

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARK'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100444

Headteacher: Ms Dawn Ferdinand

Reporting inspector: Mrs Lorna Brackstone
21872

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th February 2002

Inspection number: 230661

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Lawrie Pattinson
Date of previous inspection:	10 th January 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21872	Lorna Brackstone	Registered inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? How high are standards? a) the school's results and pupils' achievements.
9880	Tony Comer	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education	
3574	Dr Kanwaljit Singh	Team inspector	Equal opportunities The Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Marks is situated in the north of Islington. It is smaller than other schools with 176 pupils on roll with numbers of boys and girls broadly equal. About half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and this is one of the highest percentages in the borough. Those parents in employment mainly work in manual labour. The proportion of pupils known to use English as an additional language is 30 per cent and this is high. However, only a small number of children in the Reception class and Year 1, who use African, Turkish or Greek language, are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Half of the pupils are from white UK heritage and the remainder are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs, including statements, is 21 per cent, broadly in line with the national average. Nearly three per cent of the pupils have statements and this is both above the national average and very high compared to other schools in the borough. The school has identified a small group of gifted and talented pupils. There is one class per year group. Although most children have attended a wide range of nurseries, attainment is well below national expectations when they start school at the beginning of the academic year in which they will be five. The school is involved in the North Islington Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school that provides very good value for money. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and, together with her deputy headteacher, the school is managed excellently. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they have attained above average standards in English and mathematics and achievement is very good. This is because the overall quality of teaching is of very high quality and all pupils are fully included in the learning process. Inspectors fully endorse the view of one Year 6 pupil who considers it to be a 'treat' to come to this school.

What the school does well

- By Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are above the national average. From starting school with standards well below national expectations, pupils make excellent achievement in these subjects.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have very high expectations and lessons are planned to ensure that all pupils' needs are met.
- Curricular provision is very broad and pupils benefit from the successful links developed through the local education action zone and a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent; provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good. Every pupil is fully included in all aspects of school life.
- Provision for moral and social development is excellent, resulting in pupils having very positive attitudes to learning.
- The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational and with the excellent support of her deputy strategic management of the school is outstanding.

What could be improved

- There are no major areas of weakness, but assessment procedures in foundation subjects need to be developed further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected by HMI in January 2000 and has made very good progress since then. Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and 6 have improved. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress over time are now very good. Pupils with special educational needs are identified on entry into school. Excellent procedures have been developed

to monitor the quality of provision for these pupils. In addition to those areas identified for improvement, the quality of teaching is now very good overall and the leadership and management of the headteacher and her deputy headteacher are now excellent. All staff share a very strong commitment to improve and have an outstanding capacity to succeed.

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	E*	C	C	A
Mathematics	E*	E	A	A*
Science	E*	D	E	C

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Children start school with standards that are well below nationally agreed levels. They make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage, but are still below nationally agreed levels by the start of Year 1 of the National Curriculum. Inspection findings indicate that standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 are above national averages. Standards in science in Year 6 are in line with national averages. This represents a very good improvement since the standardised tests of 2001, which are displayed in the table above. It also indicates that from Reception to Year 6 very good achievement is made. In Year 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national averages. This also represents an improvement from the 2001 standardised tests when, although standards in writing were in line with the national average, they were below in both reading and mathematics. Standards in Years 2 and 6, in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography, music and physical education are as expected for their age. Standards in singing and in dance are above average throughout the school. The school sets realistic targets that are based on detailed analysis of pupils' work. They are well placed to exceed the current targets that have been set. Pupils start school with attainment that is well below national expectations, but achieve very well overall. Achievement in English and mathematics is excellent. Over the past few years, overall trends in standards have been upwards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes and are very keen to come to school. They are enthusiastic about all their activities and are very well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the pupils is good. Almost all pupils behave well in class and around school. No anti-social behaviour was observed.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with all adults in school. They use their initiative very well and grow into mature and responsible young people.
Attendance	Although attendance levels have been poor in the past, there has been a very significant improvement and are now in line with national averages. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very 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 and learning is very good. During the inspection, 41 lessons or part-sessions were observed. All of these were at least satisfactory in quality; two were excellent, 16 were very good, 19 were good and four were satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. It is very good in Years 3 to 6. Strengths of teaching and learning include very high teacher expectations of behaviour and the quality of work achieved. Lessons are planned to a very high standard and this ensures that all pupils are fully involved in the learning activities. Relationships between pupils and adults in school are of very good quality and class management is a very strong feature of the school. Pupil tracking systems are exceptional and this ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve their fullest potential because classroom assistants provide very good levels of support. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well. Teachers are developing their own knowledge of information and communication technology and this is having a positive impact on the teaching of this subject. Resources are used very effectively to develop learning and the good use of homework encourages interest and independence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The pupils receive a very rich curriculum that is enhanced by high quality extra-curricular activities. Links with the local community and partner institutions are used very well to enrich the pupils' experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The co-ordinator has established exceptional systems that ensure that these pupils are very well supported and make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Teachers are very aware of the pupils needs and quickly assess their learning requirements. This is done well through the emphasis on explanations of key vocabulary and the use of visual aids.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for social and moral development is excellent and is fully reflected in all aspects of school life. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is very good and highly promoted through the taught curriculum, interactive displays, celebrations of religious festivals and assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school knows all its pupils and families very well and very effective procedures are in place to ensure that they are very well cared for. The educational support and guidance given to the pupils is of very good quality. Both the monitoring of academic performance and personal development are very effective.

The school actively encourages parental involvement, but it is not always reciprocated.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and works very closely with her deputy headteacher to ensure that the school is managed exceptionally well. A highly professional team support them very well and all responsibilities are managed thoroughly.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body very successfully fulfil their statutory requirements and have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work very closely with the staff, provide very high quality support and make critical evaluations of all major decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Data from tests are rigorously analysed and very clear targets are set for improvement. Monitoring procedures are systematic and the highest quality methods are used to achieve accurate evaluations.
The strategic use of resources	Strategic planning is excellent and all available resources are used very well. The use of specific grants is exceptional. Best value is always sought and this is clearly evident through the excellent procedures of monitoring, evaluating and comparing all aspects of school life.

There are a good number of teaching and support staff. The adequacy of the accommodation is good overall; classrooms are spacious, there is a purpose-built information and communication technology suite and a safe and secure outdoor area for the Foundation Stage. However, the administrative offices are very small and are not suitable for discussions with parents. Learning resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like going to school. • The school has high expectations. • Behaviour in school is good. • The right amount of homework is given. • Their children make good progress at school. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • There is a wide range of activities provided outside of lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about the progress of their children. • They would like to feel more comfortable approaching the school with a questions or a problem.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive comments, but is unable to agree with any of the negative remarks. All staff are very approachable and accessible at both ends of the school day. Parents are provided with good levels of information on the progress made by their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children start in the Reception class with skills in all areas of learning that are well below national expectations. However, by the time that they are in Year 6, overall levels of attainment are above national averages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well in this school. This reflects the school's commitment to raising standards and its very good use of a wide range of initiatives to achieve this.
2. Although all children achieve well during their time in Reception, by the time they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum, almost all children are still working below nationally agreed expectations in the key areas of literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and personal, social and emotional development. This is because their attainment on entry into Reception is so low; few children receive stimulus outside of school to enrich their learning experiences and many are using English as an additional language. However, children do attain the expected level in physical development.
3. Overall achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 is good. By Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are in line with national averages. This represents a good improvement since the national tests of 2001 when standards in writing were average, but below average in reading and mathematics. In comparison to similar schools, standards were all well above average. In the teacher assessments in science the number of pupils achieving the nationally agreed level was above the average, but below the national average for the number of pupils attaining the higher level. Overall achievement in these subjects in Years 3 to 6 is also good. By Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are above the national average and in line with the national average in science. Good standards have been maintained in mathematics since the 2001 national tests. Results in English were in line with the national average in 2001 and inspection findings indicate a good improvement since then. Science standards have improved significantly since the tests in 2001 when results were well below the national average. In comparison to similar schools the performance of pupils in 2001 was very high in mathematics, well above in English and average in science.
4. In Years 2 and 6, standards in the foundation subjects are in line with national expectations. From below nationally agreed levels at the start of Year 1 of the National Curriculum, pupils achieve well in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. Throughout the school, pupils achieve higher than average expectations in dance and singing.
5. The overall trend in standards is an improving picture. This is because of the very good quality of teaching and learning and the outstanding analysis of pupils' performance. In the Year 2 standardised tests the performance of pupils since 1999 has been steadily rising. However, the 2001 Year 2 cohort had a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and this resulted in a dip in performance in the national tests. In Year 6, the trend in performance since 1999 has also been upwards and is, in fact, above the national trend.
6. Comparing the results in Year 2 over time from 1999 to 2001, boys performed better than girls in reading and writing. No differences were noted between boys and girls in Year 6 during the same period of time. No differences in attainment between boys and girls were noted during the inspection. This is because very detailed analysis has been collected on gender and ethnicity issues and effective strategies have been put in place to deal with any differences in attainment.

7. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented achieve very well, because they are specifically targeted. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good gains in their learning because of the effective procedures for identifying those needs.

They make consistently very good progress throughout the school because of the good teaching and effective support in class. They are well supported in literacy and numeracy. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve well in all subjects. The school's analyses of Year 6 test result data indicate that pupils who speak English as an additional language attain standard and sometimes higher than their monolingual peers. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of the schools' work, having access to extra-curricular activities and to school visits.

8. The school sets realistic targets for further improvement and is making very good progress in achieving them. They carefully look at individual pupils in each cohort and make specific plans to raise attainment. For instance, the improvements are very clear when the results of the current Year 6 cohort are compared to those achieved in their national tests in Year 2. Standards at this time were judged to be well below the national average in reading, writing, and mathematics. As a result, this group of pupils have achieved excellently in English and mathematics. Targets are continually raised as achievement responds to the additional support given through the North Islington Education Action Zone, the effective strategies implemented by the school and the very positive impact of the literacy and numeracy initiatives on standards across the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Children in the Foundation Stage have good attitudes to learning and are generally enthusiastic about their learning. They behave well and are eager to help both their peers and all adults who are involved in their learning. Relationships are good in the Reception class.
10. In Years 1 to 6 pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastically involved with the life of the school. Parents state that the children like coming to school, that they are encouraged to work hard and do their best and that the school helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents also feel that behaviour is good. The inspection evidence supports these positive views.
11. Overall, the behaviour of pupils is good and is frequently very good and excellent in the older year groups. A minority of the younger pupils can demonstrate challenging behaviour that sometimes has an adverse effect on teaching and learning. Around the school and in the playground behaviour is good. Pupils play happily together and are polite and courteous. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour during the inspection.
12. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. The range of educational visits, visitors and after school activities, as well as the emphasis that the school places on personal, social and health education, all contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative and to take responsibility through a variety of activities, including the school council, class rules and special duties in the classroom and in assemblies. Some pupils have taken part in a 'pupil parliament', an initiative set up within the North Islington Education Action Zone.
13. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils make a positive contribution to learning; standards having been maintained since the last inspection.
14. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. The recently introduced 'home school support' project is beginning to have a beneficial effect on attendance and is now broadly in line with the national average. There is a reduced level of unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive at school punctually and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. During the inspection, 41 lessons or part-sessions were observed; two lessons were excellent, 16 were very good, 19 were satisfactory and four were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection by HMI when teaching was judged to be 'at least satisfactory and often good'.
16. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage. The teacher in Reception has recently taken responsibility for this age group and is developing her knowledge and understanding of the specific needs of these young children. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are taught well and teachers' expectations are good. This ensures that the children acquire skills, knowledge and understanding. Planning is detailed; it includes all areas of learning and classroom organisation fully reflects the Foundation Stage curriculum. The topics chosen are stimulating and meet the needs of this age group well. For example, during the inspection week work was based on the picture book 'Don't forget the bacon'. This involved a very well planned trip to the local shops, a literacy focus on making shopping lists and the counting of various fruits bought as a numeracy task. A wide range of teaching methods are used effectively and these include individual sessions, group work and whole class lessons. This ensures an adequate pace of learning which maintains the interest of the children. They are managed well and good use of praise ensures that behaviour is of an acceptable standard. The children are developing an appropriate knowledge of their own learning through the use of purposeful day-to-day assessments by the teacher. Time is used satisfactorily in Reception; when directed, the temporary nursery nurse interacts appropriately with the children. Indoor resources are used well to promote intellectual, physical and creative development. However, the outdoor area is not used sufficiently well as an integral part of the school day.
17. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 1 and 2. Although both teachers in these year groups are inexperienced they have a good knowledge and understanding of the age group and teach basic skills well. Planning is of very high quality and activities are identified to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Teachers have very high expectations and encouragement and praise are used very well to maintain pupils' interest in their learning. The productivity and pace of lessons is maintained well through a mixture of individual, group and class sessions. Very good use is made of questioning techniques and pupils' levels of understanding are continually assessed. For example, in a very good literacy session in Year 2 the pupils were required to read a short piece of text together. When they came across the different types of punctuation used they were asked to make a particular sign, which denoted a specific mark and this had a very positive impact on their learning. Pupils are managed well and encouraged to be involved in their learning. This has a positive impact on the knowledge of their learning. Good quality resources are used to develop the pupils' intellectual skills. For example, white boards and big picture books are used very well to support learning in literacy sessions. Time is never wasted and very good use is made of support staff to promote learning. This was clearly evident in a Year 1 literacy lesson where the learning support assistant was used very well to assist pupils with special educational needs. This had a particularly good impact on a pupil with a statement for special educational needs who was enabled to have full access to the learning opportunity by the very high quality support of this classroom assistant.
18. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is very good overall. The experienced teachers are very highly skilled in the teaching of literacy and numeracy; the acquisition of knowledge and skills is secure. Very detailed planning is linked to the specific needs of all pupils and learning support staff are identified clearly to assist with pupils who have learning difficulties. Extremely detailed tracking procedures are used very well to target pupils and this results in very high quality teacher expectations. Pupils have a very good understanding of their own learning because they are involved in setting these targets. Teachers encourage the pupils' intellectual and creative development through discussions and rigorous questioning. For instance, these techniques are used exceptionally well in the Year 6 class within many subjects areas of the curriculum. Independence in learning is successfully motivated through group challenges and tasks. Interactive white boards and overhead projectors are used very well in Years 3 to 6 and this has a positive influence on information and communication technology skills development.

19. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy very good relationships with all adults working with them. In a number of classes, relationships between teacher and pupils are excellent. These strong relationships have a very positive impact on the quality of learning. Overall, homework is used well to support learning and encourages pupils' interest and independence.
20. The quality of teaching received by pupils who have English as an additional language is good. Staff have high expectations and pupils are very responsive to the teaching provided. They are generally enthusiastic and highly motivated learners. The support staff work closely with class teachers and help pupils within class. Very successful strategies, such as repetition of key vocabulary, modelling of correct answers and presentation of work with a strong visual content supports pupils very well and this results in pupils' good achievement. Teachers use good strategies to check pupils' understanding of vocabulary before deciding which teaching points to reinforce. Pupils' learning is also helped by the opportunities afforded them to work with peers. The acceptance by teachers of a diversity of languages in their classes adds significantly to bilingual pupils' ease. They become willing participants in lessons and are keen to express their ideas. Pupils make good progress in developing basic skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening.
21. The work of both support teachers and assistants is of very high quality and this has an important effect upon the standards achieved in school. They work very closely with class teachers to provide high quality support for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. All support staff are well trained and the teamwork evident in the classrooms is exceptional.

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

22. Curricular provision is very good throughout the school and has improved since the last inspection. All statutory requirements are met and pupils receive a very wide range of learning experiences. English and mathematics are appropriately given a considerable proportion of curriculum time. This has contributed to the improved National Curriculum test results in Year 6. The school has implemented a well-structured curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The curriculum for pupils in both key stages is broad, balanced, relevant and inclusive. It gives pupils opportunities to learn well in all subjects. The time allocation for all subjects is appropriate and is used effectively.
23. The curriculum for children in the Reception Class is satisfactory and follows the national guidance for this age group. The steps in all six areas of learning are well covered through the provision of a range of activities. Appropriate emphasis is given to children' personal and social development, communication, language and literacy development and mathematical development.
24. The national strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are well established and have a very positive effect on pupils' learning in English and mathematics. The literacy hour is consistently planned and taught in all classes. Oral work is used well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Subject vocabulary is prominently displayed in all classrooms and around the school. Opportunities are provided for pupils to extend their writing skills. Planning for numeracy is very effective. There is a very good, structured approach to lessons, with appropriate time given to mental arithmetic. Appropriate emphasis is given to mathematical vocabulary and solving word problems. These strategies are having a very positive impact in improving results for Year 6 pupils.
25. In other subjects, the school has schemes of work that provide clear guidance for staff. These are revised as and when necessary to meet the needs of pupils. The school has developed curriculum maps in all subjects to ensure that there is appropriate coverage and progressive

development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Planning is very good. There are appropriate long-term plans, based on schemes of work and teachers use these consistently to plan work. A block of work is planned for each subject over a period of half term so that an aspect can be studied in sufficient depth.

Weekly planning in lessons is very good. Learning intentions are clearly stated and assessments made during lessons are used effectively to guide future planning.

26. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The school is fully committed to inclusion and this is evident in the high priority placed on special educational needs to ensure that the individual needs of the pupils are met. Most pupils receive excellent support in the classroom, either from the teacher or from the learning support assistants, to enable access to the same curriculum as the rest of their class, through activities appropriate to meet their needs.
27. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive a good, broad and balanced curriculum and are successfully enabled to take part in all school activities. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. The language needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are assessed carefully. These pupils have full access to the curriculum and are given good support in classrooms. The curriculum reflects a positive attitude towards other cultures and languages. Test results are analysed on the basis of gender and ethnicity; these indicate that pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve similar and sometimes better results than their monolingual peers.
28. Equality of access and opportunity in relation to the curriculum for all pupils is very good. The school is committed to equal opportunities, ensured through the aims, the general philosophy and ethos of the school. The school's broad curriculum gives pupils of all ethnic minorities good opportunities to gain confidence through religious education, art and design, music, geography and history. For example, there are many stimulating displays resulting from the 'Black History Month' celebrations and a resident artist has helped enrich pupils' experiences in African art. This has resulted in pupils producing high quality of work in African mask making and African textiles. European and African traditions also enrich pupils' understanding in music. Planning in all curriculum areas meets the needs of higher attaining pupils and this ensures that they achieve very well.
29. A large number of boys and girls of all ages participate equally in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. Pupils' learning is enriched through clubs such as football, dance, drama, art, science, information and communication technology, cricket, and hockey. The curriculum is also enriched through booster classes in English and mathematics and a science club. Homework is given and marked regularly. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and develops home school links.
30. The school makes very good use of the local community and surrounding area to support pupils' learning beyond the classroom. A variety of visitors come to the school to speak to pupils. The very good range of visits out of school further enriches the curriculum. Pupils undertake a residential visit in Year 6, which provides a wide range of learning opportunities for social development. They also very successfully play team games such as football and netball with other local schools.
31. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school has an appropriate policy and schemes of work. Pupils' understanding is well developed in 'circle times', in lessons and through the school council. Their knowledge and understanding of roles and responsibilities in a modern democracy are well developed through the North Islington Education Action Zone's Pupils' Parliament. Pupils' debate issues such as traffic in the streets, school dinners and how to operate school councils effectively. Personal, social and health education links well with the school's very good ethos and excellent provision for moral and social development. Sex education and drug awareness is taught and health education is covered in the science curriculum. The provision is very effective in promoting pupils' achievement.

32. The school's links with the business community, through participation in the North Islington Education Action Zone, are very good and this has a very positive impact on pupils' learning in all areas. These are particularly good in information and communication technology. Links with neighbouring schools are very good and these have been developed through the education action zone partnership and through curriculum co-ordinators meetings and sporting events.
33. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Excellent provision is made for moral and social development and this is an improvement since the HMI inspection.
34. The school is successful in developing attitudes and values consistent with the school's Mission Statement and the strong Christian ethos. This inclusive and supportive ethos forms a good basis for pupils' spiritual development and there is a calm and stable atmosphere in most classes. It is promoted through assemblies, pupils' personal, social and health education, circle times, religious education and through many art and music lessons. There is a daily assembly, with an appropriate act of collective worship. Each assembly includes a prayer, time for reflection, singing and music and provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. Singing during assemblies is particularly good; pupils sing with joy and expression and listen very well as they enter and leave. In some classes, pupils have made 'soul boxes' in their art lessons and have many opportunities to express emotions such as sadness, joy and anger.
35. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. The care the school provides and the positive relationships that are established foster moral values. The staff provide very good role models and there are systems in place to teach right and wrong and develop the sense of caring and sharing with others. 'Circle times' are used to guide pupils to develop values such as honesty, fairness and co-operation. Excellent assembly on building friendships, displays of a wide range of posters such as 'recipe for friendship' and very stimulating displays of pupils' work on sharing help promote pupils' moral development. The behaviour policy is consistently implemented. There is very effective emphasis on reward for good behaviour and it was noticeable how pleased pupils were to receive house points.
36. The quality of provision for pupils' social development is also excellent. Pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and groups in lessons and are encouraged to co-operate well during their daily activities. Older pupils are encouraged to be involved with the welfare and behaviour of younger children, such as during assembly times. Pupils are frequently reminded, in assemblies and classes, to respond to their peers in a thoughtful way. A very good feature of the school's provision for personal development is the school council that enables pupils to gain an understanding of democracy and to take responsibility. Trips encourage independence and give opportunities to represent their school in the community. The residential trip in Year 6 offers pupils the opportunity to live in close quarters with a wide range of people in a situation that is new to them. Good manners are promoted and pupils are polite to each other and to visitors to the school.
37. Pupils are provided with very good opportunities to develop their knowledge and appreciation of their own and other cultures. There are many valuable opportunities for pupils to develop awareness of their own and other cultures. The celebration of Black History gave pupils the insight through music, art, food and dress of black African and black Caribbean culture. Pupils listen to music from their own and other cultures. They study Islam and Judaism and learn about religions and beliefs other than their own. Displays around the school have a multicultural dimension and visits outside the school take place regularly. Artwork on display resulting from a visit to Regent's Park Mosque, provides opportunities to understand Islamic culture further. Pupils receive very good opportunities to learn about the diversity and richness of the range of cultures in Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The support and guidance that pupils receive, both formal and informal, is very good and most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions and problems. The evidence supports the confidence that these parents have in the school's ability to deal with any issues that arise. The teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and respond to their needs. The Foundation Stage and pupils for whom English is a second language receive good support. Pupils with special educational needs receive excellent support. This represents a very good improvement since the HMI inspection.
39. Overall, procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good and have a beneficial effect on their progress and personal development. Whilst the procedures for supporting the pupils' personal development are very good, the recording process is mainly informal.
40. The school policies and procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good and there is no evidence of oppressive behaviour. The class rules, the pupil rewards system and awards assemblies and the emphasis placed on personal, social and health education through 'circle time' all contribute significantly to the success of these policies. Policies and procedures for promoting health and safety and for dealing with child protection issues are also very good.
41. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported in a positive learning environment which ensures suitable opportunities for all pupils to develop their understanding of English. They are well integrated in the school life and are well cared for by the school. Mutual respect and tolerance of others' feelings, values and beliefs, underpin the good relationships within the school.
42. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are very good. The impact of the home school support project is evident in the improved attendance. Plans to develop this activity to include additional support for pupils and families at a more personal level, together with a proposed breakfast club, should enhance its effectiveness.
43. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good overall. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science assessment procedures are excellent. This is a very significant improvement since the time of the previous HMI inspection. Assessments are undertaken each half-term, or at the end of appropriate topics of work and teachers keep very extensive records of pupils' current attainment. This information is used most effectively in these subjects to ensure that pupils are provided with work that is suited to their individual needs. In other curriculum areas, satisfactory assessment procedures are in place, with teachers keeping a variety of relevant information relating to pupils' attainment and progress. However, the school has already identified the need to introduce a more unified system for assessing foundation subjects in its plans for the future.
44. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress through the school in English, mathematics and science are excellent. All pupils are provided with targets at the beginning of the year and later in the year these targets are reviewed, using the information that has been gained. New targets are then provided, if appropriate. The school keeps very extensive and detailed records of pupils' attainment and of the progress they make, as they move through the school. Very careful predictions are made about pupils' future performance, using this information.
45. The school is effective in identifying children with learning difficulties soon after entry into Reception and this has a positive impact on the progress they make. The school uses its assessment procedures exceptionally well to identify pupils who need additional support and to ensure that their needs are met. Teachers review pupils' targets, which are of very high quality, on their individual education plans each term and, wherever possible, the parents are involved. The special needs co-ordinator receives information about any child new to the school and is able to identify any concerns. These are shared with the pupil's teacher and the necessary support given to ensure that the pupils are given good care. The school firmly believes in early intervention, which has a very positive impact on the very good progress the pupils make. The school has developed very good links with other agencies to ensure that pupils receive as much support as possible. The special needs co-ordinator meets with the educational psychologist and

representatives from the learning support service and the behavioural support team to discuss the needs of individual pupils and to seek advice on how best their needs can be met within the school. They know each of the pupils extremely well and the school is successful in caring for pupils who are known to need particular attention and for whom the school needs to be particularly vigilant. This is endorsed by the school's full commitment to inclusion. Provision for pupils who have statements is excellent and the school ensures that all other agencies, as outlined in their statements, are fully involved. Annual reviews of the statements are appropriately completed and, again, all agencies involved with the pupils either attend the review or submit reports.

46. The school also has good procedures to monitor the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language. All pupils from Reception to Year 6 have been assessed and their stage of language acquisition has been determined and recorded. The teachers are given this information to enable them to give systematic support within classes through differentiation and use of classroom assistants.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Overall, the partnership with parents is good. No judgement on partnership with parents was made at the last inspection by HMI so no direct comparisons can be made. Of the small number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or who attended the parents' meeting, a big majority have positive views of what the school provides and achieves. A small minority of these parents disagreed that the school keeps them well informed about how their children are getting on. However, inspection evidence does not support their misgivings.
48. There is very effective communication between the school and parents, with information provided through regular newsletters, notice boards, termly parents' meetings and annual reports. Information on the curriculum that each class is to follow during each term is sent to all parents. Parents know that they can discuss issues informally with staff.
49. Pupils' annual reports give parents a clear picture of children's attainment, progress, personal development, strengths and areas for improvement. The recent change in format, giving a clear, overall picture of pupils' academic progress within their classes, has been well received by parents.
50. The school makes significant efforts to encourage parental involvement in the school. A few parents help out in the classroom and in some other activities, such as on school trips and attendance at special assemblies. There is a small, but very supportive, Friends of St Marks group that raises a significant amount of money to supplement school funds. The recent Christmas Bazaar was generally regarded as a resounding success. A computer club for parents has been organised and is due to begin shortly.
51. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the special needs process. The targets, on the individual education plans, are discussed and reviewed during parent consultation evenings. They are also invited to attend or contribute to the annual reviews for pupils with statements of special educational needs.
52. There is good communication with parents. Interpreters can be provided if needed. Currently, parents come to school with their older children or relatives who can speak and understand English. Some standard letters are translated in pupils' home languages to keep parents well informed.
53. Overall, the impact of the parents' contribution to the life and work of the school is satisfactory, although the school would like to see a general improvement, particularly in parents' contributions to children's learning at school and at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The main reason why the school is so successful is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Her educational vision for the school is inspirational and this enables her to very successfully motivate and influence all staff. The deputy headteacher is also an outstanding leader who works very closely with the headteacher to ensure that very high quality improvements are achieved. This has been achieved through outstanding management, professional rigour and leading by example. A team of enthusiastic and dedicated staff support them very well and carry out their roles and responsibilities with vigour. The upward trend in standards achieved by pupils is just one way in which the school has been successful in fulfilling its aims. There is a very strong commitment to improvement and an outstanding capacity to succeed.
55. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The co-ordinator is very experienced and all the paperwork is extremely well organised. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. There is a very good special education needs policy, which endorses the school's commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils. The special education needs co-ordinator very effectively monitors the targets on the individual education plans and the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs. She is also responsible for the deployment of the learning support staff, who are invited to attend training sessions relevant to all staff working in the school. For example, they have attended information and communication technology sessions and have also benefited from the experience of specialist speakers who support them with their training needs. The governing body is well informed about the special needs provision in the school through regular meetings between the special educational needs co-ordinator and the designated governor.
56. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is well co-ordinated. Procedures are in place for the assessment of pupils, who are graded and targeted to further their learning. Regular training sessions are organised to support both the teachers and learning assistants. The school has good procedures to monitor the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The Year 6 test results have been analysed in English, mathematics and science for bilingual pupils. These indicate that pupils who speak English as an additional language attain a similar and sometimes higher standard than their monolingual peers.
57. Everything the school does is geared to raising standards and ensuring that all pupils are fully included into the life of the school. A highly effective school development plan systematically focuses on improvement and provides outstanding strategic management for the future. It has been agreed by both staff and governors and enables all involved in the school to have a clear view of what needs to be done. It addresses the appropriate areas for development well and fully reflects the aims and values of the school.
58. The governing body have a very clear committee structure and successfully fulfil their statutory requirements. They are extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of school life and have a very clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They work very closely with the staff, provide very high quality support and make critical evaluations of all major decisions.
59. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are excellent. There is a systematic programme in place for monitoring lessons, plans and books, which is very effectively carried out by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators. The analysis of pupil performance throughout the school is of the very highest standard and staff work very closely together to evaluate the quality of learning. Senior management have developed outstanding monitoring procedures and make the very best possible use of information gained from test results. For example, they have successfully analysed weaknesses in pupil performance in English, mathematics and science.
60. Financial planning is very closely linked to the educational priorities that are identified on the school development plan and have been agreed by both staff and governors. Excellent use is made of all available resources. All funds, including specific grants, are carefully matched to the priorities that have been identified in the plan. The substantial amount of money that accrued

whilst there were a large number of acting headteachers, prior to the appointment of a substantive headteacher, has been carried over and has been very carefully allocated for projects to be achieved in the near future. For example, the school hopes to use some of this money to improve the administrative block. Very clearly identified routines have been established and enable the headteacher and governors to monitor the deployment of resources and to establish best value for money principles when measuring improvements in the quality of teaching, standards achieved by the pupils and when purchasing resources. Day-to-day financial management and administration of the school are very good because of very efficient administration procedures and very effective use of new technology.

61. There is a good match of teaching and support staff. Structures are very securely in place for the induction of both newly qualified and teachers newly appointed to the school. The school provides an excellent venue for the training of new teachers. Performance management procedures are firmly in place and used well to develop staff and improve pupil achievement.

The accommodation is good, with classrooms appropriate in size and a spacious hall suitable for school performances. Learning resources are good. There is also a satisfactory outdoor area for the Foundation Stage. A new information and communication technology suite and an attractive library area funded by the North Islington Education Action Zone has made a positive impact on standards. However, the administration area of the school is very small and there is not a suitable place to meet parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The school has no major weaknesses.

Minor issues for further improvement:

- improving the involvement of parents in the work of the school (paragraph 53);
- implementing plans to extend assessment procedures to foundation subjects (paragraphs 101, 105, 112, 116, 120, 124);
- developing the use of the outdoor area as an integral part of the Foundation Stage curriculum (paragraph 67).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	16	19	4	0	0	0
Percentage	5	39	46	10	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	175
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	90

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	53

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.6

School data	2.4
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	15	8	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	7	8	8
	Total	19	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (84)	91 (84)	96 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	21	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (84)	96 (88)	96 (88)
	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	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	13
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	21	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (81)	82 (56)	86 (78)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	20	22	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (59)	79 (56)	75 (63)
	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	16
Black – African heritage	21
Black – other	18
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	87
Any other minority ethnic group	25

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	25.0

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	562,026
Total expenditure	561,063
Expenditure per pupil	3,083
Balance brought forward from previous year	54,033
Balance carried forward to next year	54,996

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 18%

Number of questionnaires sent out	175
Number of questionnaires returned	32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	22	6	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	28	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	22	6	3	3
The teaching is good.	66	22	3	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	22	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	16	13	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	25	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	66	22	9	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	28	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	22	3	0	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. There is one class in the Foundation Stage, which is a step in education prior to starting the National Curriculum in Year 1. Children are admitted into school in the September following their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were 29 children in the Reception class who were being taught by a full-time qualified teacher new to this age group. A full-time nursery-nurse, newly qualified and on a temporary contract, was supporting her.
64. Most children have attended a wide variety of different nurseries before they come to school, but both parents and children are well prepared for the formal start of schooling. They are invited to the school at the end of the summer term to meet staff and observe the Reception Class routines. Interviews between staff, parents and children are held at the beginning of the autumn term, ensuring that the school gets to know the families well. These good induction procedures ensure that children quickly settle into the school routines.
65. The school follows the Early Learning Goals, the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum in Reception. This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or '*stepping stones*', from which both progress and standards can be measured.
66. Children enter the Reception class with skills in all areas of learning that are well below the nationally expected levels. This is confirmed by the baseline assessments conducted with these children. However, with the provision of a good range of suitable activities and good quality teaching overall, the children work purposefully towards achieving the early learning goals in each area of learning and good progress is made. The information collated from baseline assessment is used effectively to provide appropriate support. The teacher plans the work with a clear focus on children's individual learning needs and a good range of activities are provided to develop all areas of learning. However, occasionally, these are over-directed and children have to sit on the carpet for long sessions, becoming tired and inattentive. All staff use praise effectively to motivate the children, to engage them in learning and to promote their self-esteem. Children make good progress in all six areas of learning, but almost all do not attain the nationally agreed goals in personal, social and emotional, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development by the end of their Reception year. Children's physical development is as expected for their age when they start Year 1.
67. The indoor area provides a stimulating learning environment, but the outdoor area is not used well to extend and enrich the curriculum. During the inspection, it was used only for physical development and this is a weakness. Children with special educational needs are carefully monitored. Children who speak English as an additional language are assessed and support is provided within the class through the use of visual aids and appropriate match of work.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and is promoted at every opportunity. Considering their low start they make good progress as a result of good quality teaching. However, the majority of children will not achieve the final stage of the '*stepping-stones*' in the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. In a significant number of lessons, children show interest in the activities such as singing number rhymes, using initial letter sounds to identify objects and counting the number of children present in the class. They have started to respond to a more formal structure. However, some children do not always sit quietly when the teacher is talking and often interject with their own responses. Much emphasis is placed on good

behaviour, working and playing together or along side each other. Children respond well when they work in pairs in the information and communication technology suite.

Children are learning to concentrate for a suitable length of time, but many lose concentration and get tired at the end of the day. They are learning the social rules of taking turns, but some find it hard to wait. For example, they found it hard to wait for their turn to get fruit and, as a result, much time was wasted in correcting behaviour. Both boys and girls and children of different ethnic groupings develop good attitudes towards others. Through good teaching, children learn to be caring and giving. For instance, they hear the story of 'The Rainbow Fish' who gave her fins to help others and staff appropriately asks questions as to what they would like to share with their friends. Emotions such as fear, sadness and happiness are explored when they hear the story of 'The Lost Sheep'. The very strong supportive ethos of the school encourages children to learn to be quiet and reflective at assembly times.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Children make good progress in this area of learning, but, because of their low attainment on entry, almost all do not reach the final stage or '*stepping stone*' of the early learning goals. Above average children are able to talk, explain their activities in the role-play area and use simple statements with confidence. Most children are beginning to recall stories. For example, they were observed acting out the story of the 'Three Little Pigs' for the school assembly. However, most Reception children are still working on the third stage of the '*stepping stones*' and this is below national expectations for this age. Above average and average children recognise their names, some familiar words, sing well known songs and choose to read in the reading area. The displays and resources promote reading well. They are aware that the print carries meaning. They understand that print is read from left to right and are beginning to use pictures to talk about a story. Above average children recognise a good number of high frequency words and build some consonant-vowel-consonant words. However, overall standards in reading on entry to Year 1 are below those expected. Most children write their names and the above average write sentences independently with some recognisable letters. They control writing tools well and are learning the correct formation of letters. Overall, standards in writing on entry to Year 1 are below those expected nationally.
70. The overall quality of teaching and learning in this area of learning is satisfactory. Teaching of phonics is good and is promoting letter/sound recognition well and most children know some initial sounds. However, some whole class sessions give insufficient opportunities to develop language skills when the teacher does most of the talking. Many children give one-word answers and, at times, staff accept these without challenging them further. As a result, some opportunities to support children through adult intervention are missed. For instance, when children were engaged in tasting fruit and writing shopping lists, they were not challenged to comment on the taste and smell of fruits nor relate their experiences of visiting a shop the previous day. Children who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported and their progress is good in all areas of communication, language and literacy.

Mathematical development

71. Although all children make good progress in Reception, almost all do not reach the final stage or '*stepping-stone*' of this area of learning, because attainment on entry to school is so low. Overall, teaching is good in this area of learning. Children are successfully taught a good range of number songs and rhymes. This helps them to order numbers and recognise that numbers can be counted up or down. Sorting, counting and matching are successfully integrated into different activities and the children use these skills with increasing accuracy as they count toy animals and pieces of fruit at snack times. For example, children count the number of children present at the registration period and work out the number of pieces of fruit needed for the whole class. Children are beginning to recognise written numbers. Above average children recognise numbers to 10 and some beyond. A small number of children name two-dimensional shapes such as triangle, square, and circle. Mathematics is taught both across the curriculum and in specific

lessons. The teacher has good subject knowledge and plans lessons well. Teaching is in a style similar to that required by the National Numeracy Strategy and this is making a positive impact on children's learning. However, at times, teachers expectations are inappropriately high. For instance, in one lesson the children were required to count numbers to 29. This was much too difficult for most of the class and it led to them becoming inattentive. This resulted in a small number of children presenting challenging behaviour. Children who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Attainment of almost all children is below the expected early learning goals when they complete the Reception year. However, good progress is made as a result of the good quality of teaching in this area of learning. Children learn about pushing and pulling movements when they roll malleable materials or use wheeled toys. They gain experience of the world around them by walking around the school and participating in a visit to the local shops. They learn to draw simple maps of their route to school. Children discuss their families, talk about where they live and share special events such as birthdays and other celebrations. When using the computer, children learn to use the mouse to operate the programme on the screen. For example, they manipulate the mouse to draw straight, curved and zigzag lines and are able to write their names on the screen. The teacher demonstrates computer skills well by using a white interactive board and this enables the children to achieve well. They learn about a variety of materials when using construction toys, programmable vehicles, sand and water. Their knowledge is developed well through the teacher's good questioning skills. For instance, they were encouraged to think about their favourite and other exotic fruits when they visited a green grocery shop. This first hand experience enabled them to talk about their likes and dislikes with developing confidence.

Physical development

73. By the end of Reception year, children's physical development is appropriate for their age. This is because of good teaching in this area of learning and good provision, both indoors and outside. For example, they are given opportunities for using wheeled toys. Children showed good awareness of space and control and enjoy the experiences with these toys. They also have many opportunities to climb and balance and use apparatus safely. Children move with good control and co-ordination when they play with hoops, balls, rings and beanbags. They use the hall well for learning the skills of hopping, jumping, walking and standing still. Construction kits, puzzles, and cooking activities are all used well to promote the children's finer hand skills. Most children handle pencils, brushes, glue spreaders, craft tools and construction kits appropriately. Many control the computer mouse appropriately. Very positive responses are made to these activities and children show enjoyment and motivation.

Creative development

74. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities that stimulate their imagination and enable them to make good progress. However, because attainment on entry is so low when they enter school, they do not achieve the expected level by Year 1 of the National Curriculum. Children use pencils, felt pens, crayons, paints confidently to present their ideas through drawing, painting and modelling. They use a range of materials to make collages to depict their stories such as 'Handa's Surprise', and 'The Rainbow Fish'. They are given opportunities to experiment with a range of art materials and techniques, play imaginatively with small toys and use the role-play to develop their skills further. In whole class sessions, they learn to sing a wide range of songs and action rhymes. They use musical instruments and experiment with sound. The teaching of creative skills is satisfactory overall. A wide range of appropriate activities is planned but based mainly on whole class sessions. As a result, children do not get many opportunities to express freely, choosing activities as and when they need. In addition, children are given insufficient opportunities to draw their own shapes to create individual representations.

ENGLISH

75. When pupils start Year 1 of the National Curriculum their levels of attainment are below the national average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. High quality teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 ensures that all pupils make good progress; by the end of Year 2 standards are in line with national averages. In Years 3 to 6 the very good quality of teaching and learning results in very good progress being made. By the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average. The overall achievement in English is very good. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained in Year 2 but have improved significantly in Year 6 when they were judged by HMI to be 'close to or below' national averages.
76. Initially, most pupils lack the confidence and knowledge to speak and listening skills are poor. However, by the time the pupils reach Year 6, excellent progress has been made in speaking and listening skills. In Years 1 and 2, effective teaching encourages pupils to listen carefully to instructions and they also use appropriate language with satisfactory understanding. Speaking and listening skills continue to develop very well in Years 3 to 6. The pupils are encouraged to use technical vocabulary in all subjects across the curriculum and start to express themselves with sophisticated speaking skills. They listen sensitively to each other and evaluate the views expressed. By Year 6, they successfully discuss a wide range of viewpoints and maturely take part in debates and discussions with high levels of confidence.
77. Given the limitations of the pupils' skills on entry to the school, they do very well to attain satisfactory standards in reading in Year 2. Pupils of all abilities talk enthusiastically about reading and have a very positive attitude towards books. This is because teachers promote the Literacy Strategy and all forms of literature are given a very high profile throughout the school. Above average and average pupils talk enthusiastically about reading 'chapter books' such as 'Never-ending Story' and accurately identify authors and illustrators. They clearly explain how they 'sound out' the letters of words they are unsure of. Below average pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and confidently ask friends for help when tackling unknown words. By Year 6, almost all pupils read accurately with fluency and expression. For example, an above average pupil uses the word 'enormous' with real meaning and this contributed to the interesting manner in which the passage was read. Above average and average pupils discuss the different characters in books and make thoughtful analysis of plots and themes in stories. For instance, one above average pupil described the parents of Roald Dahl's 'Matilda' as 'neglecting in their duties'.
78. Overall achievement in writing is excellent. By Year 2, standards are satisfactory and this represents very good achievement from below average standards at the start of Year 1. In Year 2, the above average and average pupils write detailed stories, using capital letters and full stops accurately. They understand what an adjective is and use describing words such as 'wicked, cruel, and silly'. They use exciting vocabulary when starting stories such as 'One sunny day there lived a girl' to captivate the interest of readers and make good use of rhyming couplets to create poetry such as combining words like 'red and 'Ted' together. Below average pupils are developing the use of full stops and capital letters in short sentences. They write simple instructions for daily tasks and confidently try to write their own spellings. Their writing skills continue to be developed consistently well in Years 3 to 6. In Year 3, they accurately identify the different verb endings and start to use commas with confidence. Above average and average pupils in Year 4 start to use paragraphs in their detailed stories about princesses and spooky nights. Year 5 above average and average pupils use adjectives such as 'gentle voices' and 'musky clouds' very effectively in stories and poems. By Year 6, almost all pupils write extensively on a wide range of different topics, such as 'Out in Space' and other adventure stories. They use their skills very well to write for a range of purposes, which include newspaper reports, diary extracts, poetry, letters and discussions. Above average and average pupils develop characters through the use of direct speech. Punctuation, such as exclamation marks and commas, are used accurately and lively, descriptive language is included to create effect. For example, one pupil described a feeling of fright 'as knuckles turning white just like they do on a roller-coaster'. Although below average pupils occasionally forget to use capital letters, they

know how to plan stories and confidently present arguments for and against controversial issues such as school uniform and playtime.

79. Standards of handwriting are good throughout the school. Younger pupils regularly practise forming their letters correctly and older pupils develop a neat, legible, joined-up style. Teachers have specifically targeted handwriting throughout the school and expect the same good standards of handwriting in all subjects. Spelling is taught systematically in all classes. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn to recognise letter blends such as 'tr', 'sw', 'gl', and 'cr' and confidently identify word patterns. Older pupils develop well their spelling techniques, using dictionaries and achieving personal targets that teachers set.

Very good use is made of information and communication technology skills to produce final copies, which are correctly spelt.

80. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good and has an extremely positive impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the literacy session and clearly identify learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils. These objectives are revisited at the end of the lesson, ensuring that pupils have a good awareness of their own learning. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson the teacher clearly identified the objective and promised his class that they would learn how to identify adjectives in text. Relationships in class are excellent and very good use is made of praise and reward strategies. This has a highly effective impact on pupils' enthusiasm and interest in the subject. Planning is very detailed and activities for differing groups of pupils carefully highlighted. This is successfully achieved because the highest quality assessment and tracking procedures are in place and are used exceptionally well to set individual, group and class targets. This has a very positive impact on the quality of learning and ensures that pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons are interesting and suitable topics are chosen to really motivate the pupils. For example, an excellent Year 6 lesson involved pupils discussing the advantages and disadvantages of taking mobile telephones to school. Class management is very good and teachers always have very high expectations of both work and behaviour. Sessions move at a very good pace and this enables pupils to work at an effective rate. All teachers use classroom assistants very well to support pupils' learning. For instance, in a very good Year 4 lesson the learning support assistant was used very well during the introduction to assist a group of pupils who had special educational needs. Very good use is made of information and communication technology to present lessons. For example, interactive white-boards and overhead projectors are used very effectively to make sessions interesting and this is having a positive impact on pupils' concentration.

81. Teachers very carefully plan suitable work for pupils with special educational needs. Activities closely match the provision identified in their individual action plans. Classroom assistants provide very high quality support and work closely with the teachers to ensure that the needs of all the pupils are met. Pupils who use English as an additional language are supported by high quality visual aids that enable them to have full access to learning situations.

82. Management of English is excellent. The co-ordinator has an outstanding knowledge of the subject, which has been used exceptionally well to raise standards and improve the overall quality of teaching and learning in English. Test results are analysed in exceptional detail and are used to identify weaknesses in pupil attainment, develop teaching techniques and set targets for future improvements. Literacy skills are used very well to support other subjects within the curriculum, such as history and geography. Excellent use has been made of grants from North Islington Education Action Zone to create a stimulating new library, which is shortly to be catalogued, using a computer software program. Pupils benefit from a good range of storybooks and these are used very well to promote reading skills.

MATHEMATICS

83. Standards are close to the national average at the end of Year 2 and are above by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. Given the well below

nationally expected attainment on entry to the Reception, pupils make very good progress by the end of Year 6. This represents excellent progress by all pupils including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The standards have been steadily improving throughout the school since the last inspection, as a result of good and very good teaching; the school's rigorous monitoring system; tracking pupils' progress and setting appropriately challenging targets for improvement and the provision of extra support to achieve these through booster classes.

84. The National Numeracy Strategy is used very effectively. It has a very positive impact in raising pupils' achievement, particularly in instant recall of number facts for mental calculations, the use of mathematical vocabulary and 'using and applying mathematics to solve problems'. Last year's test results have been thoroughly analysed by the subject co-ordinator and weaknesses identified are now being targeted in lessons. The detailed planning, together with the use of very good assessment ensures that pupils of differing prior attainment are given suitable work. Booster classes have been introduced to help those pupils identified as potentially benefiting from extra help. The criteria by which pupils are selected ensure that the groups fully match the needs of all.
85. By the time pupils are in Year 2, they undertake a range of practical and problem solving activities. Most pupils count to 100 and identify odd and even numbers. They recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 and higher attaining pupils go beyond. For example, during discussions with pupils, above average and average pupils could add and subtract two digit numbers, using strategies for quick mental calculations. They count on in tens from a given number, multiplication facts to 2 and 10 time-tables and corresponding division facts, doubling simple numbers such as four, six, eight and halving them. They begin to understand place value of digits to 100, but their understanding beyond is not secure. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are able to add and subtract two digit numbers. Above average pupils are learning to solve problems using three digit numbers to achieve the higher levels appropriate for their age. Most pupils know the main properties of simple, two and three-dimensional shapes and can sort them correctly. They solve money problems accurately, giving the right amount from 20 or 50 pence and work competently with money up to £1. They are able to measure the length, volume and weight of objects, using standard and non-standard measures, including metres, litres and kilograms. Pupils' learn appropriate mathematical vocabulary. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils were able to divide a shape in two and four equal parts, using appropriate mathematical vocabulary of half and quarter. Above average pupils could understand that two quarters make a half.
86. By Year 6, pupils have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of place value in large numbers and show a good awareness of number patterns through using tables and multiplication grids. Their recall of timetables is very well developed. They understand the equivalence in fractions, and above average pupils correctly order decimal fractions rounding them to the nearest tenth or hundredth and convert them into percentages. Pupils collect and interpret data in bar and line graphs and pie charts. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils were able to use the four number operations to solve multi-step word problems in time, weight, money and measurement.
87. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. This is due to the additional support they receive from the learning support assistants, which helps to boost their confidence. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make very good progress overall as a result of good teaching strategies, such as use of visual materials, explanations of vocabulary and supporting pupils with work sheets that give visual clues, without the work being made easier in content.
88. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. This shows a very good improvement from the last inspection. The three-part lesson structure, recommended by the numeracy strategy, is used very effectively to promote pupils' learning. Teachers give due regard to mental and oral work at the start of a lesson. Pupils enjoy these appropriately short, sharp sessions. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, the teacher gave pupils three digit numbers and asked them to put these in order of biggest to smallest and then to make a largest number from a given three-digit number. Pupils enjoyed the work and made very

good progress. They were well stimulated before the main activity. An appropriately high proportion of direct teaching keeps pupils on task throughout each lesson. Pupils behave well, concentrate and persevere to complete their tasks, thereby achieving very well.

89. Planning is very good. Teachers share their learning objectives with the pupils, using their good subject knowledge and understanding to demonstrate skilfully and explain clearly a wide range of mathematical concepts. They use charts, overhead projectors, write on boards and use work sheets with visual content to support their pupils. In Years 4 and 6 classes, the use of 'interactive white board' to demonstrate and explain new concepts had a very positive impact on learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers use and explain the precise mathematical vocabulary that is then displayed around the classes for pupils' support.

For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher ensured that pupils used correct vocabulary such as 'two equal halves, and four equal quarters' of a whole. Teachers generally use questions very well, both to check on understanding and to develop learning.

90. Teachers are careful to evaluate with the pupils whether the learning intentions for the lesson have been met. They do this by reminding pupils of what they are expected to learn at different times during the lesson and use the final whole session for reinforcement. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were learning to work out the area of shapes. They were asked, at different intervals, what they were learning and if they had found quicker methods of counting the squares in a shape. This helped pupils to focus on learning and they made good progress. In all lessons, teaching is in groups, arranged by prior attainment. In very good lessons, the interest and concentration of all pupils is maintained and achievement is very good. For instance, in a very high quality lesson in Year 5, pupils of all abilities were given very good support and guidance when they were developing their knowledge of metric units of mass. Above average pupils are always given challenging work and perform at a good pace. Teachers use the assessment information gained to plan the next stage of work or setting individual targets very well. Teachers and pupils make effective use of the range of resources, including white boards, digit cards, and 100 number squares, to consolidate and support pupils' mathematical understanding. Teachers feel secure in teaching mathematics with the guidance from the Numeracy Strategy.
91. Management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has rigorously analysed test result data to set class and individual targets. He is very secure in his knowledge and understanding of the subject and monitors lessons, teachers' plans and scrutinises pupils' work. He gives demonstration lessons and supports colleagues very well. This has a positive impact on standards. Numeracy is used well to support learning across the curriculum, particularly in science and geography. Good use is made of information and communication technology to promote some numeracy skills. There is a clear plan for further improvements in mathematics, the focus being the improvement of standards in Years 1 and 2.

SCIENCE

92. Standards are broadly average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are achieving well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001, the school's results were well below average. The co-ordinator analysed the results and identified the areas of particular weakness. These have been well addressed, through very good teaching and through the provision of extra lessons for Year 6 pupils. As a result, standards have improved very significantly. At the time of the school's previous inspection, standards at the end of Year 6 were below average and standards have improved since then.
93. By the end of Year 2, pupils successfully undertake experiments on a number of aspects of their work, for example, electricity and materials. Pupils in Year 1 also undertake practical activities, such as those on sound and the human senses. However, a small minority have problems finding the appropriate scientific vocabulary to explain their work. Many pupils successfully name the main external features of both the body and a flowering plant and most explain the items needed to sustain life. Most identify the main components of a healthy diet. Pupils show a clear

awareness that different living things are found in different places. Most recognise and name common materials, such as metal, plastic and wood and they successfully describe some of their uses. Whilst most pupils readily explain ways in which materials can be changed, a number of pupils lack confidence in discussing reversible change. Almost all pupils explain the role of batteries, wires and bulbs in an electric circuit and know that a circuit will not work if it has a break in it. The pupils are confident in explaining that light and sound come from a variety of sources.

94. By the end of Year 6, pupils successfully carry out a range of experiments, using suitable equipment, making observations and recording their findings. For example, pupils in Year 6 readily carry out investigations into gravity and air resistance. Pupils in other classes also carry out practical work, such as that on sound in Year 5. Whilst most pupils successfully explain their work, understanding and using the correct scientific language, a small number continue to find this aspect difficult. At times they also have difficulty in clearly answering questions and some have problems interpreting graphs. However, most pupils successfully explain the meaning of fair testing. Almost all pupils are confident in explaining many of the life-processes of humans, such as the role of the heart in blood circulation, as well as discussing, for example, the importance of the skeleton, in particular the teeth. Most pupils name the various parts of a flower and they can explain the food chain. Many pupils successfully name a variety of materials, they can describe their various properties and they explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Pupils know that substances can be mixed and many describe how these can be separated through processes such as sieving and filtration. They are less confident in explaining the processes surrounding dissolving and evaporation. Pupils know that objects have weight, because of the gravitational pull of the Earth and most explain that friction and air resistance are forces that slow moving objects. Pupils know that light travels in straight lines and most explain how shadows are formed.
95. The quality of teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are very well planned, with teachers throughout the school, especially in Years 3 to 6, now making good use of practical activities. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. This provision is contributing towards the progress the pupils are making. The teachers are also particularly careful to use and emphasise the correct scientific terminology, which is also having a beneficial effect on the pupils' learning, overall. All teachers have good subject knowledge and they provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken. The pupils show great interest in the subject, displaying consistently good attitudes and much increased confidence in practical work in particular. In such circumstances all pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Where teaching is very good, in Years 3 to 6, subject knowledge is especially secure, expectations are high, pupils are provided with much independence in carrying out their activities, plenary sessions are used most thoughtfully and, as a result, pupils make very good progress in their learning. Teachers throughout the school are enthusiastic and this makes the pupils enthusiastic, too. Pupils work hard, concentrate well and are keen to find answers to the problems set. The teachers and teaching assistants provide help and well directed support throughout. The pupils' behaviour is good and often very good. They work well with other pupils in carrying out activities, they are very aware of safety procedures and most produce their work neatly and carefully. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly, with most appropriate comments of support and advice being added to help the pupils develop their work further.
96. The school has an appropriate scheme of work, based largely on the government's curriculum guidelines and suitable resources are readily provided to support the work. Careful planning ensures that all aspects of work are suitably covered, with the planning for practical activities now being extremely thorough, especially in Years 3 to 6. The co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic and she supports her colleagues well, whenever necessary. Opportunities are planned for her to observe the work being undertaken in the classrooms, to see the standards being achieved. She is a very good practitioner and has worked hard to raise standards through analysing pupils' previous test results and providing extra lessons for Year 6 pupils. Excellent arrangements are now made for assessing the pupils' work, with extensive evidence being kept to identify pupils' current attainment and the progress they have made. This information is also used well to provide

suitable new work for all pupils. The written work, especially that relating to reporting on practical activities, provides support to the school's initiative in literacy. Counting and measuring activities, in various aspects of the subject, support the school's work in numeracy. Information and communication technology is also used to enhance the work in science, such as when pupils in Year 5 used a program on the human body. Pupils find the subject exciting, especially when carrying out experiments and the excitement generated by the 'wonders of science' contributes towards their spiritual development.

ART AND DESIGN

97. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, almost all pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational need and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their individual starting points as they move up through the key stages. Art and design is the focus subject for development during this year. The wide range of imaginative and colourful displays in the classrooms and around the school celebrates pupils' achievement and demonstrates that pupils achieve well in the subject.
98. Pupils' skills and understanding of different techniques and use of a variety of media have been systematically developed as they move through the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils experience a range of activities and media, enabling them to explore colour, shape, and texture. They are introduced to paint, brush, crayon, chalk, charcoal and learn to control these well. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils were making patterns, using straight, curved and zigzag lines. They used charcoal, chalk, and crayons to good effect and then used string to give texture to their patterns. Throughout Years 1 and 2 there are good examples of cross-curricular links. For example, a display of work being done by Year 1 depicts the story of Moses, read in literacy sessions, in relation to their religious education topic. They show good skills of observation in the portraits they make, using pastels, and learn how to soften the lines to create the illusion of skin texture.
99. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6, because teachers have good subject knowledge. Art and design makes a very good contribution to cultural development. For example, pupils gain good knowledge and understanding of African culture when they make African style tiles, using lentils and beans, and apply their skills in designing to produce effective results. Their skills are enriched through resident artists and they learn to make African masks, using mainly recycled materials. Year 4 create effective patterns and stained glass windows, using Egyptian artefacts and pictures for stimulus. This supports their knowledge and understanding of Egyptian civilisation. Visits to places such as Regents' Park Mosque inspire them to make silhouette pictures. Pupils make three-dimensional Jewish artefacts in relation to their study of the religion. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is also good. All pupils are fully included in lessons and are able to express themselves in a variety of differing media.
100. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. Pupils enjoy art lessons and express themselves confidently. In all lessons, teachers have very clear objectives, which they share with their pupils and the teaching of skills and techniques is good. Teachers' own knowledge and understanding have greatly improved as a result of in service training from the specialist art co-ordinator and from observing resident artists' work. Teachers question well to challenge pupils to think deeply about what they were trying to achieve. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used the Internet to show images of attack on the Twin Towers on 11th September 2001. They listened to the report and expressed their feelings and moods before starting the topic on 'Issues in the News'. This resulted in pupils' excellent achievement. Teachers use a variety of media and prepare their resources and, as a result, pupils achieve well in lessons. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils managed to draw their patterns, using chalks, crayons, charcoal and felt pens and produced good results. Displays show that good links are established with other subjects, such as with literacy, when they paint their story settings, with science when they paint and use

collage to show food chains and the project on 'creating and making surfaces of planets'. There are many links with history, geography, design and technology and mathematics. However, work in the style of famous artists is underdeveloped and so is the use of computers.

101. Management of the subject is good. The school has been using a nationally recommended scheme of work, but is revising it to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met. The co-ordinator is an art specialist and gives good guidance and support through teaching of skills in workshops and through providing suggestions and resources for particular lessons. Pupils' work is well displayed and celebrates their artistic success. The co-ordinator has not been able to monitor the quality of teaching and learning by reviewing the sketchbooks, as not all teachers have adopted them for use in their classes. Assessments are made at the end of lessons and are shared verbally, but are not, as yet, recorded.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well. During the inspection, no lessons were seen. Therefore, judgements are based on a study of teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work.
103. By Year 2, pupils successfully clarify their ideas for making a product through class and group discussion. Having decided how to proceed, pupils are confident in identifying the items they need to make that product. They choose from a range of suitable materials such as paper, card and food and tools, such as scissors and knives, to help them. Pupils cut their components carefully and join them together accurately, using items such as sticky tape. Pupils successfully make, for instance, models of houses, coats for Joseph, vegetables prepared in a variety of ways and 'soul boxes'. By Year 6, pupils draw up appropriate plans for making an item and, in some cases, first producing simple models of that item. Having produced their plans pupils choose from a range of materials, including fabric, food items and wood and tools, including saws. They successfully measure, cut and shape the materials and join them with glue and thread. Pupils provide appropriate finishing techniques, such as painting, where required and they confidently evaluate their work, both as they proceed and when they have finished. Younger pupils have produced photo-frames, money containers, Viking and Egyptian artefacts and sandwiches with various fillings. Older pupils have made musical instruments, slippers and towers to support a weight.
104. No lessons were observed, but an examination of teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and an examination of some of their finished work show that learning is good. Teachers' planning is good and, in particular, links are made with other subjects, whenever possible. For example, the work on musical instruments in Year 5 is closely related to work in science. Pupils are provided with opportunities to carry out all relevant activities and develop all appropriate skills. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and they readily discuss the work they have produced, how successful it has been and how it could have been improved. The range of activities provided, the instruction received and the enthusiasm displayed clearly help all pupils to make good gains in both their designing and making skills.
105. There is a suitable scheme of work and an overview is also produced to ensure a full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. All aspects of work are now suitably covered, with opportunities being allowed for designing, making and evaluating finished work. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and, through her role as headteacher, she has a clear understanding of the work that is being done in the school. Although they are largely informal, assessment procedures are satisfactory, with a variety of information being provided to identify pupils' current attainment and their skill levels. The school has plans to develop these procedures further. The writing activities undertaken in planning and evaluating work give support to the school's initiative in literacy. Measuring activities, such as measuring and cutting card and wood accurately, support the work in numeracy. Some use is also made of information and communication technology, for example when pupils type out plans and evaluations of their products.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. At the time of the last inspection, no judgement was made on standards. However, it is evident from current planning and the quality of work produced that good improvements have been made in this subject. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well.
107. In Year 1, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of local places and confidently recall their address. They describe their route to school, with growing accuracy and explain the different local landmarks seen on their journey. By Year 2, they are successfully contrasting an island location with that of their own and have learnt to use simple keys to maps. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because the teachers provide interesting topics, which the pupils relate to and make geography skills fun to learn.

For instance, they use a bear called 'Barnaby' who travels around the world and 'sends postcards' to the pupils. In Year 3, they learn about how different buildings in their environment are used and confidently identify those used for leisure purposes, trading and for housing. In Year 4, they learn how man affects the environment with litter, mobile phones and vandalism. In Year 5, they use atlases, globes and maps to locate European countries and capital cities. By Year 6, the pupils discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the local high street, describe their route and have a clear understanding of how they might improve their local environment. They also describe the water cycle in detail and know how rivers change landscapes by continual erosion. Pupils maintain this good achievement in Years 3 to 6 because they are motivated in their learning by very good quality teaching. Very close links are also made with numeracy and literacy and this reinforces their learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 have recorded the different types of transport found on their local high street and have created graphs to depict the most commonly found. Geographical challenges are completed in Year 6, which successfully use enquiry skills and an analysis of data. This was observed when pupils were required to work out the advantages and disadvantages of improving a local park area. Discussion skills were good and pupils maturely ranked, in order, their preferences for improving the particular area. Pupils successfully achieved this challenge because the teacher provided very good quality input and described to the class exactly what they would learn. This indicated that relationships were excellent and had a very positive impact on the quality of learning.

108. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. This is because work is carefully planned to meet the needs of all and adult support is deployed well to ensure that everyone is fully included in the lesson.
109. The management of the subject has been recently taken over by a new and enthusiastic member of staff who has already identified areas of development. An audit of resources has been carried out and the co-ordinator has already made plans to monitor teachers planning. Appropriate use is made of information and communication technology.

HISTORY

110. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but discussion with pupils and evidence from work sampling and teacher planning indicate that standards in both Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress throughout the school. No judgement on standards was made at the last inspection by HMI, but it is clear that good developments have been made in this subject.
111. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the difference between the past and the present. They accurately identify the date when the fire of London happened and explain how it started. Year 3 pupils discuss the Roman invasion of Britain; they understand that the Romans

wished to settle in Britain and know that fighting took place between the inhabitants of Britain and these invaders. Year 4 pupils learn about life in Ancient Egypt and understand that they were dependent on the River Nile. Pupils in Year 5 gain a satisfactory understanding of the Victorian era and confidently compare the differences between the rich and poor during this time, including an in depth study of the novel *Oliver Twist*. Very good links with literacy are maintained in Year 6 when pupils create their own versions of the diary of Guy Fawkes from the day before he plotted to blow up the Houses of Parliament. They also organise different periods of history into an accurate timeline and understand that evidence about the past can be found from both original artefacts, such as old photographs, and by using information gathered in books.

112. No teaching was observed during the inspection and, therefore, a judgement cannot be made. History is carefully taught in specific blocks of time during the academic year and topics well chosen. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. The management of the subject has been recently taken over by a new and enthusiastic member of staff who has already identified areas of development.

An audit of resources has been carried out and planning is shortly to be monitored. Although the quality of planning is good, procedures to evaluate pupil performance are at a developmental stage.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well.
114. By Year 2, pupils confidently name items of computer equipment such as screen, mouse and keyboard. They successfully use a keyboard to type text, including their names and short sentences. For instance, pupils in Year 2 use computers confidently to produce poems about 'The Giant'. They place gaps between words, using the space bar and most pupils are able to introduce capital letters and full stops into their writing. Using an appropriate paint package, pupils produce an interesting range of pictures, such as those of houses and patterns. They confidently and independently access the menu to print their finished work. Pupils give instructions to a floor turtle to produce straight-line movements over varying distances. They successfully undertake simple modelling activities, exploring aspects of real and imaginary situations presented on the screen. By Year 6, pupils show sound skills in word processing, being confident in changing the font, colour and the size of their work. Older pupils can successfully move portions of text from one place to another. Pupils use the mouse accurately, to help produce various forms of art and they successfully merge artwork into their writing; for example, when pupils in Year 6 produced detailed work on volcanoes. Pupils successfully develop their control skills, using a floor turtle as well as a screen turtle to produce a range of straight line and turning movements, following a set course or producing their own patterns. Many pupils confidently access the Internet, as well as a range of CD ROMs, to provide a variety of information for history and science. They recognise patterns and relationships in adventure games, for example, and they confidently predict the outcome of different decisions. Pupils in Years 3 and 6 further improve their modelling skills through successfully producing a range of spreadsheets, for instance, when undertaking work on shopping. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are showing increasing confidence in sending electronic mail. Pupils, at present, have limited opportunities to develop their skills in monitoring external events.
115. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In a lesson seen in Year 6 they were very good. Teachers throughout the school are enthusiastic about information and communication technology and, now that resources have improved, in particular with the computer suite, they are able to provide regular opportunities for pupils to use the equipment. A number of teachers admit to some previous lack of confidence, but through careful preparation of lessons teachers are now providing pupils with most appropriate learning experiences. They provide clear and careful instructions on how to use various items of hardware, as well as various word processing and art packages, and all pupils are able to make good gains in their computer skills. Teachers also

provide opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Where teaching is very good and where teachers' subject knowledge is particularly secure, the advice and demonstration is especially helpful; where there are high expectations, pupils make very good gains. Pupils respond by generally showing very good attitudes to the subject and behaving very well. They listen carefully and they settle well to all tasks, with high levels of concentration and developing levels of skill. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and they work well, both alone and with a partner when necessary. Relationships are usually very good and pupils ask adults for help when required. They share computers amicably and are careful in their use of all forms of equipment. Very occasionally, a small number of pupils show less attention to their teacher, they cannot decide who will use the computer first and they are slow to settle to their work. Teachers and teaching assistants provide appropriate help and advice throughout, enabling their pupils to make steady progress.

116. The school has a nationally recommended scheme of work with additional plans having been added about its implementation. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has worked hard to enhance the overall provision. He is a very good practitioner and has contributed significantly to the improvement in provision within the school.

The co-ordinator has been very well supported by North Islington Education Action Zone, who have made a major contribution towards the overall resourcing of the subject. The co-ordinator readily supports his colleagues in lessons as well as providing training for them. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and, although they are informal, suitable information is available to enable staff to identify pupils' current understanding. The school has plans to develop more detailed assessment procedures in due course. Through the work in word-processing the subject is making an impact on pupils' literacy skills. Through the collection of data and its presentation, for example in the form of graphs, as well as its use in lessons, information and communication technology is having a significant effect on the development of numeracy skills. Information and communication technology is also contributing to other subjects, such as science and history and further enhancing pupils' knowledge and understanding in those subjects. Many pupils find using computers exciting, having a positive impact on their spiritual development. For example, pupils are particularly excited when they produce various images on screen.

MUSIC

117. Standards, at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, are in line with those expected nationally. Standards in singing are above those expected. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well.
118. By Year 2, pupils confidently sing a variety of songs, with good control over rhythm and pitch. They put much expression into their singing, when performing together, and they support this expression with good control of dynamics. Pupils sing a number of songs from memory and are most careful to sing the words clearly. In following tunes, pupils confidently use hand movements to give emphasis to the words. Pupils in Year 2 explore and make sounds and, using an appropriate range of untuned percussion instruments, they are able to follow a simple score most appropriately. They also readily play instruments to support other pupils in their singing. Pupils successfully compose a short musical sequence that they rehearse and then play to other members of their class. Pupils are able to describe the sounds they make, carefully using the correct vocabulary. By Year 6, they sing a range of songs, sometimes in two parts, showing good control over both breathing and diction. When singing in two parts pupils confidently maintain their own parts, showing a clear awareness of how the different parts fit together to achieve the overall effect and they successfully finish together. Pupils happily perform their work from memory. They confidently sing in small groups and they make a most suitable contribution to the whole performance. Pupils in Year 3 produce their own musical compositions, based on the movements of animals. They use a variety of instruments, perform for each other and then suggest ways in which their performance might be improved. Pupils readily listen to a range of recorded music and, where appropriate, they identify the instruments being played. They have developed a good musical vocabulary and they use this in developing and improving their work.

119. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well-planned and brisk in pace, with a most suitable range of resources being provided to help pupils develop their musical skills. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and instruction and demonstration are provided, with, for example, teachers readily singing or playing instruments for pupils. Much help and well directed support is then provided, enabling all pupils to make good gains in their musical skills, especially singing. Teachers make effective use of pupils to demonstrate different aspects of work to other members of the class. Pupils join in the activities with great enthusiasm and commitment, showing suitable creative effort, where appropriate, and they contribute well to lessons. Their attitudes are consistently good and sometimes very good. They enjoy their music, singing well, playing instruments confidently and working amicably with other pupils. They are happy to listen to music and are confident in offering opinions about what they hear. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the work of other pupils and they readily applaud their performances.
120. The school has an appropriate scheme of work and, through careful planning, all areas of work are successfully covered. The co-ordinator also draws up an overall school plan to ensure this coverage. The co-ordinator, who is keen and enthusiastic, monitors the planning of the work to be covered by her colleagues and supports singing sessions well.

However, she has no opportunities to observe class lessons taking place. Informal arrangements are in place for assessment and some information is gathered to judge individual pupils' attainment. The school has already identified this as an area for further development. Very effective use is made of a visiting teacher to enhance the quality of the music provision in the school, especially singing. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular music activities for pupils such as school performances and events in the local community. Good use is made of information and communication technology to enhance the curriculum as, for example, in Year 6 when pupils searched the Internet for information on composers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are generally in line with national expectations. However, in dance they are higher than expected. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well.
122. By Year 2, pupils move confidently around the hall, showing clear awareness of space and other pupils. In dance, they successfully control their movements and show appropriate changes in speed, direction and level. They confidently introduce gesture and stillness into their movements, especially when responding imaginatively to music and most successfully express their feelings. For example, pupils in Year 1 readily imitate a variety of movements and feelings when imagining a visit to the seaside. Pupils understand the need to warm up for, and recover from, exercise. By Year 6, in dance, pupils very successfully compose and control their movements by varying shape, speed and rhythm and expressing their feelings in response to music. Most show good control and fluency in performing a variety of dances. They readily modify their movements to improve them where they think necessary. In games, pupils successfully develop their throwing, hitting and fielding skills and they show satisfactory levels of performance. In developing their own games, based on cricket, pupils are beginning to show an awareness of tactics. Pupils recognise the effects that exercise has on their bodies. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 attend swimming lessons and successfully develop their confidence in the water. By the time they complete these sessions in Year 6 at least 95 percent swim 25 metres unaided. Pupils in Year 6 develop their outdoor skills during an annual residential visit to Essex.
123. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good; in one lesson seen in Year 2 it was very good. Teachers provide good planning, clear instructions and enthusiasm, together with a good and varied range of resources. This allows all pupils to make good gains in their physical skills. All members of staff change appropriately for lessons and they join in and demonstrate for pupils. This helps them identify areas where they might improve. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have suitable expectations of the pupils' performance. Where the teaching is very good, the pupils make very good gains in their learning. This is because the teacher is very confident, particularly good demonstration is used and expectations are high. In all lessons, pupils join in

appropriately and enjoy themselves. They make good physical and creative effort and usually take pleasure in the quality of their performance. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with teachers generally showing good control and management skills. Very occasionally, a minority of pupils do not give their full attention to their teacher and do not take the activities totally seriously. Teachers often take the opportunity to use pupils to demonstrate good practice and opportunities are usually provided for the pupils to discuss the quality of the work seen, to identify the good features. Teachers and teaching assistants provide help and support to pupils in all aspects of their work and, in particular, they emphasise the need for safety. In turn, pupils show good attitudes, usually behave well, work well alone and with a partner or group and carry equipment carefully and safely. Pupils appreciate the work of other pupils and they readily applaud their performances.

124. The school has a suitable scheme of work. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator has drawn up an overview and ensures that all aspects of work are covered. He monitors teachers' plans and is fully aware of the work being tackled. The co-ordinator also has the opportunity to observe some lessons and is able to see the standards being achieved. Assessment is listed in teachers' planning and some information is recorded about individual pupils to identify their current attainment. However, arrangements are informal and the school has identified the need to improve them.

Activities involving counting and measuring, in various aspects of physical education, give appropriate support to the school's initiative in numeracy. Limited use is currently made of information and communication technology to further develop pupils' work. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular sporting activities and has a number of proactive sports teams; for example, the school football team has been very successful and has received numerous awards.