, refines their reading skills and raises their self-esteem.

104. As pupils' reading skills on entry to the school are generally very low, they do well to attain average standards. In Years 1 and 2, they build upon their experiences of phonics learnt in reception. Pupils have a real joy for reading. Average and below average pupils, including those with special educational needs, quickly develop their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds due to the quality of the structured teaching that they experience. This helps them to tackle new and unfamiliar words. Above average pupils demonstrated enjoyment and interest in reading, when in Year 2 they identified the phonemes in a favourite story, 'Owl Babies'. In Years 3 to 6, the standard of pupils' reading is in line with national averages. Above average pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve even higher levels. Pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy and older pupils can speak with first hand knowledge of a range of different authors, including Roald Dahl and J K Rowling. School reading records indicate regular monitoring by teachers and moderate to good progress through regular home reading activities. These reading records are also a good form of communication with parents. Older pupils are adept at using non-fiction books and they understand the access provided through contents and indexes. Pupils said that they used the

school library and the local library. One pupil simply searches the Internet. The reading skills of the majority of Year 6 pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts.

105. The standard of writing seen during the inspection for Years 3 to 6 is in line with national averages. Above average pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have made good progress so far this year. A good example of this in Year 6 is the writing of opinions based on characters in 'The Diary of Anne Frank' and in Year 5, competent writing of Victorian letters using slates or pen and ink. Above average pupils really know how to produce descriptive sentences that command attention, including, 'One cold, wintry morning, Sam Donald thought he would take a long stroll.' Also, in the poem, 'What is Beauty?', 'Dolphins dancing gracefully in the middle of crashing waves.'
106. Pupils of average ability made similar progress in writing in the same period. An example of note is their river poems in Year 4. Their work shows an improving style, but with erratic spelling, as in the instructions to make a pizza. Below average pupils in Year 6 learn how to write 'in a character's boots'.
107. Presentational skills need strengthening throughout the school. Standards of spelling and grammar, including punctuation, are varied. Pupils know how to sustain stories with dialogue, as in 'The Grabbing Bird', or 'The Case of the Missing hamster'. Some use different forms of writing appropriately; for instance when producing an empathetic account of a day in the life of a working Victorian child, 'Our Mother died in the mills, and father died of a sickness...'. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils write up their accounts of a rusting experiment that include predictions and conclusions appropriately. In a Year 5 history lesson, pupils write accounts of the life of Queen Victoria, while in Year 3 pupils explain the intricacies of embalming in Ancient Egypt. In Years 1 and 2, standards of writing are also in line with the national average. The most able seven year olds re-write parts of their story book 'The Big Shrink', sequencing the words 'then', 'next', 'after' and 'finally'. The average and below average pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, follow a model of the owl babies to think out their sentences and write, with help, their own versions. For the majority of pupils throughout the school, there is a variety of writing tasks provided in the wider curriculum. However, pupils are not given many opportunities to use computers to improve their writing. Writing standards, overall, are average, but clearly improving due to good and very good teaching. It is presently a school focus and pupils are making good progress.
108. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. This is particularly so within the Literacy hour. The way in which they use questioning to draw out meaning and develop pupils' understanding is thoroughly effective. In a Year 4 lesson on finding adverbs with the suffix 'ty', pupils were really forced to think and interrogate the word cards on the word wall to provide suitable examples of alternative adverbs. They worked hard, and one pupil correctly spelt 'mighty'. At this point, the teacher praised their efforts greatly. This is one example of the way that teachers establish very good relationships in lessons. Generally in literacy lessons, where pupils of different attainment are grouped together, teachers plan work that matches pupils' abilities. Consequently, pupils are challenged to learn and they respond by working hard and productively, making very good progress. Below average pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported by teacher assistants and pupils learn well as a result. In some lessons, however, these pupils find the length of the literacy session too demanding. Very occasionally in the seven to eleven age group, the teacher's brusque manner causes pupils to lose concentration and for both these reasons, this results in less progress than usual being made. The teaching of spelling is generally satisfactory, but does not consistently lead to improvements in pupils' written work. Strategies to link the learning of spelling with writing activities are not well developed. Teachers assess pupils' progress closely and effectively in lessons. This helps them to set challenging targets for improvement for individual pupils and groups of pupils. For example, very good planning in Year 2 leads to the level of work being adjusted appropriately as the ability groups rotate around the activities. Moreover, where teachers share the learning objectives with their pupils, the latter are clear about what they should know and do. Teachers also complete an assessment grid on the reverse of the weekly planning sheet. These assessments give an accurate evaluation of pupils' progress, with written comments about any additional support needed. Marking of work within the lesson also identifies clearly what is needed to improve standards and gives pupils a good understanding of their teachers' high

expectations. Substantial homework in English is set, effectively pursuing pupils' individual targets. The evidence of pupils' response is seen in the generally good quality of their 'Fair copy' books, and homework books. For example, in Years 4 and 5 the quality and range of writing, including poetry, is good after their genre studies.

109. Teachers use pupils' interest in other subjects to develop their skills in reading and writing. There were some examples of this being done well, when pupils in Year 2 used their knowledge of linking words to write recipes for sandwiches and pizzas in design and technology. Pupils in Year 5 wrote shape poems after reading Wes Magee's book 'Madtail, minihale and other shape poems'. The school's promotion of literacy across the wider curriculum is good. However, there is a need to use information and communication technology more consistently in literacy.
110. When the school opened in January 2000, there were weaknesses in English and poor standards. These have been remedied rigorously and effectively. The way in which test data are analysed has helped the school identify very accurately just what needs to be improved. This has been followed by well-designed strategies for improvement. The number and quality of books has improved helping to stimulate pupils' interest in reading. There has been thorough and effective monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and the senior management team. The subject co-ordinator provides excellent leadership and has a very accurate understanding of what needs to be improved and how to go about it. All this results in an effective focus on improvement throughout the school that is having a strong impact upon raising standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

111. Most pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 attain the standards expected for their ages in numeracy and all areas of mathematics (number, algebra, space, shape and measures, and data handling). Results of the national tests in 2001, show that the percentage of pupils reaching level 2 and above was well below the national average, although this represented an improvement in standards from those in the previous year. Standards at age eleven in 2001, of the percentage of pupils reaching level 4 and above, were well above the national average, which was a significant improvement on the previous year. Overall standards have been improving each year with an increasing number of pupils attaining Level 2 at age seven and Level 4 at age eleven. Continued improvement in the curriculum focused monitoring of teaching and learning, careful tracking of pupils' progress and the very good leadership and management have all contributed to the improvements in standards over the past two years. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls. Most pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs, are well supported and achieve well. Achievement of those pupils who do not have English as their first language and who are at an early stage of acquisition, is satisfactory although they do not always receive enough support. The inclusion of all pupils in mathematical experiences is good, overall.
112. This year, the evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, across the school, pupils are achieving well. The standards of the current Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with that expected nationally. The improvement in standards is due to good teaching that engenders very positive attitudes and gives most pupils a good level of challenge in all aspects of the subject. In particular, the emphasis on mental arithmetic and discussion, using correct mathematical language, is leading to better understanding. The lower standards than shown in the 2001 tests by the age of eleven are due to variations in year groups of pupils. National comparisons, do not take into consideration the high number of pupils with learning difficulties or those in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils that enter the school during Years 3 to 6 also affects the overall standards achieved in some year groups.

113. At age seven, standards of work seen in books and from talking to pupils, are in line with those expected and most pupils, including those identified as having special needs, are achieving well. The majority of pupils have, at least, sound mental mathematics skills because of the many opportunities provided by teachers at the beginning and end of lessons to practise and develop these. For example, most pupils can recognise odd and even numbers. Most pupils count confidently to 100 in steps of 2, 5 and 10 and higher attaining pupils understand place value to a hundred. Lower attaining pupils work comfortably with numbers to 50, counting in 2's and 4's. Pupils are familiar with mathematical operations and mathematical signs and use these to make up number stories, using numbers to a 100. Higher attaining pupils add tens to a given number, recognise and use coins to a £1 in shopping activities and know the names of two and three-dimensional shapes. The level of achievement of these pupils is good in these areas and they make good progress.
114. By the age of eleven, most pupils have developed good skills in mental mathematics and the majority work confidently with large numbers. Pupils have a secure grasp of place value and of the four number operations. They confidently complete written calculations, for example those involving multiplication and division of three digit numbers by one and two digit numbers. Pupils understand the link between equivalent fractions, percentages and decimals and higher attaining pupils use this confidently to solve challenging everyday problems. Pupils find perimeters and areas of regular shapes and most use a protractor well to accurately measure and draw angles. Co-ordinates are used successfully to locate position and rotate shapes. More able pupils, identify accurately and record the co-ordinates. Pupils have a sound grasp of common weights and measures and time. Through data handling activities, pupils learn to draw and interpret line, pie and block charts. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to their work in mathematics, because most teachers make learning interesting and challenging. Pupils work well together especially when working in group activities and on investigations.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is good and teaching is sometimes very good. Of the thirteen lessons seen, two lessons were deemed satisfactory, nine were good and two were very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in their understanding of the methods promoted through the National Numeracy Strategy. The three-part lesson structure is well established and planning is good. At the beginning of lessons, teachers clearly share the purpose of the lesson with pupils so that they are aware of what they will be learning and what is expected. The oral and mental sessions are usually delivered well and enthusiastically. In the main part of the lesson teachers manage their pupils, time and resources efficiently. Activities are usually well matched to the needs of pupils, so that pupils concentrate and behave well. Support assistants are used very well to support lower attaining pupils, which ensures that their learning is effective. Lessons usually end with a review of what has been learnt when pupils are given the opportunity to explain their thinking and talk about what they have been learning. However, the setting of work involving real-life problems is not a regular feature in all classes. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work, but there are too few useful comments included which let pupils know how they can improve and the use of procedures is not consistent across the school. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in all mathematical activities and their needs are met.
116. Across the school, the pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to aid and extend their learning is not yet fully developed. Most teachers lack confidence and are unsure of how to use available programs. Pupils use mathematics well to help learning in other subjects. For example, they are involved in drawing graphs and taking accurate measurement in science, using timelines in history and measuring in design and technology.
117. The Numeracy Strategy is well established. The co-ordinator provides very effective leadership and support to colleagues and manages mathematics very well. She has received very good support from the local authority in striving to raise standards. Thorough training for teachers and support staff has been very effective in improving teaching and standards. Teachers plan carefully together, using national guidance effectively, to ensure that pupils of similar aged classes receive a comparable range of learning activities. The thorough analysis of test results and regular assessments are used to identify any areas of weakness in pupils' learning. Lessons have been observed by the headteacher and co-ordinator in all classes and their perceptive monitoring and

observation comments have been aimed at raising standards. The accessible learning resources are of good range and quality and used well in lessons to support pupils' learning.

## SCIENCE

118. In 2001, according to teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, pupils' standards were in the lowest five per cent nationally. In the end of Year 6 tests, standards were average when compared to national figures and well above average when compared to those of similar schools.
119. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' attainment in the present Year 2 and Year 6 classes is in line with the national average. Pupils throughout the school, learn to carry out scientific investigations. Because the school has to be consistent in applying its very good behavioural policy, pupils are not given the freedom to devise, set up and carry out their own experiments until they are in Year 5 or Year 6. As the school establishes its principles further and pupils develop skills as independent learners, these skills are an area for development within science. Since it opened, the school has improved its science results at a rate above that which has happened nationally. In 2001 national tests, 43 out of 44 pupils who took the tests reached the expected level 4. This represents very good progress considering that the Year 6 results in 2000 were well below the national average.
120. A scrutiny of the work of pupils in Year 2 shows that pupils have a good understanding of a range of mini-beasts such as snails, ladybirds and frogs. They know where they live, what they eat and can explain the lifecycle of some of them. They begin to understand that vibration causes sounds and know about common sources of light. They can classify materials and have investigated them so that they know that some materials change when subjected to a change of conditions. Pupils learn about their own bodies and their senses. For example, in a satisfactory lesson in Year 1 pupils were given an exciting "dark room" experience. As they passed through the room, they encountered a variety of objects, such as a lemon, a drum and a fork. Later pupils drew, discussed and wrote about these objects showing clearly that they understood which senses were involved in their identifications. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, learn about light, its natural and artificial sources and how life is adapted to day and night. They begin to understand about the formation of shadows, why we have night and day and the phases of the moon. They also develop a sound understanding of healthy eating and the need for a healthy diet.
121. By the age of eleven, all pupils are helped to reach at least level 4, the national average. Their ability to be involved in carrying out and analysing the results of investigations is developed satisfactorily, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6. Older pupils become increasingly confident, they understand the principles of "fair testing" and they discuss the changing of individual factors that will alter the outcome of the experiment. Therefore, they know that it is important to make tests fair and they are good at predicting what might happen, explaining what they have done and writing simple, but sensible conclusions. A good example of this was seen in the wide range of discussions in a very good Year 6 lesson on sound. Pupils talked about the difference in pitch of the sound, as the height of the column of air in various bottles was changed. Pupils are also taught about the possible dangers to the body of poor eating habits, alcohol, drugs and smoking.
122. Pupils' pride in their work develops slowly in Years 1 and 2. However, as standardised systems of presentation are taught and as pupils' handwriting improves, presentation of their work does improve and by the end of Year 6 it is satisfactory. They also work very hard to complete their work in the time available. They show very good levels of collaboration and the ability to work co-operatively when carrying out investigations in pairs and small groups. This is particularly so when "pairing and sharing" which is a notable strategy in "The Orion Way" of learning. Overall, progress is good as pupils move through the school. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress in years 1 to 6. This is because of the good support that they are given. Except for inconsistencies in the support given to pupils with English as an additional language, in some classes, the level of inclusion in all science activities is good.
123. Teaching in science is good, overall. Some examples of very good teaching were seen during the inspection. Most teachers have a good understanding of the subject and this enables them to provide clear explanations, which pupils can understand. Lessons are usually planned carefully

and teachers are well organised. Learning support assistants play an important role in the lessons. They are well briefed and are very good at prompting pupils so that they are able to make their own decisions and reach sensible conclusions. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Consequently, pupils feel confident to both ask and answer questions. They are willing to try out their ideas, knowing that their contributions will be valued even if they are wrong. This helps pupils to show initiative when evaluating investigations, as they are happy to talk about their ideas. Teachers clearly have high expectations of pupils, both in terms of behaviour and the quality of their work. This, combined with the fact that they plan interesting activities, results in highly motivated and very well behaved pupils. Teachers do not plan to use computers to support or stimulate learning as often as possible and consequently information and communication technology does not make a strong contribution to the development of pupils' learning in science.

124. Pupils' work is frequently marked. Praise is used regularly to promote pupils' self-esteem. There are some good examples of teachers using written comments to explain how pupils could improve their work, but this practice is not as widespread as could be expected.
125. The scheme of work has recently been updated to take account of new national guidance. The co-ordinator provides good leadership, is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and is monitoring teachers' planning and pupils' work. This results in a broad range of teaching strategies and the inclusion of interesting resources whenever possible. There is a sensible and manageable assessment system in place. Results are carefully analysed and weaknesses targeted and improved. The information gathered from assessment is used to plan future lessons and to provide informative reports to parents. A very helpful portfolio of assessed pupils work is being developed to make valid comparisons and judgements when assessing pupils' work.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

126. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 classes, or in Year 6. However, a scrutiny of work reveals that standards in art and design, at ages seven and eleven are satisfactory for their ages, taking into account the stage of the school year. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make close observations of themselves and of their friends sometimes using a mirror and at other times asking their friends to describe them, in order to draw and record their observations. The theme, 'We are all the same in some ways, different in others, but all unique' by pupils in Year 2 shows that art is being used well by teachers to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. An after-school Art Club, organised by the deputy headteacher, makes a good contribution to raising standards in art for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have opportunities to study work by famous artists, such as 'The Starry Night' by Van Gough. They have painted their version of a 'Starry Night over Grahame Park', showing a good example of using different shades of blue and experimenting with line, form and texture. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn to express their ideas, feelings and emotions through their drawings, after making a study of facial expressions, work inspired by reading a story. The displays show facial expressions when a person is surprised, afraid, embarrassed, upset or angry. They explore the use of line and shade in their drawings, to show a change in facial expressions.
127. Teaching is good overall, with good lesson pace and planning. This has a good impact on pupils' learning, as a whole. However, progress is better for pupils with special educational needs, who are well supported by support assistants, than it is for bilingual learners at the initial stages of learning English, where there is less support. Teachers generally have very good subject knowledge and all make good use of praise and encouragement. This has a good impact on developing very good attitudes towards the subject and in enhancing pupils' self esteem, including pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
128. In a lesson in a Year 5 class, planning was very good and was delivered enthusiastically by the teacher. The teaching was suitably differentiated, so that all pupils knew clearly what they had to do. Expectations were very high, so that pupils tried hard to improve. Pupils in both Year 5 classes are provided with good opportunities for investigating the visual and tactile qualities of different materials and processes. They are able to make use of simple stitches. Observational drawings, displayed in a Year 5 class, of their teacher are of good quality. Pupils in Year 3 are developing their ideas appropriately for their age in relation to body proportion, while drawing different people. All pupils are fully involved in their work and the pace remains brisk throughout the



lesson. They make close observations and some are beginning to evaluate their work and to use this to improve their next attempts. Pupils in Year 4 draw detailed drawings, for example, of different types of torches, from different perspectives, as part of their lesson in design and technology

129. The subject co-ordinator is new and already provides good leadership in developing the subject. A scheme of work has been adapted from the national guidance produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school policy for art and design is not yet formalised. Good quality resources in the school meet the demands of the curriculum. The design and technology room is used well to develop work in art and design, thus encouraging good links between the two subjects. Pupils' art is valued and used well for displays throughout the school to provide a welcoming and an attractive learning environment for the pupils. Art also makes a very good contribution to developing the school's multicultural ethos and awareness; displays reflect languages that are represented within the school community, showing a strong belief in equal opportunities. Throughout the school, greetings for people, such as 'shalom' are written in many languages. Including the youngest pupils in the school, art is used well to create an atmosphere of friendship and respect.
130. Subjects, such as history and design and technology, provide a useful focus for developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and design and for practising skills. This is evident from pupils' displays in Year 6 on Ancient Egypt, where the visual elements of line, colour, texture, shape and form have been studied and developed to good effect, through designing and making Egyptian mummies and headgear. Art has also been used well by teachers and pupils in Year 5, to make a comparative study of different aspects of life during Victorian times, for example, to express differences through art in the role of men and women and of rich and working class children. Art is also integrated with religious studies. Islamic patterns by Year 6 pupils and Diwali displays in the entrance hall are good examples of this. The use of information and communication technology to extend techniques in art is limited, as is the use of art in developing pupils' information and communication technology skills. Assessment needs developing further at the school level through agreed procedures and through an improved use of assessment in planning work. The use of sketchbooks is not widely encouraged to support self-assessment.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

131. Throughout the school, pupils achieve average standards in the work seen. By the end of Year 2, pupils can design and make simple puppets, consolidating their practical skills through a focus on movement and materials used. Boys and girls, including those with SEN and EAL, make good progress. All are fully included in all activities. Pupils in Year 1 assemble, join and combine materials to build a free-standing slide. In Year 2, pupils enliven their food technology reports by completing the border with scanned pictures of fruit and vegetables. By the end of Year 6, pupils accompany their work with plans, in some cases producing working drawings and justification for their choices and ideas. Progress is satisfactory. Above average and average pupils in Year 4 disassemble torches to make judgements about their components with a view to designing one of their own. Below average pupils, including those with SEN, produce planning designs for a torch to enable reading in bed, with a thin beam and a small bulb. Pupils in Year 5 investigate a range of breads from around the world. Their presentation includes a good range of factual information. Pupils in Year 3 design and evaluate sandwich snacks, using the criteria of taste, appearance, smell and texture. They produce a graph to show which sandwiches were liked the most and lunch boxes are neatly crafted with attractive designs.
132. Taking into account all of the evidence from the lessons observed and from the scrutiny of completed work, the quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Activities are planned and managed satisfactorily to promote pupil interest and to support the progressive development of design and technology skills through the scheme of work. In a good lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher consolidated pupils' knowledge and understanding through the provision of a variety of types of materials from which to construct puppets. In the Year 3 to 6 age group, younger pupils were given opportunities to test the assembly of torches, examining switches and circuits, whilst older pupils were encouraged to make their own evaluations of the characteristics of various breads. The quality and range of learning opportunities

provided is satisfactory. Good links with a local High School have enabled Year 6 pupils to experience design and technology activities before secondary transfer. Boys and girls, including pupils with SEN and EAL, have good attitudes to learning. In all of the lessons observed, pupils of differing attainment were equally engaged and motivated. They co-operate well and behave well. This helps them to make good progress. The arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Arrangements for the leadership and management of the subject are limited at present because of staff changes. Although planning, and some teaching, has been monitored in 2000/1, this has resulted in very limited action planning. This leads to the judgement that the leadership and management of design and technology are unsatisfactory. There have not been any opportunities for recent in-service training for staff. The accommodation is good and there is a good range of learning resources. Information and communication technology is not yet used satisfactorily to enhance pupils' learning in this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

133. Attainment in geography is in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding in geography. Throughout the school, pupils appreciate that the local area, Grahame Park, can be contrasted with places further afield such as Katie Morag's fictional island of Struay, a village in India and the seaside at Llandudno. Pupils in Year 1 have considered the external features of local houses during an introduction to fieldwork. At the end of Year 6, pupils have sound understanding of the life of a river from youth to maturity. Pupils use maps of increasing complexity well as they progress through the school.
134. No teaching of geography took place during the inspection, so no judgement on the quality of teaching can be made. However, throughout the school, teachers' enthusiasm and very good relationships with the pupils promote sound learning about, for example, the location of Chembakoli, a village in India and the location of the UK in the world. From talking to pupils and looking at their work it is clear that their attitudes to learning in geography are good. In Year 4, the teachers' coherent planning enabled pupils to both explore 'river' poetry and to understand the main key words associated with the journey of a river from its source to the sea. Teachers' planning is satisfactory in that it promotes appropriate geographical vocabulary to develop pupils' understanding. In Years 1 and 2, the travels of Barnaby Bear are the main vehicle for the promotion of the subject. In Years 3 to 6, pupils consider environmental issues in and around Grahame Park, using the techniques they learned earlier in the study of the fictional Island of Struay.
135. Co-ordination of geography is satisfactory, with some good features. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching, pupils' workbooks and display. She gives written feedback. Geography is promoted appropriately. The curriculum is well planned, including fieldwork in local streets and a residential school journey to the Isle of Wight for older pupils. Assessment, however, has only just been introduced and is not yet fully effective. The accommodation and grounds support the subject well, but the use of information and communication technology is not well developed.

## **HISTORY**

136. From the limited evidence that is available, it is evident that pupils in Years 1 and 2 reach standards that are below those expected for their age. Year 1 pupils learn about what homes were like a long time ago and compare them with modern homes. However, there is no recorded evidence to show that they understand the similarities and differences between the two, for example, through using the appropriate vocabulary of past and present. They show some understanding of the materials that are used in present day homes. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the main events in Florence Nightingale's life and describe some of the work she did and the type of clothes she wore. Opportunities provided are too limited, for them to develop a sense of chronology through in-depth study, instead of using a rotation of activities for the duration of the lesson. The lack of sufficient resources to support activities for this age group is also one of the factors responsible for lower standards in Years 1 and 2.

137. In Years 3 to 6, pupils reach appropriate standards for their age. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 5 achieve better than this. Year 5 pupils demonstrate good evidence of empathy and can extract relevant information from books, pictures and artefacts, to build their knowledge and understanding of what it was like for children living in Victorian times. They are able to organise and communicate their findings in different ways. Pupils in Year 6 make use of maps, for example, to locate Mount Olympus and they use research materials to deduce information about the belief of the ancient Greeks and their religious practices. They name some of the Greek Gods and their responsibilities and find out interesting facts about them. However, the lack of a computer in the class makes it difficult for pupils to develop their research skills through using information and communication technology. In Year 4, pupils make effective use of books, pictures and posters to acquire knowledge and understanding of aspects of everyday life during World War 2. Pupils, who have special educational needs make good progress over time. However, progress made by those who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. Overall, pupils use a good range of sources of information to find out about past people and events, although, at present, they are not using CD-ROM for their research purposes. Chronology is developed appropriately for older pupils, for example, through using a time line linked to Queen Victoria's life and they use dates and terms appropriately.
138. History makes a good contribution to literacy by encouraging pupils to listen and to speak well, and by giving them the confidence to use specific terminology. This was seen during a role-play situation in a Year 5 class, where a vivid comparison was made between rules in a typical Victorian classroom and those presently applied in the Orion School. This made the history lesson particularly successful. History also helps pupils write to a variety of stimuli and forms.
139. Throughout the school, pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and show interest in learning history. Older pupils are enthusiastic about their work in history and work consistently hard. Pupils' behaviour is good and they co-operate very well during group-discussions and in class situations. Relationships with adults and between pupils are particularly good.
140. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, although it lacks depth. Teachers are also limited in their ability to provide good explanations due to the lack of suitable resources for this age. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, and often very good or even excellent. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. In classes in Years 3 to 6, a major strength is the use of history to promote pupils' literacy skills, including writing. Writing frames are provided to support pupils of all abilities. Stimulating activities include the use of role-play, which has a good effect on developing empathy, for example, with working class children during the Victorian period and with children during the time of World War II. As a result, pupils take an active part in class discussions and settle quickly to set tasks, which leads to good progress during lessons and over time. Most teachers make good use of a range of quality resources, motivating pupils well to support the teaching and learning of specific topics. Where teaching is very good or better, teachers' very good lesson planning and preparation helps pupils gain a better understanding of past times. Teachers also make very good use of time at the end of a lesson to reinforce learning. Questions at the beginning and at the end of lessons provide good opportunities to assess what the pupils have learnt, but these assessments are not formally recorded by all teachers and used in differentiating work for pupils of all abilities. Evaluation of weekly plans has been introduced recently.
141. The subject is managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She takes a keen interest in building up resources to support history topics that are being taught, particularly artefacts, pictures and books. The school makes good use of visits to support work in history, for example, to libraries, museums and art galleries. A visit to Gunnersbury Park Museum has been planned to see the Victorian costumes, to experience a Victorian classroom and to provide pupils with an opportunity to learn from role-play. The school is also beginning to make use of information and communication technology to support the teaching and learning of history, although this is only just beginning. Some word-processed work was seen in Year 5 on the Victorians, which was displayed on classroom walls and added to the good learning environment of the class. Specific history topics have been allocated to all year groups. These follow the national guidance for schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school policy is not yet formalised. The co-ordinator supports colleagues in lesson planning, especially helping

them to select different activities and resources for their class. There is some monitoring of history teaching through direct observation and through looking at pupils' work and displays, which provides useful information on how to move forward. She has identified in-service training as a priority area for the future. Assessment is another area needing further development to ensure a systematic progression of knowledge, skills and understanding across ages and abilities.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

142. Although much progress has been made in ensuring that pupils who previously had little experience of using computers now regularly do so, standards achieved in information technology at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use a mouse confidently to access CD-ROMs, make simple paint patterns and use a word processing program to write captions and short sentences. They use a simple pictogram program to show their personal characteristics and preferences. Pupils develop mouse skills by using a "Dress the Teddy" program. They gain increasing familiarity with the keyboard layout. Pupils begin to save files of work they are doing. They use a CD-based dictionary to find and print definitions of less familiar words. They use music processing software to make simple compositions. However, the standards that they achieve in using these programs are below those expected for their age group, because the teaching approaches used are not yet sufficiently challenging and effective. In addition, pupils are not yet given enough opportunities to talk about their experiences of using information and communication technology in school and at home and to plan and reflect on their work.
143. By the end of Year 6, pupils use word processing programs and graphic files to produce a variety of posters, including "wanted" posters, publicity for school events and advertisements. They create tables to record results of scientific investigations, use a simple spreadsheet to sort and calculate sets of mathematical information. They create simple sets of instructions to program floor robots or generate a simple geometrical shape on the screen. They use database programs to find information about famous Victorians and to classify information about themselves and animals. They are beginning to use the Internet to find information for their studies, for example, learning about World War II in history. Year 4 pupils are beginning to use a very good individualised mathematics learning system to improve their achievement in the subject. Some classes have used e-mail. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident in using computers, navigating programs and have satisfactory keyboard skills. However, they do not achieve the standards expected for their age group, particularly because they are working from low levels of previous experience, but also because they are not taught how to evaluate and develop their work. For example, they produce posters that use too many examples of fancy fonts and multiple colours to achieve a good readable design.
144. Pupils made satisfactory and sometimes good progress in lessons observed throughout the school. However, they are not making enough progress in using information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. For example, throughout the school, pupils laboriously create graphs by hand, which could more easily and effectively be created, using their computers. Pupils with high levels of special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English are making too little progress in information and communication technology, because lesson tasks are not being adapted well enough to meet their needs.
145. The quality of teaching observed in lessons is satisfactory, overall. Of eight lessons observed, four were good and four were satisfactory. Further evidence from observations of short information and communication technology tasks, presented either as part of an integrated studies afternoon or in other subject lessons, indicates that, although sometimes effective, there are instances when teaching is less than satisfactory. This is because there is no direct teaching, or because pupils are given tasks which are well below their capabilities. Good teaching observed combined clear and challenging objectives, which extended pupils' capabilities. Very clear teacher guidance backed up by visual guidelines and task guide sheets enabled pupils to make rapid progress. Teachers' planning closely follows the National Curriculum and they set objectives, such as learning how to save files or answer a series of questions, using a database, which can be readily achieved in the time available. Common weaknesses in most lessons observed included spending too long giving pupils long sequences of instructions, which they then could not remember. When

pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English work with support staff, they usually complete the tasks set for them. However, they do not always understand the task, particularly if they do not have close adult support. A lack of teacher knowledge of what pupils can achieve at particular ages often leads them to set tasks with too little challenge.

146. Teachers do not usually require pupils to save or print out their work, so that they spend twenty minutes creating images or texts, which are then deleted. They do not usually take opportunities for pupils to compare what they have achieved and talk or write about how they could improve their work. Teachers give encouraging feedback in lessons to help pupils improve their skills. They are beginning to keep simple, but effective, checklists of pupils' basic skills, such as keyboard use and file saving.
147. Pupils are very enthusiastic about using information technology and relish working in the school's information and communication technology suite or with the classroom laptops. Pupils with computers at home say they prefer working with the computers at school because they use programs that are more age-appropriate, do interesting tasks and learn things they did not previously know.
148. The scheme of work covers the required elements of the National Curriculum. However, too little use is being made of the information and communication technology suite and the school's stock of laptops as learning resources for other subjects, such as mathematics, art, music, history and geography. The subject leader has shown great initiative and commitment in helping to establish the school's network system. He has also drawn up a development plan, established an Internet Use policy and begun to train teaching and support staff to use the programs. The school is due to begin the national information and communication technology training programme for teaching staff in the Spring Term of 2002. The subject leader has established a useful system of assessing pupils' basic skills, but the school has yet to adopt an assessment system that will track progress in the areas required for information and communication technology for the National Curriculum. Subject leaders in other subjects do not have direct responsibility for identifying and promoting best practice in the use of information and communication technology as a learning tool for their subjects. This is contributing to the low levels of use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
149. The subject leader has had to spend most of the time allocated for his responsibilities carrying out necessary maintenance and housekeeping on the network system. This is diverting him from his important task of helping develop and monitor teaching and learning with information and communication technology across the school. In addition, very little use has been made of the present facilities to support pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English.
150. The subject leader has established a very successful after-school computer club, which is helping to build up a group of older pupils with higher levels of skill and experience. It is also promoting even more enthusiasm and awareness of the potential of information and communication technology in the school.

## **MUSIC**

151. Standards in music are satisfactory at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in singing are good throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils sing a good repertoire of songs in time and tune. They listen carefully and readily repeat and learn the phrasing and timing of new songs. They produce the right volume to match the mood of the songs they sing. They use percussion instruments and a computer program to make and perform simple compositions. They recognise the sounds made by a range of common instruments. By the end of Year 6, pupils sing a wide variety of songs from different cultures, including some with complex rhythms. They create and perform instrumental and voice compositions, developing their own rhythm and melodic structures, using tuned and untuned instruments. They listen to and discuss a range of music by classical and modern composers. They understand and use simple notation and know the length of different notes, such as crochets, quavers, minims and semi-breves.

152. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with high ability, make good progress in lessons and, as they go through the school, particularly in developing singing skills. Although there is little specific provision for their needs, pupils at the early stages of learning English do as well as can be expected.
153. All pupils greatly enjoy music lessons, particularly the weekly singing lessons, taken by the headteacher, which are an important feature of the life of the school. They sing with great enthusiasm and gusto and can be heard humming and singing phrases from new songs they have learnt, during the school day. In class lessons, they work together very readily on compositions and playing instruments and they listen very attentively to music, which is played to them.
154. The quality of teaching is good. Of the four music lessons observed, two were good and two were very good. Further very good music teaching and learning was observed in an assembly. Group singing lessons for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 are very well taught. The lessons are very well structured and the head teacher builds up an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation by promising and delivering surprise elements. In class lessons, teachers use a commercial scheme, providing a clear planning structure for all staff, to teach music appreciation and simple composition skills effectively to Years 1 to 6. In a very good year 3 lesson, the teacher used a CD from the scheme to play music from the Indian and Elizabethan music traditions to introduce the concept of a drone and melody combination. The good range of music chosen for singing and class lessons helps to widen pupils' awareness of classical, traditional folk and world music. Photographic evidence shows that very good use has been made of a special project recently undertaken with the BBC Concert Orchestra. Teachers give good, informal feedback to pupils in lessons, telling them where they are doing well and what they need to focus on to improve their performance. However, they are not yet using a formal system of recording and assessment.
155. The quality of leadership in music is good. The music subject leader was new in post in the term of the inspection, but had already used a questionnaire survey of staff teaching skills and needs very effectively to enable her to identify staff development needs and teaching strengths. She had already used this information to provide a very helpful series of teaching guidance sheets for staff. In addition, extra funding has been obtained to buy instrumental resources, such as steel band and drum kits. This has enabled the school to offer individual extra-curricular tuition to older pupils in steel band and rock drumming, as well as in brass instruments. Information and communication technology is not sufficiently well used in teaching music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

156. Standards are in line with those normally expected nationally, at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils' attainment in swimming is good and all achieve the standard expected nationally at the end of Year 6, with a significant percentage reaching higher standards than this.
157. Physical education is not presently a focus for development in the school. The school has two halls, both of which are of a good size for physical education and the school is well equipped with large scale and high level equipment. Dance is a strength of physical education throughout the school and pupils are used to enjoying dance, not only in lessons, but also during "Golden Time". This is a period at the end of each week when high level effort and achievement are rewarded. The teaching of the skills of traditional games is good throughout the school and a good range of extra-curricular clubs supplements this. These include soccer, cricket, dance and country dancing. Other games and sports are provided according to season. The attendance at these clubs is good and they have a positive effect on the standards of the pupils who attend.
158. The quality of teaching in physical education is satisfactory, overall. Four lessons were seen during the inspection. Two lessons were observed in Years 1 to 2 and two in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching in these lessons was good in two lessons and satisfactory in the other two. The quality of teaching was equally balanced in both areas of the school. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and is linked to the schemes of work. Teachers dress appropriately for physical education. They provide good opportunities for warm up and cool down at the beginning and end of lessons. Teachers demonstrate exercises effectively to the pupils during lessons and,

consequently, pupils are able to improve their own skills. Teachers are aware of pupils' abilities and monitor their progress accordingly. The teacher of a good lesson in Year 1 effectively reviewed the work from a previous lesson and provided an interesting and active warm up session. Both the teacher and the classroom assistant provided good examples for pupils to follow. The lesson deepened pupils' knowledge and understanding of the need for exercise in a healthy lifestyle and the need for safety when changing speed, level and direction. A very good rapport had been established with these pupils and, therefore, the teacher managed them very well and maintained good levels of discipline and control. Good pace is maintained in most lessons and, therefore, pupils display a high level of motivation. All pupils enjoy their learning in physical education and their attitudes to the subject are good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

159. The level of leadership in physical education is satisfactory. The quality and range of resources are good and effective use is made of the good quality playing field and the school halls. There is good provision for competitive sport and the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which contributes well to the learning of all the pupils involved.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

160. The school has identified religious education as an area of weakness and an area for further development. Current practice is that religious education alternates with personal, social and health education and insufficient time is spent teaching the subject. The very good personal, moral and social education provision provides pupils with a very good foundation in relationships, the principles of right and wrong and codes of behaviour, but this is not sufficiently linked to religious education. Only one religious education lesson was observed during the inspection. Other evidence was gained from examining limited samples of pupils' work and from discussions with pupils and staff. It is clear that pupils do not attain the standards expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, is unsatisfactory over time.
161. By the age of seven, most pupils have a limited understanding of belonging to a community and their own faith groups in particular. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to communicate their own experiences about special times and celebrations. They understand the need for rules, truth and honesty and forgiving and saying sorry. By the age of eleven, most pupils have an understanding of festivals such as Pesach, Sukkoth and Ramadan. They have a growing understanding for the need to respect different cultures and traditions. Most pupils know about important religious leaders such as Jesus, Moses, Muhammad and the Buddha but have limited knowledge of their teachings. They demonstrate an awareness of the different approaches to worship, prayer and sacred writings and their importance to believers, but these are not firmly embedded. Their understanding of places of worship other than their own and particularly Christian places of worship, is below expectations. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and this reflects the fact that religious education has had a low profile throughout the school.
162. An examination of pupils' books and folders indicates limited evidence of religious education in most year groups except Year 4. Presentation and handwriting skills of the older pupils are below expectations. Marking is inconsistent and is not used as well as it could be to support pupils' literacy skills or to develop and extend pupils' understanding of religious education.
163. There were no religious education lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 to judge the overall quality of teaching. The only lesson seen was in a Year 3 and teaching was good. The lesson was well planned and the teacher displayed good knowledge of Islam and the Five Pillars of Wisdom. Lesson objectives were clearly communicated to pupils so that they knew what they were learning and this raised their interest. The lesson proceeded at a good pace and pupils clearly understood what was meant by belonging to a group or community and in particular the Muslim community. Muslim pupils were given good opportunities to talk about their religious practice. Good use was made of resources and artefacts to provide visual stimuli to promote learning. Pupils watched a video and looked at artefacts and pictures which developed their understanding well.

164. The school utilises the Locally Agreed Syllabus, but there is insufficient, detailed planning to support teachers in delivering effective lessons. However, the school has identified the need to develop its own detailed planning, based on the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus to give more guidance to teachers. There is a satisfactory range of artefacts and resources which teachers use effectively to support their teaching. There is no use of information and communications technology to support pupils' learning.