

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **DUNCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Islington

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100403

Headteacher: Mr Barrie O'Shea

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jayne Clemence  
22629

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2001

Inspection number: 230700

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Sussex Way  
Islington  
London

Postcode: N19 4JA

Telephone number: 020 7272 5620

Fax number: 020 7281 9180

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Barbara Vaughan

Date of previous inspection: April 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22629	Jayne Clemence	Registered inspector		How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9970	John Acaster	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
19352	Kiran Campbell-Platt	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs	
27568	Muriel Davidson	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious Education Music	
1963	Sibani Raychaudhuri	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
18638	Christopher Shaw	Team inspector	Science Information and Communication Technology Art and Design Design and Technology	
1967	Jennie Willcock-Bates	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Curriculum Geography History Physical Education	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Duncombe is a large primary school in Islington for pupils between the ages of three and 11. There are 419 pupils; 199 boys and 220 girls. The nursery has 32 children attending part time. Many pupils start school with skills below those expected for their age, and for a significant minority, they are well below. Pupils come from a wide range of cultures. Forty eight per cent of pupils are from White other backgrounds, 35 per cent are from a White UK heritage, 15 per cent are Black-African. Thirteen per cent are White-European, nine per cent are Bangladeshi, six per cent Black other, and a small number from Chinese and Pakistani origin. Eight per cent of pupils are from other backgrounds. Sixty per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is a very high proportion by national comparison. Twenty per cent of the pupils are on the school's special educational needs register; a figure broadly similar to that found nationally, and just under half of those pupils are at the higher stages. Eight pupils have statements of special educational needs. Seventy per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, and half of those are given additional support. Pupils come from 52 countries, and in all 33 languages are spoken in all. The school has a high proportion of asylum seekers. There is also a high level of mobility by families; 72 pupils joined during the school year, and 71 pupils left other than at the end of the school year. The school is part of an Educational Action Zone. The community has a very high level of social and economic disadvantage. The school has built a strong reputation locally, and has a long waiting list. There is a high turnover of teachers, though at the time of the inspection, there was a full complement of staff. This remains a challenge to achieve and sustain.

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

Duncombe is thriving school, working successfully to achieve excellence in many areas of its work. It is an excellent example of a school working effectively to overcome many challenges and disadvantages faced by the pupils and their families. Whilst many pupils enter the school at a relatively low level, they achieve very well over time, and reach standards compared with similar schools, that are in line with those found nationally in English, above the national average in science and well above in mathematics. Pupils are not yet reaching standards that are in line with the national average in English and science, though the gap is closing steadily. The very good teaching is having a direct impact on raising standards. Leadership and management is excellent, providing clear direction for continued improvement. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Highly effective strategies for raising standards and pupils' achievements mean that pupils achieve very well in developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy over time.
- The dynamic and visionary leadership by the headteacher, supported by an excellent management team, ensures high expectations for the pupils academically and socially.
- The very good quality of teaching is having a direct and positive impact on raising standards; the highly effective and professional contribution by learning support assistants provides focused support for pupils' learning.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes, and the outstanding range of opportunities for personal development, result in their acquiring a strong sense of pride and responsibility for the school, reflecting good citizenship.
- The very good provision for children in the Foundation stage provides a secure and very positive start to school life.
- The targeted support for pupils, and strategies for developing speaking and listening skills, ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve very well.
- The excellent links with the local and wider community richly broaden the pupils' education.

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

- Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are not developed systematically across the curriculum

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement overall since the previous inspection in April 1998. The school was judged to have many strengths at the time. The key issues identified have been addressed systematically; the senior management team has been restructured and the quality of teaching has improved. Statutory requirements are now fully met. Although there have been improvements in ICT, there remain weaknesses still to be eradicated fully. The school has sustained its strengths, and in some instances, further improvements have been made.

## 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	D	E	C
Mathematics	E	B	C	A
Science	E	B	D	B

**Key**

Well above average    A

Above average        B

Average                C

Below average        D

Well below average   E

Pupils achieve very well in developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and this has an important impact on many other subjects as a result. Standards are improving over time, though they are only in line with the national average in mathematics. By comparison with similar schools, in the latest national test results by Year 6, pupils are in line with the national average in English, above in science and well above in mathematics. In the 2001 national test results, pupils by Year 2 were well below the national average, and in the lowest five per cent nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics, though inspectors found a more positive picture than this during the inspection. The large number of teachers and staff changes in Year 2 was an important factor in these low standards. Standards in information and communication technology are low due to the lack of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills systematically. The school sets realistic, yet challenging targets for the pupils.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent; pupils have a high level of enthusiasm, they are keen to learn, and show an excellent awareness of the impact of their actions on others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils learn the importance of self-discipline from an early age.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent; the wide ranging opportunities for personal development means pupils acquire a strong sense of responsibility for themselves and others; the excellent relationships between pupils and with adults are based on consideration and respect for one another.



Attendance	Unsatisfactory; a few families take their children away during term time.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching has many strengths and is making a direct and positive impact on standards and pupils' achievements. In more than one third of lessons, teaching was satisfactory. Just under one third of the teaching was good, and approximately one third was very good and occasionally excellent. Teaching in English was very good overall throughout the school, and literacy skills are being developed most effectively through the "Success For All" initiative. Teaching in mathematics was satisfactory in Years 1 - 2, and very good in Years 3 - 6. Teachers are skilled and effective in teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers and support assistants are very aware of the wide-ranging needs of the pupils. They plan carefully to meet those needs and ensure work is well matched. As a result pupils, including those with special educational needs, and English as an additional language achieve very well over time. Teaching in information and communication technology is not yet systematic, and there are missed opportunities to teach these skills to pupils in subjects across the curriculum. Learning support assistants work most effectively with small groups of pupils and make a strong contribution to their progress in lessons, and achievement over time. The high quality teaching helps pupils to develop a genuine love of learning, and many become thoroughly absorbed and active as they strive to improve further.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; the curriculum is broad, reasonably balanced and relevant to the pupils; the wide ranging extra activities make an important contribution to pupils' education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; pupils achieve very well and their needs are considered carefully across all subjects.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good; strategies for improving pupils language are highly effective and pupils achieve very well as a result.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent overall; very good provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and excellent provision for developing moral and social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent; pupils' welfare and care are underpinned by exemplary practice; assessment is rigorous and systematic ensuring pupils' progress and achievements are tracked closely.

The school works well with parents and there are many examples of positive links between school and home. The curriculum is particularly effective in developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and this is having an important impact on other areas of school life. The curriculum for information and communication technology is less effective and currently underdeveloped. The wider curriculum is rich

and varied, providing pupils with many genuine opportunities to develop academically and socially. Procedures for the care and welfare of pupils are meticulous, and individuals are noticed, even within such a large school. The rigorous assessment procedures and use of assessment information ensures work is matched carefully to the pupils' wide ranging needs.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent; the headteacher and senior managers make a strong team with complementary skills, and a strong emphasis on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; the governing body is led ably, and governors are active and supportive in their roles.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent; there are systematic strategies for evaluating the impact of the school's actions on standards, teaching and pupils' learning.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent; resources including people, finances and time are used to the best effect in supporting the pupils and helping them to achieve their best.

There is a good number of suitably qualified staff and the accommodation is good overall. Learning resources are good and well cared for. The leadership and management is a strength, and central to the school's continued success. There is clarity of purpose and direction, with a strong emphasis on raising standards, and ensuring pupils achieve as they should. The school applies the principles of best value in all its work and as a result operates at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children really enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The teaching is good, and children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is friendly, and the headteacher is very accessible.</li> <li>• Children are encouraged to be responsible from a very early age; they generally behave well and have very positive attitudes to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents would like more information about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agreed with all the positive views of the parents. The school provides parents with many opportunities to find out about how their children are progressing, including three open evenings a year. Inspectors consider that the end of year reports do not always provide sufficient guidance about how their children could improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards are improving, and although by national comparison, they are yet to be fully in line with the national average in all subjects, pupils achieve very well over time.
2. Many children start schools with a limited range of skills. They settle quickly to school life in the nursery, and the provision ensures most children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals. Children do not automatically have a place in the school after their nursery placement, due to the very long waiting list for Duncombe, and therefore a significant minority move on elsewhere. The school's high level of mobility means that a significant proportion of pupils join and leave during the course of their primary years, and therefore the composition of Year groups of pupils change dramatically over time. Whilst the school does not seek to use these factors as a reason, they contribute to the variable standards reached by pupils when compared nationally.
3. The school sets realistic, yet challenging targets, and remains ambitious for pupils to exceed their personal best and to achieve as they should. This aim is supported by effective strategies for raising standards further. The very successful approach to developing the pupils' language, communication and literacy skills is having an important impact on other areas of school life, as pupils manage to use those skills in many different contexts.
4. By Year 2 in the most recent test results in 2001, standards were in the lowest five per cent nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. By comparison with similar schools, they were below the national average in reading, and well below in writing and mathematics. Inspection findings showed a more favourable picture, and standards were judged to be much closer to the national average by Year 2 than previously. The very low results were a combination of factors, including a high number of teachers for the Year 2 classes, a significant proportion of pupils having special educational needs, and some having joined the school more recently.
5. By Year 6 in the most recent test results, standards were well below the national average in English, in line in mathematics, and below in science. By comparison with similar schools, standards were in line in English, above in science, and well above in mathematics. Inspectors found pupils achieving well in many areas, and often very well in developing the basis skills of literacy and numeracy.
6. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving very well because of the focused support they receive in class and with smaller groups. Individual targets are reviewed and revised regularly, and most are precise and measurable, assisting in tracking their individual achievements over time. Work for pupils with special educational needs is well matched to their needs. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to help and include pupils in their understanding of classroom work, for example, by giving clear instructions and using key words. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the very good opportunities that teachers provide for learning together. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in lessons, for example in improving their speaking and listening skills, and were observed to take part in classroom discussions confidently.
7. The standards of work produced by the pupils targeted for English as an additional language (EAL) support are well below national expectations, as they have not yet acquired enough English to work at a level expected for their age. However, they make very good progress in developing English, given that they are beginners in English on entry to the school. The pupils learn very effectively in mainstream lessons. Throughout the school, almost all have acquired the necessary language skills to participate actively in lessons, and achieve very well in mathematics and science. This is reflected in the school's analysis of the 2001 results by Year 6. Although the different groups of EAL learners' attainment in English is generally lower in relation to what is

expected for their age, they are closing the gaps in science and mathematics. This is a significant achievement for the school.

8. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress in lessons, and achieve very well over time. This is also because of the highly effective strategies and emphasis upon developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout the school. There are many opportunities where all pupils are encouraged successfully to communicate with their peers and adults, concerning what they have learnt during lessons. In some lessons, pupils are paired carefully with one another to ensure appropriate assistance is available in the relevant language should it be necessary. The opportunities for pupils to express themselves are not limited to lessons, and the school's culture of encouraging everyone to express their views and opinions appropriately, adds to the rich range of situations for further communication and development of the English language. This is a significant success, and makes an important contribution to many pupils' achievements and in raising standards further.
9. The school has an inclusive attitude towards pupils, regardless of their individual differences or backgrounds, and for example, views those pupils with English as an additional language as a real asset to the school community. Where there has been any underachievement, for example by Turkish boys, the school identified this weakness swiftly, and formulated a plan of action to ensure they caught up where necessary. This was assisted greatly by the expertise and experience of Turkish speaking teachers, working closely with pupils and their families.
10. In English by Year 2, pupils make sound efforts to spell new words, and show increasing understanding in their reading. Higher attaining pupils read confidently, and explain clearly about the different characters, plots and main events in their books. Many express their views willingly, and with growing confidence. Pupils write short pieces of work, and sequences of sentences, based on what they have read, though few have written for a wide range of purposes. Most pupils understand the importance of basic punctuation and grammar. By Year 6, higher attainers are very secure and accurate in their reading skills. They read with fluency and expression, and discuss the main points and themes of books. In writing, only half the pupils produce work of any length including the development of ideas. Other pupils manage shorter pieces of written work. The standards of handwriting have scope for considerable improvement. Many pupils have acquired accurate spelling skills, and this is reflected well in their work across other subjects.
11. In mathematics by Year 2, pupils understand the basic principles of fractions. They share objects and use numbers orally and mentally with increasing accuracy. Many pupils use combinations of coins correctly. They are beginning to measure in centimetres and metres, making reasonable estimates in the process. By Year 6, pupils are using data, and presenting information in a variety of ways, for example in tally charts and frequency charts. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to deal with fractions as decimals, though they are not yet confident in this process. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge usefully, for example in presenting their findings from investigations in science.
12. In science by Year 2, most pupils observe similarities and differences in plants and animals. They record their findings in simple forms. Higher attainers understand the importance of conditions required for growth. By Year 6, many pupils are able to describe the processes of evaporation, and investigate accurately how to separate a mixture of salt, sand and rice. Higher attainers have a secure understanding of forces, and many pupils apply their knowledge of friction to such questions as why a bicycle slows down when pedalling stops. They are less secure about the variables in an experiment and how this impacts upon the idea of a fair test.
13. Standards in information and communication technology are below those expected for the pupils' age. Their skills have not been developed systematically, and therefore many pupils' knowledge is patchy, and dependent upon their experience outside school. The school is working hard to rectify this weakness, and has sought to overcome difficulties with resources that were entirely beyond their control.

14. By Year 2 and Year 6, in other subjects, standards are in line with national expectations in art and design, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. Standards in information and communication technology are below those expected nationally across the school. In design and technology, standards are in line with those expected by Year 2, but below by Year 6. This is because the subject has not had a strong focus recently, due to the subject leader having left, with only temporary arrangements to cover the subject currently.
15. The school is managing to ensure pupils are achieving well, and often very well in basic skills or literacy and numeracy, despite pupils' high mobility and a high staff turnover. The strengths identified at the previous inspection have been sustained and improvements since then have been good. There remain several outstanding weaknesses yet to be fully eradicated including standards in information and communication technology across the school, and design technology by Year 6.

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

16. The quality of pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships is excellent. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The standard of overall behaviour continues to be very good. Attendance, lower than before, continues to be unsatisfactory, despite the school's best efforts.
17. Most pupils are excited by school and like it a lot. They enjoy their work. Younger pupils particularly find their playtimes friendly and lively. Older pupils appreciate the supportiveness of their teachers. Young and old are encouraged by the responsibilities entrusted to them and enjoy a feeling of shared ownership. They are proud of their school and keen to show visitors what they do, and to recommend them, for instance, to visit the library. Older pupils are pleased to remark that they see the school improving all the time.
18. Most pupils have excellent attitudes towards their work. The 'Success For All' programme, adopted last year, strongly promotes active listening, encouraging, sharing ideas with a partner, explaining them to the class, and completion of tasks. Accompanied by a swift pace, pupils are drawn into responding rapidly and expressively as they "ask" or "tell" their partner. They become extremely used to working co-operatively. As a result, pupils generally develop much confidence, are alert to respond, are vocal, enjoy the frequent interaction, expect to contribute, and are consequently rarely bored.
19. Behaviour, spurred by this socially friendly and active ethos, is very good overall. Despite the fact that one in every five pupils is on the school's register of special educational need, behaviour in lessons is often very good and sometimes excellent. In a Year 4 physical education lesson, for example, in cold conditions, all pupils maintained keen concentration in following the instructions of their teacher, gave prompt appropriate answers to questions posed, practised quickly and sensibly the sideways passing of a rugby ball, and played enthusiastically a brief competitive game. After cooling down, games monitors then ran and gathered the markers and equipment and, without adult supervision, enjoyed collaboratively stowing them away in appropriate places in the storage room. Occasionally a few individuals do show moodiness or excessive self-confidence. Teachers generally manage the pupils' behaviour very well and the learning of the great majority is rarely hindered. Bullying and other oppressive or discriminatory behaviour are uncommon. It is foreign to the strong ethos of the school and dealt with effectively. The few individuals with temporary exclusions last year did not re-offend. The school has a good record in containing pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools.
20. Behaviour outside lessons is characterised by its friendliness and politeness. Pupils tend to be very lively and vocal, entirely without cheekiness. They move about the school in an orderly way. They queue patiently in the dining hall, chat amicably with their neighbours, and clear away pleasantly. Pupils observe a sense of occasion in assemblies. Playtimes are joyous, perhaps occasionally tending to be a little over-exuberant, but generally marked by a binding sense of responsibility, even among the very young.

21. Pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent. Pupils come from many different backgrounds but the social cohesion that they form together is striking. It extends throughout the school, not just within year groups. This is because:
  - a. All pupils share a common culture, lively but disciplined, associated with the learning techniques used, and
  - b. They are widely entrusted to look after each other and to assist in managing aspects of the school, under the firm guidance of the headteacher and staff.
22. At least one in four pupils across the school is a monitor, and most value their responsibility. As in their classroom practice, pupils from all backgrounds, and both genders have equal access to such activities. They are given a clear understanding of their duties and of the limits to their authority. For example, some Year 4 monitors are given the responsibility to let younger pupils in or out of the main building to go to the toilet, to report on children misbehaving, and to ensure that pupils from other years do not enter the infant playground. They perform this conscientiously to the limits of their power: "If someone is very naughty we give the name to the headteacher". The youngest pupils know that the monitors have authority.
23. There are many other areas of responsibility, often involving organisation and management. Examples include the library, where eight Year 6 monitors were observed to calmly facilitate and superintend the lunchtime table games played by 20 or more very voluble Year 1 pupils. At the 'House of Fun' (a shed) a group of monitors carefully distributes extra outdoor games equipment to those who can produce their ticket of entitlement. Pupils throughout the school know that they can take any problems to the 'Bully Busters', a group of peer counsellors, who are always to be found in the hall. Displayed around the school, photographic cartoons with speech bubbles show the Bully Busters at work sorting out unpleasant behaviour, and in the last instance reporting it to the headteacher. The Bully Busters are held in high regard by all.
24. The school's co-operative learning strategies continuously encourage pupils to voice their feelings and opinions. These are given fullest expression through the system of class councils and their election of two pupils each to the school council. The school ensures that this citizenship is meaningful. Under the adept chairmanship of the headteacher, the school council is a lively and jolly body, with a serious sense of purpose. Appropriate members of staff are invited to attend. Money may be spent. Members are frequently asked to consult with their partner to suggest solutions to the varied concerns brought to it. Votes are then taken and the decisions are implemented. In the summer, for instance, parents were told by newsletter that marbles were banned from school by decision of the school council. Councillors, even in Year 1, raise their hands to volunteer their opinions well. Two pupils have recently been elected to serve on the newly created school parliament for the North Islington Education Action Zone.
25. Through its lively learning and social environment the school fosters an active and co-operative contribution by each pupil extremely successfully. The result reminds one of the fizz in champagne!
26. The school continues to struggle with its attendance. Based on the figures for 1996-1997, the last inspection reported it to be to be satisfactorily around the national average. It fell sharply two years later, and although there has been some improvement since, particularly by reducing the incidence of unauthorised absences, which were rocketing, overall attendance continues to be about 3 percentage points below the national level. Within this, unauthorised absence has been cut from 4.4 per cent in 1999-2000 to 0.7 per cent in 2000-2001, which is still just above the England average of 0.5 per cent. It is quite common for pupils to arrive a little late for school.
27. Many factors contribute to this. About one in six pupils join and leave the school every year other than at the start and finish of their primary education, so the school population changes quite rapidly. Parents have an increasing tendency to take holidays during school time, or go on extended visits to their overseas relatives. Awareness of the importance of education is not deeply rooted in some and domestic needs may take priority. The incidence of illness and other

disturbance tends to be more prevalent within the locality than in more advantaged areas. Some households lack experience of the importance of good time-keeping.

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

28. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage, and in Years 3 - 6 is very good overall. Teaching in Years 1 - 2 is good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, with far less unsatisfactory teaching now. The quality of teaching is having a clear and positive impact on standards and pupils' learning and achievements.
29. In more than one third of lessons, teaching was satisfactory. Just under one third of the teaching was good, and approximately one third was very good, and occasionally excellent. In a very small minority of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory in Years 2 and 3. There is a very strong philosophy of including pupils, regardless of their differences or backgrounds. Teachers ensure they plan and provide carefully for the pupils' wide ranging needs. Pupils are supported very effectively in smaller groups, sometimes outside of lessons, and all teachers take an active interest to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged. They take particular care in the use of language, and in their communications with pupils for whom English is an additional language, ensuring they achieve what should realistically be expected of them over time.
30. Teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures the children have a very positive start to their school life. They learn well-established routines, and many reach the expected Early Learning Goals by the end of this stage. The nursery and Reception teaching is very good overall, and children have a wide range of activities that reflect the requirements towards meeting the Foundation Stage curriculum. The atmosphere for learning is very positive, and adults work co-operatively to the benefit of the children. Children arrive eagerly and show a keen interest in school life, some can hardly wait to get started as they enter the school.
31. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very effective, and work is well matched to their needs. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to ensure pupils are included fully, and to help them understand activities. They give clear instructions, using key words to assist the pupils, and help them focus on the purpose of the tasks. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in their speaking and listening skills as a result of the very good strategies and highly effective teaching.
32. The school has one full-time teacher for English as an additional language (EAL), and a part-time Turkish teacher who offers bilingual support in the Nursery and Year 1. Pupils at the early stage of learning English also receive some support through Turkish where appropriate. The quality of bilingual support is satisfactory. An EAL specialist teacher provides curriculum support for pupils with EAL. The EAL teacher works alongside the class teacher and the quality of this work is very good. The EAL teacher has a secure knowledge of how to develop the English language skills of bilingual learners. The needs of pupils are identified through careful assessments carried out by the class teachers with guidance from the EAL teacher. EAL planning clearly focuses carefully on the language that is required for specific lessons and activities. The EAL teacher employs suitable methods and visual resources, which enable pupils to develop understanding in English. The quality of partnership teaching between the class teacher and the EAL teacher was very good as observed in science lessons. However, this approach has not been sufficiently developed across the school. This is an area for development. The EAL teacher makes a very good contribution the school's literacy programme, Success For All.
33. The quality of teaching English including literacy was very good overall across the school. More than half the teaching was very good, with some excellent teaching. The "Success For All" strategy is structured with precision, and assessment of the pupils is rigorous and systematic. Work is very carefully matched to the pupils' wide ranging needs, and the variety of activities within the literacy lessons helps to sustain the pupils' interest and motivation. Teachers have a very clear understanding of how to teach the basic skills of literacy, and those more recently appointed to the school quickly grasp the framework and principles of the initiative. Teaching in communication is highly effective and ensures all pupils have many opportunities to talk about

what they have learned, answer questions and discuss their ideas. Throughout the lessons, teachers ensure pupils work effectively in small groups, and in pairs to talk through their learning. This approach is managed efficiently and effectively, and no time is lost in organising pupils, as there are very well established routines for paired and group work. All pupils, regardless of their individual differences or backgrounds achieve very well in developing their communication skills.

34. Teaching in mathematics, including numeracy was satisfactory overall in Years 1 - 2, and very good in Years 3 - 6. There were examples of excellent teaching for the older pupils. Teachers prepare thoroughly, and use resources carefully to support the pupils' learning. The rigorous use of assessment information ensures pupils have activities that are suitable for their levels of understanding. This includes pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language.
35. Teaching in personal and social education is excellent. The teaching enables pupils to develop a keen sense of responsibility for themselves and others, and they recognise the principles of good citizenship from an early age. The subject is integrated effectively across many areas of the curriculum, both formally and informally, and has a powerful impact upon the pupils' personal and social skills and attitudes. By the time they leave, many pupils are confident, mature and secure in themselves, able to express their ideas clearly and consider others' views in the process. They have a keen sense of justice, fair play and social responsibility.
36. Teaching in Years 1 - 2 is satisfactory in mathematics, art and design, music and religious education. It is good in science, design and technology and physical education, and very good in English. Teaching in Years 3 - 6 is satisfactory in art and design, music and religious education. It is good in mathematics, science and physical education, and very good in English. There was insufficient evidence in humanities and information and communication technology throughout the school, and in design and technology in Years 3 - 6.
37. Information and communication technology is not yet used as an integral part of the teaching and learning across the school. This is partly due to the wide-ranging problems posed by the equipment and provider. Teachers are not all confident in its use and application in subjects, and there are missed opportunities to develop the pupils' skills as a result.
38. Highly effective teaching was characterised by clear learning objectives and rigorous use of questions to ensure pupils understood every aspect of the lesson. In an example of excellent teaching during "Success For All", the teacher's dynamism and infectious enthusiasm resulted in the pupils being enthralled by the lesson, and totally absorbed in their learning. No time was wasted as pupils moved swiftly to their next tasks. Instructions were clear and precise, and answers were modelled helpfully to assist all pupils. The pupils worked very effectively in pairs to discuss their work, and the teacher used this time to listen and observe the pupils' responses, modifying and emphasising any points that had not been understood fully. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had read texts accurately and were able to identify cause and effect relationships. All pupils responded eagerly to the opportunity for homework, and everyone understood what was to be learned over the week, and that an assessment would take place on Friday. This level of rigor added a further sense of urgency and importance to the task. The pupils' attention was sustained for an impressive period of time. Other examples of high quality teaching were seen in Years 5 and 6 with teachers setting high standards and expectations for pupils academically and socially. There were many examples in teachers' planning where tasks were carefully organised to match the wide range of pupils' needs.
39. The learning support assistants make an excellent contribution to the pupils' learning and achievements. They work at a very professional level, as the school ensures they are trained and empowered to work with groups of pupils, including "Success For All" sessions. They make careful and detailed observations of the pupils in lessons, and several staff are working to train as teachers themselves currently. In a literacy lesson carried out by a learning support assistant, with younger lower attaining pupils, the highly effective strategies ensured all pupils learned how to spell new words and use them accurately in sentences. All pupils were so eager to contribute,



they could hardly contain themselves to answer the questions. There was obvious satisfaction from staff and pupils as much success was achieved throughout the lesson.

40. In otherwise satisfactory teaching, for example in Years 1,2 and 3, the pace of lessons sometimes slowed a little, and pupils settled for a less demanding time than observed elsewhere. In the minority of unsatisfactory lessons, strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour were not secure, leading to a loss of time and opportunities for learning, and activities were not always sufficiently well structured to ensure pupils stayed productive throughout the lessons.
41. The many strengths in teaching ensure pupils are keen, well motivated and understand the importance of effort and hard work in order to improve further. Many pupils know their targets, and strive to surpass them in order to achieve more. By the time they leave, pupils have a heightened sense of responsibility, and considerable independence that has been developed effectively over time. Many pupils volunteer willingly, with genuine effort. They apply themselves seriously to tasks in lessons and in their wider school duties. The teaching strategies, together with a very positive atmosphere and high expectations for success, enable pupils to take a keen and active part in their own learning.

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

42. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good in the Foundation Stage and also for Years 1 - 6. The school provides a broad, reasonably balanced and relevant curriculum for its pupils with literacy and numeracy at its core. Religious education is taught and meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has still remained an issue as it was during the previous inspection. Although a statutory curriculum is in place, the quality and range of curricular opportunities are unsatisfactory for ICT. The school has chosen appropriately to give a high priority to teaching pupils the basic skills and in particular literacy, speaking and listening. This is a suitable strategy, though care is required to ensure other subjects are not squeezed as a result.
43. The curriculum has improved for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes since the previous inspection when it was only satisfactory. All areas of learning are given appropriate emphasis, with a particular focus on the development of the children's language skills. For Years 1 - 6, all subjects of the curriculum are planned and taught over the year but there is some discontinuity in developing skills systematically in subjects such as history and geography because of the organisation of the curriculum and the rotation of the subjects during the school year. There is a general need to explore where other connections can be made to reinforce and consolidate skills and ideas introduced in one subject in, and through, other subjects.
44. The school has given priority to improving standards in English. It has made a commitment to a full and rigorous implementation of the Success For All, a comprehensive literacy programme, instead of the National Literacy Strategy. The thinking behind this move is to improve pupils' speaking and listening as well as their reading and writing. The strong impact of this programme is clearly visible on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in speaking and listening. The school also offers pupils time and opportunities for extended writing. This is an area of improvement since the previous inspection.
45. There are many significant strengths in the current curriculum such as the very well planned provision for personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education, the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and support for pupils learning English as an additional language. There is very good equality of access and opportunity. Very effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans identify specific targets. Provision for special educational needs remains a strength of the school. The curriculum provides a clear focus on supporting the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and social skills. Pupils with special needs have full access to all the activities offered by the school and also benefit from a very effective range of additional support. Pupils have very good access to classroom activities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported by the very effective

range of strategies to include them fully into all areas of school life. Pupils are rarely taken out of their lessons for additional assistance, but rather supported appropriately with everyone else. Pupils with special needs benefit greatly from the individual tutoring they receive to improve their literacy skills. They get very good support from a wide range of external specialists and trained and effective team of Learning support assistants. The good focus on individual pupils and their needs results in all pupils being fully included in the life of the school.

46. The provision for ethnic minority pupils including pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is very good. The school has improved its provision since the last inspection by introducing ways to maximise pupils' achievement in English. The school is now offering EAL pupils a range of planned opportunities for developing speaking and listening in mainstream lessons through "Success For All". Careful planning of EAL support addresses specific language skills required in the lesson, and also ensures that early stage EAL pupils have similar experiences as the rest of the class.
47. The curriculum is enhanced by visits and visitors. Theatre groups, artists and storytellers extend pupils' ideas and experiences in literature and art. Over the school year pupils have the choice to participate in a large range of extra-curricular activities, which include recorder, guitar, choir, keep fit, netball and many others.
48. The school's philosophy of warmly including everyone it works with extends to its wish to include the local and wider community. It is seldom that an inspection team finds a school where the range of visitors including people from the community as well as celebrities is judged to be exceptional. However, this is the case at Duncombe. Many volunteers from the local community, who attend Access courses, come to help pupils in lessons. The school makes excellent use of its partnership with business communities in the City to enhance pupils' quality of learning. For example, Salters and May, a solicitors' firm provides reading partners for pupils and Armourers and Braziers has sponsored an art project. These volunteers provide excellent role models for the pupils, and they are encouraged to inspire the pupils and challenge them to aspire to achieve both now and in the future. There are also strong links with the Institute of Education that have resulted in recruitment of teachers to work in the school.
49. The school includes everyone as a matter of course, by ensuring equality and access and opportunity for pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and needs. Its commitment is fully reflected in its work and relationships. It is also reflected in all its formal and informal systems and procedures for meeting the needs of all its pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. There are very effective whole school procedures for monitoring equality of opportunity in school life, for example, pupils raise issues through the school council, and there is very good provision for analysing data to investigate emerging patterns of achievement by different groups of pupils. Each department has an equal opportunities policy and all teachers are expected to monitor and support the schools aims.
50. The whole ethos and atmosphere of the school is one of inclusion. There is recognition and celebration of the diversity amongst pupils, whilst developing a well-integrated school community. Great value is attached to pupils' cultural traditions and home languages to raise their self-esteem and confidence. There are many useful multi-lingual signs around the school acknowledging the languages spoken by pupils. The curriculum content, books and displays reflect very well the diversity of culture in the school and wider local community.
51. The emphasis on personal development, including the focus on developing basic skills and encouraging the pupils to work independently, prepares them very well for the next stage of their education. Curricular links with the local secondary schools also help to smooth this transition. The school provides its pupils excellent opportunities for becoming confident, caring young people, certain of their own value and accountable to making their own decisions. The provision has improved since the previous inspection, particularly as to the depth and breadth. It is deeply embedded within the ethos of the school.

52. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in the school is excellent. The provision for spiritual development is very good. Opportunities for reflection are offered throughout the school day, in the effective use of pairing for discussion and learning. The senior management team has made a significant contribution to the provision for spiritual development, by ensuring that the regular acts of collective worship provide sufficient opportunities for reflection. In assemblies pupils are often invited to discuss what might happen next, to recall a saying or event, or to reflect upon feelings or actions. This happens during both the story section and when considering a moral or theme. Assemblies accurately reflect the ethos of the school and the exemplary standards in moral and social development when moral elements are drawn well from the story. The pervading atmosphere in the school and the dynamism of the staff allow for many opportunities to appreciate awe and wonder in lessons. Real excitement was demonstrated at the description of natural wonders of the world during a study of a non-fiction text in a "Success for All" lesson. Pupils show their appreciation of friends' success by applauding answers. Chances are offered for all pupils to share in midday prayers, which also contribute to the high level of spiritual development. All these features represent a very good improvement since the last inspection.
53. Provision for the pupils' social and moral development is excellent. Pupils have many opportunities to learn the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The discipline policy is effectively displayed and implemented in the classroom and outside. Excellent behavioural routines are well established allowing a controlled and happy working and playing environment in school. Pupils are successfully running a 'Bully Buster' centre where older pupils follow strict procedures for recording behaviour and offer advice, support and strategies to help their pupil colleagues. They have many opportunities to care for each other and become responsible for their own actions. They are successfully offered procedures to adopt in conflict resolution and are provided with suitable vocabulary to express their emotions during sensitive and well designed personal and social education sessions. Teachers offer very good role models and opinions are listened to and valued. All members of the school community are treated with courtesy and respect. Effective structures and routines in the classroom allow pupils many opportunities to listen to the views of partners or groups and transmit them to the whole class. The school has created wide-ranging opportunities, and responsibilities are taken on diligently by pupils who are elected democratically to the class and school council. In this area they are able to contribute to the decision making of the school and the monitoring role of all members of the community.
54. Provision for cultural development is very good. All members of the school community are valued, and this includes the many cultural riches, values and customs brought to the school by its pupils and staff. Pupils talk freely about their own religious beliefs and customs in religious education. All personal achievements and school events are celebrated by displays and pictures, which include friends from the local community. Music contributes significantly to the cultural awareness of pupils by listening, singing, dancing and making music linked to many times and world cultures. This school celebrates its national heritage through the high profile association in local and national initiatives, its study of British history and visits to local places of historic interest. It is widely and closely connected to its local community. The whole school community supports and celebrates its diversity very well.

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

55. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent. The arrangements for child protection are exemplary, and used as a model for other schools in the area. The headteacher is the link between pupils and any necessary outside agencies such as social services, Child Line, the educational welfare officer or the police. The school is aware of, and represented in, all individual cases dealt with by the local Child Protection committee. The school follows strict guidelines and the headteacher is very experienced in determining the appropriate responses. All the teachers, including new staff, have been trained in the correct procedures in identifying children at risk.

56. All adults in the school take great pains to watch over the health and safety of the pupils in their care. The school makes sure that the pupils, who come from a very diverse range of backgrounds and cultures, feel safe and secure at all times. This is partly achieved by having a much larger than usual number of helpers, both paid and volunteers, drawn from the local community. The school has very good systems in place for dealing with problems connected with health and physical well-being. The school has a school-home support worker who devotes half of her working week to the school, helping pupils and their families. The headteacher has made sure that all local agencies involved in education, welfare and support know the school very well and can therefore respond at a much more personal level. Safety measures such as fire evacuation procedures are fully in place and the school carries out regular safety checks of the buildings and grounds. Classrooms are very safe places, although teachers could be more methodical in their approach to risk assessment in lessons. The school has strict security, which the adults and the pupils follow without fail. Pupils feel very secure and know what to do if they are troubled in any way. The school helps pupils help themselves by establishing groups, such as the school council, who are involved in decisions about the day to day running of the school.
57. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are excellent. The extremely good communications systems within the school ensure that all pupils are known very well. The school keeps detailed records which it updates daily. This means that teachers and helpers can respond immediately to the pupils' changing circumstances or needs. The school makes pupils aware of their responsibilities as soon as they enter the school. As they grow older, pupils are given more responsibility for their own learning and responsibilities connected with the smooth running of the school. A good example is the way that pupils in Year 4 can volunteer to 'police' the infant pupils at break and lunchtime. Apart from earning suitable rewards for tasks such as this, it helps pupils develop a more caring attitude to each other. The school council often devises and monitors these systems itself. The school gives pupils lots of opportunities to mix socially and in class with pupils of different ages and backgrounds. It ensures that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. Boys and girls are encouraged to work and play together naturally. The harmony achieved between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds is excellent.
58. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. All teachers and other staff work together from the moment the school gate is opened to record pupils who are in school, pupils who are late and those who are absent. The school will phone parents or carers immediately if a pupil is absent without reason and long-term absences are checked regularly. The school-home support worker works both to help maintain this contact and to educate and support parents who have difficulty in getting their children to school. The school runs an 'attendance club' and a 'lateness club' to complement this process. The school has been successful in improving attendance and punctuality. However, the extremely transient nature of a small proportion of the school population means that absence, particularly unauthorised absence, is still below the national average.
59. The procedures for monitoring and supporting good behaviour are excellent. All teachers and other staff follow guidelines almost to the letter so that pupils always know what is expected of them. School assistants, including lunchtime staff are well trained and equally consistent in their dealings with pupils. Good behaviour is reinforced through praise and sanctions are rarely required. One of the exciting aspects about the behaviour management is the way that the school involves the pupils in discussing and setting the limits of appropriate behaviour. When pupils have a real behaviour problem, the teacher negotiates targets, with the help of the special needs manager or the appropriate agency. 'Time out', in a corner of the classroom or with a senior teacher, is sometimes used until the pupil is ready to rejoin normal activities but pupils are never left unattended. Teachers never allow pupils to disrupt lessons. In one instance, a pupil came into the classroom in a belligerent and antisocial mood. Because the teacher dealt with him in an entirely familiar and consistent way his resentment was quickly dissipated. In a very short time he was making a valuable contribution to the lesson.
60. The school's procedures for dealing with bullying are also excellent. Again, the school involves pupils directly in the process. From the moment they enter the school pupils learn that there is always someone to talk to. Assemblies, role-play and class discussions give pupils a real insight

into the nature and symptoms of oppressive behaviour. The 'Bully Busters' is a carefully chosen and trained group of year 6 pupils who operate in a well-signposted corner of the ground floor reception area. Pupils who feel they need to can discuss their problems. The Bully Busters listen, take notes, hear both sides of the story if possible and try to settle disputes by negotiation. Along with the school's detailed knowledge of all its pupils and the vigilance of the adults these measures ensure that the school is an open, relaxed and friendly 'family'. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in improving and consolidating the support, welfare and guidance it gives to its pupils.

61. Since the previous inspection, the procedures for assessment and monitoring pupils' progress have improved and are now very good overall. Assessments on entry to the Foundation Stage in the nursery and in the reception class are carefully analysed and provide helpful information to alert teachers to children in need of support for their learning. From Years 1 to 6, the school applies a broad range of assessment procedures, which includes the national and non-statutory tests, school based assessments after periods of study, marking and day-to-day observations by class teachers. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language are accurate and very effective. Clear on-going records of all pupils' attainment and achievement are regularly monitored and reviewed. Consequently, programmes of work are carefully targeted to all groups of pupils and the school tracks their generally rapid progress. Performance data is very carefully analysed and the information is successfully used to boost attainment and increase rates of progress. A good example of this was in the school's recognition that Turkish boys were underachieving in tests. Planned programmes of work to boost achievement and raise levels of self-esteem and confidence proved successful. The information from analysis is used to set challenging yet achievable targets for individuals and classes of pupils and also revise and develop the curriculum and teaching and learning. Systems for assessing achievement in foundation subjects remain informal and dependent on individual teachers and are not yet as well developed as the very thorough procedures for English and mathematics.

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

62. Parents and carers have a very high opinion of the school. During the past decade the school's reputation has been transformed. Consequently the numbers of children attending have more than doubled, and its popularity has caused it to become the largest primary within the local education authority. Parents report that their children respond very positively to the school. The school has high expectations of all its pupils, urging them to express themselves and do their best. Its 'empowering' approach builds confidence, pride and a strong sense of ownership of life in the school. Almost all parents replying to the inspection questionnaire think the teaching is good and that as a result their children are making good progress in their work. Most parents find the school very friendly and welcoming. The headteacher, in particular, is very accessible and is always willing to talk helpfully.
63. About one parent in seven felt that the school could do more to improve knowledge of their child's progress. A similar number thought that the school could do more to work with them. The inspection team agrees with all the very positive opinions expressed by the large majority of parents, and considers that the school is very effective in its efforts to promote parental partnership. The written reporting of pupils' progress is, however, variable in quality, and documentation is occasionally expressed in terms which some parents may find difficult to understand.
64. The school has very effective links with its parents. This aspect has shown good improvement since the previous inspection. The importance attached to parental partnership for the all-round education of pupils is strongly emphasised in the headteacher's introductory page to the school's prospectus. Parents, before enrolling in the school, are given a guided tour by pupils and then have the opportunity for a discussion with the headteacher. On being offered a place, settling-in sessions are held, with home visits to every child. The school provides, both in the Nursery and in

the main school, attractive and very informative literature. The newsletter sent to all parents at the end of each month is a statement of consistent quality, friendliness and appreciation.

65. Information regarding progress is good overall. Teachers are readily accessible at the end of the school day to discuss any uncertainties or concerns. Parents may follow how their children are progressing through the home-school reading diary into which comments or questions may be written. The school urges parents to speak to their child's class teacher if they have any questions or need help with the weekly homework. Curriculum meetings celebrate achievement. Termly parents' evenings provide opportunities to review what the school is providing and to raise any matters of difficulty. The annual written report is explained personally at the meeting in the summer term, or posted home to the small minority of parents, fewer than one in ten, who do not attend. The quality of these reports varies widely but is generally good. Reports which are very good concentrate on pupils' attainment, and provide specific pointers in the core subjects as to how improvement might be made. The occasional unsatisfactory report fails to cover the full range of National Curriculum, omitting, for instance, design and technology, and does not address, subject by subject, what the pupil knows, understands and can do.
66. The school seeks, generally very successfully, to ensure that all sections of its broad range of parents are enabled to obtain confidence in the school through knowledge of what it is trying to achieve and the ways in which it does it. By support from special initiatives, such as the local Education Action Zone, speakers of the principal minority languages, Turkish and Bengali, are helped to feel comfortable in their understanding by the provision of sociable monthly parents' group meetings, led by a bi-lingual specialist. Each meeting has a different topic, ending usually with some agreed outcomes geared into a structured exercise by which such parents may help their children to improve. Translations of mainstream literature, for instance regarding mathematics homework, are at hand. In cases where no bi-lingual specialist may be available, translation is often obtained through the services of another member of that community, or even by the concerned support of an older brother or sister. The headteacher is valuably assisted in his commitment to this work through the outreach provided by the recently attached school home liaison officer.
67. Parents of pupils on the school's roll of special educational need are kept very well informed. Good arrangements exist for them to be appropriately consulted regarding target setting. Reviews are regular and involve parents and pupils appropriately.
68. The headteacher makes a particular point of offering assistance to parents when it comes to finding a suitable secondary school for pupils before they leave, from the very wide choice available. This special concern is intended to ensure that each pupil will be appropriately supported in extending what he or she has developed within the primary setting. From this, more than a dozen secondary schools respond by visiting and forming links, to the general benefit of the school's parents and their children.
69. Parents make a satisfactory impact on the work of the school. Most are supportive of the terms of the home-school agreement and seek to foster their children's progress. Important meetings are usually well attended. Several parents come into school as regular volunteers, mostly to assist pupils' learning, but some have also given good support by decorating parts of the accommodation. The Parents Support Group is active in arranging a social programme through several events a year, including a summer fete, which is extremely popular. Useful sums are raised. Parents are cordially invited to give their ideas as to how the money should be used, such as to enhance play facilities. Most parents enjoy and add to the school's atmosphere of friendliness. The attainment and progress of a minority of pupils is, however, held back by some parents not being sufficiently mindful to ensure the regular and prompt attendance of their children.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headteacher provides dynamic leadership and educational direction, with a clear vision for the school, and is highly ambitious for the pupils to achieve. The senior managers, including the deputy headteacher, have skills that complement those of the headteacher, and together make a highly effective team. Senior staff with responsibilities for special educational needs, and English as an additional language, are very effective in their work, ensuring pupils are supported systematically. The headteacher has built an excellent team at all levels, and staff show a high level of ownership and commitment towards the school's success. This means that many people show initiative and take responsibility for the school, including the premises manager, administrators, learning support assistants, team and subject leaders and midday meals supervisors. There is an environment where staff and pupils are enabled and empowered to take initiative, and many people choose to contribute considerable effort, over and above their responsibilities, to the overall benefit of the school and pupils. The headteacher is a key figure in the local community, and many parents seek his help in matters related to their children's' education including housing, health, benefits and welfare. In many instances, issues are resolved more swiftly as a result of his interventions, and the pupils benefit as a result in their school life.
71. There is exemplary practice in monitoring, evaluation, and supporting staff. The headteacher and senior managers monitor teaching regularly, and systematically provide feedback, including areas for further improvement. There is a carefully considered balance between monitoring teaching, and supporting teachers in their lessons. This includes senior managers teaching with teachers, modelling aspects of lessons, and more informally ensuring staff have the professional support and developing skills to do their work effectively. This approach to monitoring has been particularly effective in supporting new or temporary teachers, and those who are currently unqualified and in the process of applying for qualified teacher status. The methods for monitoring have additional rigor, as lesson observations are sometimes carried out in pairs, and the findings compared for consistency of judgements. These strategies are also helping to minimise the negative aspects of temporary staff due to recruitment difficulties, and the high turnover of teachers. The induction programme for new staff is excellent, and much thought is given to integrating them effectively as part of the team. The school is an excellent environment for training new teachers. Many of the strategies for monitoring and supporting staff are used efficiently for new teachers with positive outcomes. The headteacher has also arranged external monitoring and evaluation from those not directly working in the school.
72. There are rigorous procedures for evaluating the impact of the school's actions. All staff are encouraged to reflect on their work, and to consider what effect it is having on the pupils and their achievements. There is a strong culture whereby the school continually reflects on its work, evaluates what is working well, and where changes are required to bring about further improvements. There are excellent strategies for appraising staff and managing their performance, and the meticulous tracking of pupils' achievements adds important evidence to this process.
73. The school improvement plan is comprehensive and detailed, providing clear priorities and targets for future improvement. This means that new staff understand quickly the direction of the school, the current emphasis, and strategies being used to achieve the targets. Priorities are appropriate and pupils' achievements and raising standards are at the heart of the efforts. There is sound use of new technology, though its use to minimise bureaucracy for staff, for example in planning, recording and reporting, is currently underdeveloped. The school manages well the wide range of initiatives and demands made upon it externally, and seeks to minimise bureaucracy in many areas.
74. The school's financial organisation is meticulous, and priorities are matched closely to the budget. Specific grants are used very well, and maximum use is made of the additional funding, for example through the Educational Action Zone. The administration is excellent, and the bursar and administrators make a strong and highly efficient team. The bursar, as part of the senior management team, understands clearly the school's priorities, and plays a key role in the day to

day running of the school's administrative routines. There is a warm and welcoming office staff to greet and assist people, who help set the atmosphere of the school on arrival.

75. The school has clear aims and everyone knows and understands what is expected of them. School policies and systems are straightforward to follow, and there is great consistency across the school in their use.
76. The governing body carries out its duties well, and takes an active role in supporting and challenging the school. Governors are organised efficiently, and ably led by the chair of governors. They understand the relative strengths of the school, and those areas requiring further development, taking a full part in shaping the school's direction. Governors follow the principles of ensuring best value in their decisions and use of resources.
77. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, though this remains a constant challenge for the school to achieve and sustain. The accommodation is good overall, and best use is made of the space. The library is a vibrant and attractive area, used and enjoyed by many during school and at lunchtimes. Outside areas, though not spacious, have been developed creatively, for example the garden next to the playground, and "Fun House" for younger pupils. Resources are good overall, and well used across the school.
78. There is excellent capacity to further improve. The strong and dynamic team, where everyone's contribution is valued, has brought about a high level of ownership and responsibility for further success. This means that everyone's efforts are put to best use. The leadership has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection, with good improvement overall. Pupils achieve very well in developing basic skills, and this has an important effect in many other areas of school life. There is a very efficient use of time, finances and resources and the school provides very good value for money.



## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

1. \*Raise standards further in information and communication technology by:

- developing pupils' ICT skills more systematically;
- ensuring ICT is used as part of other subjects across the curriculum;
- enabling staff to be confident in using ICT and teaching the subject.

As referred to in paragraphs 13, 14, 15, 37, 42, 89, 105, 113, 121, 126, 130, 135, 137-141 and 145.

The school may wish to consider the following less important weaknesses:

- \*Continue to work with parents towards improved attendance;
- Monitor the balance of the curriculum;
- Ensure reports to parents are consistent, and match the best practice in the School.

As referred to in paragraphs 26, 42, 58 and 65.

**\* Indicates this is already identified as part of the school's improvement plan and priorities.**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	15	19	25	2	0	0
Percentage	8	23	29	38	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	0
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	NA	252

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	81

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	290

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	71
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	72

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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	31	28	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	23
	Girls	20	18	21
	Total	35	33	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (72)	56 (61)	75 (57)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	22	23
	Girls	16	20	21
	Total	32	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	54 (67)	71 (63)	75 (65)
	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	32	26	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	27	30
	Girls	15	19	24
	Total	35	46	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (78)	79 (76)	93 (85)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	27	30
	Girls	15	19	24
	Total	36	46	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (70)	79 (72)	93 (83)
	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	42
Black – African heritage	51
Black – other	20
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	32
Chinese	8
White	166
Any other minority ethnic group	29

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	3	1

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40
Average class size	25

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	00/01
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	£
Total income	1,158,143
Total expenditure	1,203,788
Expenditure per pupil	2,670
Balance brought forward from previous year	78,047
Balance carried forward to next year	28,042

Please note the school has a significant proportion of teachers who although qualified in their own country, are seeking qualified status currently. They are therefore deemed as unqualified.

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	466
Number of questionnaires returned	141

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	40	7	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	49	5	2	2
The teaching is good.	56	38	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	41	10	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	26	8	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	31	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	38	11	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	50	36	3	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	39	6	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	40	12	2	10

**Please find additional comments under the section of parents' and carers' views in the summary.**

**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**

79. Overall, the current provision for three and four year-old children in the Foundation Stage in the Nursery and the two Reception classes is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. The children are generally three years old when they start the Nursery and the majority attends part-time either in the morning or afternoon sessions. Up to eight of the oldest children attend the Nursery full time. They transfer to one of the two Reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old, though this is not automatic and a significant minority move elsewhere as they do not have places in the school. Although two of the teachers, one in the nursery and one in a Reception class are temporary, teachers, the learning support assistant and nursery nurses know the children and their families well. The current curriculum is broad and balanced with a strong and appropriate emphasis on communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development and the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Exciting practical activities are planned and very good teaching enhances the learning of all groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, and ensures that they all get a very successful start to their schooling. They are well prepared to start work on the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum for pupils in Year 1 and 2.
80. Children's attainment on entry to school is below average and for some, it is well below. there are wide variations. A significant minority scores poorly on the tests undertaken on entry to the nursery. They have limited skills in the English language and some are inhibited by a lack of words to communicate their ideas and feelings. Several children find it hard to sit and listen. At the other end of the ability range, a small minority are able to express themselves and confidently join in the activities planned for them because they have had successful pre-school experiences. By the time they enter the infant class, although their attainment generally remains slightly below average their behaviour is good and they continue to make significant improvement in their language and communication. Children are familiar with the routines of each class and are ready to fully benefit from the school's 'Success For All' language programme. The often very good teaching means that at the end of the Reception Year, a significant proportion is already exceeding the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals in their personal social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in their creative and physical development.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

81. The vast majority of the children enter the nursery with under-developed personal and social skills. They take time to settle into the routines of the nursery. Teaching is very good and with calm and consistent management and well-established routines, the pupils are on course to exceed most of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. By the time they leave the Nursery next summer, some will still need support but the vast majority are confident and happy in school. Children in the Reception Year have constant positive attention because the teaching is often very good. Guidelines are clear and the teachers, the learning support assistant and the nursery nurse encourage them to be confident about what they can achieve. By the time they leave the Reception class, the majority will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals and made good achievement over the year. They are well prepared for Year 1.
82. Children in the Nursery and Reception Year work and play happily together, whatever their gender, racial heritage and social background. They respond very well to each other because the teaching and non-teaching staff who works with them act as very good role models. While in the Nursery, the majority comes to school happily each day, finding their names and greeting their friends. They know what is expected of them because the teacher has carefully set routines in place enabling the start to each session to be joyful and welcoming. The children thoroughly enjoy the interesting and varied activities planned for them and work hard on their own and with others in the

class. This is because the teacher and nursery nurses are sensitive and positively encouraging, particularly to those children who are at the early stages of learning English. By the time they reach the Reception Year, children sit quietly and listen attentively to their teachers. They are keen to answer questions and discuss ideas with a partner because the teachers provide very effective opportunities for children to solve problems and share what they have learned. For example, in one very good lesson about using letters to sound out words children giggled with delight when successfully working with a partner to read and write three letter words. The teacher had captured their imaginations, set appropriate challenges and made their learning great fun. Consequently, the children concentrated for a long time and worked very hard.

83. Throughout the Nursery and Foundation Stage adults have high expectations of behaviour and clear rules are established. Consequently, behaviour in the nursery is very good. Children take out and put away equipment sensibly when they have finished using it. When given the opportunity, they plan and organise what they are going to do and with a high degree of independence moving sensibly from activity to activity after periods of sustained concentration. For example, one child concentrated for nearly twenty minutes carefully threading buttons on to a string to make a necklace. The teacher and nursery nurse manage the children well. By the time they reach the Reception Year, the children behave very well. They know when they must be quiet and when to chat. They respond quickly to the teachers' request for quiet. As a result, children are very interested in what they are doing and enjoy their time in school.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

84. Children in the nursery delight in listening to stories and looking at books. They enjoy the morning message and remembering the day of the week and the letter sound that starts the word. The children read the days of the week and joyfully sing songs to help them remember where each day comes in the week. All children are keen to talk to adults and those who are at the early stages of learning English are beginning to and make themselves understood. Some of the English speaking children are happy to act as interpreters and consequently relationships are very good. They talk to each other in their different home languages and one small child explained to a Turkish boy that he spoke English but could not speak Turkish. Teaching is good, and skilful questioning from the teacher and nursery nurse helps the children practise their language skills and develop a broader range of vocabulary to express their ideas. Children are beginning to make marks on paper and enjoy writing the initial letter of each day for display in the classroom. Most are writing their name with reasonable accuracy and form some letters into words. They achieve well over the year and are ready to learn more by the time they reach the Reception Year.
85. In the Reception Year, the love for stories develops further. Children enjoy using the story about 'Willy's Adventure at the Wedding' as a basis for their own stories. In a higher attaining group, children are already working within the first level of the National Curriculum and know that a full stop comes at the end of a sentence. They are confident with their writing because teaching is very good. Effective feedback such as 'What I like about J's writing is...' encourages confidence and promotes good achievement and new learning. Children learn how to use the sounds of letters to read and write in lively lessons, which bounce along capturing their interest by ensuring that all are mentioned. Children at different stages of acquisition of English achieve very well because they are systematically taught and encouraged to be confident to learn and successful in reading. Teachers, learning support assistant and nursery nurse encourage children to speak in sentences and model good talking. They expect children to listen and they are taught appropriate skills and consequently, children achieve well in their reading, writing, speaking and listening. They are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the end of the Reception Year in the summer.

### **Mathematical development**

86. Throughout the day the teachers, learning support assistant and nursery nurses include numbers in the activities. In the nursery the children say and use the number names when they discuss the date and how many children are in school. They cut and count pieces of play dough and match clothes to the Teddy and the dolls in the play area. They enjoyed making pictures using



cut out shapes and recognise circles, rectangles and squares. They work out what day it will be the next day and the day before. The children know when four are in the role-play area. They match pictures successfully when playing a game. In one good example, the nursery nurse asked skilful questions of the pupils to help them differentiate between pictures on the dominoes. One opportunity to extend the children's learning was missed when they were making necklaces from random shapes and could count the buttons but were not required to talk about the different patterns they could make. The children enjoy filling and emptying a range of containers with bubbly water and talk about how many small containers fill a large one.

87. In the Reception Year, teaching is effective and consequently, children's achievement in mathematical development is good. The children enjoy using real money and recognise coins such as 10p, 20p, 2p and 1p. The high attaining pupils count coins up to 15p and recognise when they have made a mistake in their calculations. They know the days of the week and remember some of the months of the year. The children are familiar with mathematical language such as 'more' or 'less' and calculate how many children will be in the class if three are absent. All pupils, including those at the early stages of learning English, can count up to ten and create pictures by putting shapes such as circles, rectangles and squares together. Nearly half of the children are already working within the early stages of the National Curriculum for pupils in Year 1 and the vast majority are on course to exceed the nationally recommended goals by the end of the Reception Year.

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

88. This is an area where children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals because the teaching is often very good. In the nursery, children enjoy learning about colours and match them to objects they find in the classroom. Learning is fun because the teacher is fully involved in the activity and that motivates the children to work hard. In one lively session the children were discussing the weather and comparing the drizzly rain with the sunshine of the day before. A child who is at an early stage of acquisition of English recognised that 'w' for Wednesday was the same as 'w' for weather and everyone celebrated his knowledge. One child proudly told the class that the sun was behind the clouds. The discussion then focussed on a rainbow the children had seen in a storybook. They made connections with the work they had been doing about colours. When the teacher asked if anyone knew how a rainbow was made, another child then confidently replied that the sun and rain needs to be present. When they enter school a significant minority have a limited range of experiences. All groups of pupils achieve very well and are effectively prepared for the Reception Year.
89. In the Reception classes the children participate in a broad range of tasks to help them learn about the world they live in and broaden out their experiences. For example, there was great delight in the classroom when a group of children discovered the affects that magnets had on certain metals. One child concentrated for a long time on moving a vehicle around a road using a magnet. Gradually, she realised that there was something on the model that was attracted to the magnet. Excellent teaching drew the session to an end with an outstanding example that showed children how helpful magnets could be when drawing pins are split on the floor. The children were captivated by the idea. Samples of children's work show their lively interest in transport and that they are beginning to understand that they can sort materials into groups with different properties. Teaching is very successful and pupils' achievement is very good. Many are already reaching several of the Early Learning Goals and are on course to exceed them by the end of the Reception Year. Although children have access to a range of everyday technology, the use of information communication technology is limited and is not used as effectively as it should be to support children's learning.

### **Physical development**

90. This is an area where the children are on course to meet the nationally recommended goals. A sound range of activities is planned for children in the hall and the outdoor play area. However, recent problems with the area immediately outside the reception classrooms, are limiting the full extent of the learning programme. In the nursery, the pupils play happily in their outside area,

although this is mainly at playtimes rather than an extension of the daily activity programme that children choose to undertake. Children benefit greatly from an inclusion programme with a neighbouring special school. They skip run and jump along side children with significant additional needs. They control their bodies appropriately, and after initial shyness throw themselves into the singing and dancing to the beat of a drum. All children including those who are at the early stages of learning English thoroughly enjoyed the session because the teaching from the special school was outstanding and the physical activities varied and demanding.

91. In the Reception Year, children can march in a straight line behind their teacher and generally move in and around the lines painted on the playground without bumping into each other. In a physical education lesson, they followed instructions accurately and showed that they could run around the hall in and out of each other and stop quickly. Satisfactory teaching helped the children to notice that when they moved vigorously their heart beat faster and their bodies became warm. Sometimes the pupils' imagination was limited by too much direction from the teacher. Pupils' achievement is appropriate. In the classroom they use small and large equipment carefully, building shapes with bricks and controlling tools such as paintbrushes, rulers, scissors and pencils.

### **Creative development**

92. A good range of creative activities are planned for the children and they are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. In the Nursery, excellent opportunities are planned for children to experiment with colour using paint, coloured sand and different materials to create large and small weavings. The rooms are skilfully decorated with displays of children's creative work, which celebrates their achievements. Children are encouraged to participate in a very large class weaving. The role-play area enables children to play together taking the roles of various members of a family proudly wearing exotic dressing up clothes and putting dolls from several nationalities to bed. They communicated with each other effectively as they put out and took away food on plates and knives and forks in their play.
93. In the Reception Year, children paint and draw to a good standard. They took great care in the lively paintings of buses, lorries and aeroplanes. Children happily play in the role-play area and wear their dressing up clothes with pride as they play in the 'post office'. All groups of children, whatever their racial heritage, level of acquisition of English and social background become fully and happily absorbed in role-play. In one very lively session the teacher skilfully played with the children. Musical instruments were taken into the playground and the children giggled with delight singing songs and playing instruments as they marched in complex lines. Great enjoyment was displayed when the children were acting out the 'Grand old Duke of York' and the teacher kept getting the words wrong and skilfully maintained the children's attention making them jump up and down. Lively drawings illustrate children's stories and show a developing understanding of how to use a pencil and crayons. Teachers, learning support assistant and the nursery nurse play with the children helping them to develop the ability to use their imagination and develop creative skills with one another. Children will meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year.
94. Leadership and management in the early years are very effective. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the curriculum and supports the temporary teachers effectively. Monitoring and evaluation is excellent and the skills and talents of teachers, the Learning support assistant and nursery nurses are used to the full. As a very good role model for teaching, the co-ordinator makes a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning for children from 3 to 5 years old.

### **ENGLISH**

95. National Curriculum test results in reading and writing for the pupils in Year 2 were very low in 2001, in comparison with all schools but below average in reading and well below in writing for similar schools. Girls achieved better results than boys in Year 2. The test results for the pupils in Year 6 were well below the national average but average for similar schools. Boys achieved better results than girls, the reverse of the national picture. In 2000, the results for Year 6 were below

average for all schools and well above for similar schools, definitely higher than the time of the previous inspection. These results show that pupils achieve very well over the years as they move up the school.

96. The very low results in 2001 for Year 2, a decline from the results of 2000, were due to the large turn over of staff during the year. Over the last three years, the school has experienced downward trends in reading and writing for Year 2 pupils and an uneven trend for Year 6 pupils. Standards in writing were lower than in reading, which contributed further to the downward trend in results. Improving standards in all aspects of English has been a major focus for the school in the last year, with the strategies introduced meeting with much success. The school has introduced a literacy programme, Success For All (SFA) to maximise its pupils' achievements in English. Although the programme is relatively new, it has made an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The present inspection findings show that standards are broadly in line with national expectations in speaking and listening, below in reading and well below in writing for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Given the very high percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), many of whom join the school part way through Years 1 - 2 and Years 3 - 6, pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening and reading.
97. The SFA programme provides a very systematic teaching of a range of reading and writing skills in groups, organised by pupils' reading levels. This means that pupils of different ages, from Years 2 to 6, work together. Co-operative learning and talk lie at the heart of the SFA curriculum. Pupils work together in partnerships and teams helping one another to become skilful readers and writers. This allows pupils to discuss their ideas with one other person or in a small group, before sharing them in front of a whole class.
98. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment in English with a significant minority at well below. They achieve very well in speaking and listening and approach the standard that is expected for their age by the time they reach Year 2. This standard is maintained as they move up the school and their speaking and listening skills are in line with national expectations when they are in Year 6. Across the school, the pupils listen very attentively to their teachers and each other and speak confidently, because they feel valued and have good self-esteem, fostered in the caring school environment. In lesson observations, the pupils discussed their ideas, explained and justified them to the whole class. During whole class sessions in Year 6, the pupils explained literal, inferred and evaluative questions very clearly. Standards in speaking and listening have improved because of high level of attention given to these skills in the SFA programme. A strong emphasis on speaking and listening skills throughout SFA lessons help pupils to become active listeners, share their ideas and express their opinions.
99. The very good teaching of phonics is helping pupils to learn letter-sounds effectively. Although the standard in reading is below what is expected for their age in the current Year 2, the pupils can sound out unfamiliar words, and they understand what they read. Higher-attaining pupils read confidently and independently and talk about the characters, plots and main events of the story. Average and lower-attaining pupils find it difficult to talk about the books they read and to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils' attainment in reading is also below national expectations by the time they are in Year 6. The higher-attaining pupils read very fluently and accurately with expression and understanding and reach very secure standard for their age. They can discuss the main points and themes of the books they read. They are able to compare the styles of different authors, such as Tolkein and J.K. Rowling. The average attainers are working towards the expected level but lower-attaining pupils, who are in large number, show limited understanding of what they read. The pupils generally acquire sound library skills for finding information from books and other sources.
100. Standards in writing are well below the national average for Year 2 and 6 pupils. Work seen in Year 2 shows that pupils mainly produce short pieces or a sequence of sentences based on what they read. There is not sufficient evidence of writing for a range of purposes. The pupils can write sentences, which are grammatically correct for their age. They have developed a sense of punctuation. Standards in spelling and handwriting are sound. Basic skills of writing are generally established for most pupils in the current Year 6. However, only about a half of the pupils attain

the average level. Work seen pupils' books in Year 6 shows that only the higher attaining pupils write at length sustaining ideas. The rest produce mainly short pieces of writing, often structured comprehension tasks or comments on texts they read. The quality of pupils' handwriting is unsatisfactory; many have not developed joined-up writing. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of useful strategies to help with spellings; consequently many words are spelt correctly.

101. The school has placed a considerable emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills, which was a key issue identified in the previous inspection. The school has made good improvement in addressing this key issue. There are now well-planned opportunities for the systematic development of different kinds of writing. Each term, one week is allocated to the development of a particular kind of writing, which pupils learn in depth through planning, drafting and producing the final version. This initiative is helping pupils in Years 2 - 6 to write for different purposes. The work produced under this initiative shows that pupils across the school are achieving well and have learnt to write reports in a style, appropriate for their age.
102. The quality of teaching is very good across the school. Over a half of the teaching seen was very good including some being excellent. The rest was mainly good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. As a result of the very good teaching, many pupils learn very effectively and achieve very well. They understand what must be done in order to improve and put in considerable effort, for example in offering answers, working with partners to share ideas, and try hard to do their best. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when teaching was good. The lessons are very well planned indicating very secure subject knowledge of teachers. Teachers have a very good understanding of how to teach basic skills. They are very effective in drawing on pupils' previous learning which is a strong feature in all lessons. Pupils are keen to show what they can remember and ready to learn new things. The teaching of phonics is highly effective. For example, in a lesson with lower-attaining pupils from Years 2 - 6, the teacher used rhymes and songs to ensure that the pupils tuned into letter-sounds as well as enjoyed the activities. The pupils responded to this enthusiasm and consolidated their learning in the lesson. A strong emphasis on vocabulary development encourages pupils to learn new words and use them in writing. Teachers know their pupils well and manage them very effectively. Pupils generally work rigorously as a whole group, pairs, teams or individuals. Much of this teaching is very dynamic where teacher maintains a brisk pace through a variety of short and timed activities.
103. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by class teachers and well-trained Learning Support Assistant (LSA), who make very good contributions to these pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils make very good progress. Their individual education plans have a clear focus on their needs in language and literacy. This very effective teaching with a strong emphasis of talk helps pupils with English as an additional language to make very good progress in developing fluency in English and reading skills.
104. Behaviour is always very good; pupils co-operate with each other and with their teachers well. Relationships are very good all round. They take the activities seriously and are very keen to become involved in discussions. When working with partners or listening to discussions pupils show great respect for each other's views. Pupils' responses are lively, and they are eager to contribute to lessons from the beginning and make lessons enjoyable occasions.
105. The development literacy across the curriculum is strong and all subjects are used effectively to extend pupils' vocabulary as well as reading skills. However, the use of information technology was not seen in any lessons. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
106. The subject leader provides a very good role model for the staff and has implemented the SFA effectively, which is making a good impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' achievement are very good and teachers throughout the school generally use assessment information effectively when planning work for different groups of pupils. Results of national tests and internal tests are analysed formally to set targets for pupils.

## MATHEMATICS

107. Current inspection evidence indicates that the number of pupils attaining the expected levels by Year 2 is below the national average. Pupils by Year 6 are on course to attain levels which are in line with national expectations, although there are fewer higher attaining pupils than would be expected, and a large spread of ability.
108. The attainment of pupils by Year 2 was very low by comparison with the national average in national testing in the years 2000 and 2001. This has been targeted by the school as an area for improvement and the improving profile, whilst small in percentage terms, is an indication that this issue is being addressed effectively. Pupils work hard and achieve very well during their time in school and the results of 2001 national testing show very favourable comparisons with similar schools by Year 6.
109. By Year 2, pupils are learning about fractions. They can make half of a shape by folding carefully and a few can draw lines to divide a shape in half. Good links made by teachers enable pupils to increase their understanding. They deal with halves and doubles of numbers to ten in a mental/oral session and then work with halving as sharing sweets and cakes into two equal groups. They are able to use coins of 10p and 1p to help with their understanding of place-value and are beginning to measure using centimetres and metres, making use of estimates. They use a number line to help them to understand times tables, for example four jumps of three make 12. Younger pupils are learning to work with the concept of time and can recite the days of the week and say which day comes before or after another. They are beginning to use and recognise coins. The higher attainers can recognise patterns made by one more and 10 more. Fewer pupils than might be expected are dealing confidently with ideas of multiplication and division as sharing. Although many pupils can double numbers and halve them, they do not yet understand that these processes are the inverse of each other.
110. By Year 6, pupils are beginning to deal with data by presenting tally charts and grouped frequency charts. The higher attainers are beginning to deal with fractions as decimals, but have yet to develop strategies for solving problems with these. This area of mathematical investigation has been identified by the co-ordinator as a topic to be addressed; special sessions are being put aside to deal particularly with this. Teachers also link current work well with problems linked to everyday life, by setting challenges. For example, at the beginning of a lesson concerned with the duration of time and timetables, pupils were asked to think of a situation in their own experience where the duration of time was important and be able to share it during the plenary session. A number of pupils suggested the time it takes to get to school. For most of the class this was a new concept and only a few were confident with the use of timetables. Pupils have a good understanding of the properties of 3D shapes and units of measurement – ideas which are reinforced by displays in the classroom which, by Year 6 particularly, offer a stimulating mathematical environment. Higher attainers have a reliable working knowledge of their tables and are able to define the use of negative numbers, but have not yet plotted graphs using all four quadrants. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge effectively in the collation of data and presentation of results in science.
111. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is generally satisfactory, with some examples of good teaching seen during the inspection. Teaching in Years 3 - 6 is very good overall. There were a few examples of satisfactory teaching, and some very good and exemplary teaching observed, particularly in classes for the older pupils. Pupils make sound gains in their learning overall in Years 1 - 2 and very good gains in Years 3 - 6. They learn very effectively and recognise what to do in order to bring about further improvements. Teachers plan their lessons well. When teachers spend sustained amounts of time with one group and where work is designed well for pupils of different abilities they make better progress in the lesson. For example, lower attaining pupils were given a large clock face as a jigsaw to remake so that they could learn about the structure of a clock face and then draw their 'favourite' time of day, while others in the class were describing in pictures what they did at various times of day. The higher attainers were drawing o'clocks, half-past and some quarter past the hour. Inventive use of story as part of mental/oral sessions for younger pupils helps them to apply their knowledge of telling the time to participating in the day with a

'Bad Tempered Ladybird'. Classroom management is very good. Most teachers use the skills utilised in Success For All to great effect in mathematics lessons. The use of non-verbal signals to indicate routines and the powerful use of 'pair and share' discussion contribute significantly to the quality of learning in maths. In using this technique, pupils are all able to participate in calculating answers, and importantly, in making assessments of their own learning. 'Tell your partner what you have learned today'. This powerful tool for learning is used less often though for pupils to discuss methods of solving problems. All teachers prepare their rooms and materials well for numeracy lessons and in the most effective lessons the pace of teaching is brisk. The good resources in the school are well used by teachers in supporting learning. White boards are used to good effect in mental/oral sessions, giving teachers a chance to make assessments of pupils' learning.

112. Teachers deploy their learning support assistants well. These well trained assistants are able to support lower attaining pupils well, by asking questions and using praise to support efforts in both the mental/oral and main section of the lesson. This enables these pupils to make good progress in lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language work at appropriate levels in mathematics, particularly the older pupils at a later stage of language acquisition. All pupils participate in the lessons well as a result of effective teaching methods.
113. During the inspection information and communication technology was not used effectively to support the curriculum and there was little evidence of computer use in lessons within the classroom.
114. Pupils like mathematics and make good assessments of their own abilities. They respond well to dynamic and pacy questions and answers in mental/oral sessions. They employ skills of active listening well and work co-operatively with a partner and in small groups.
115. The numeracy strategy is well established and teachers make accurate and regular assessments of pupils' progress. Target setting for individuals is good and teachers make helpful and effective predictions for the future attainment of pupils, contributing to the tracking of progress through the school.
116. The subject leader offers very good support and positive leadership. She has a clear vision for the direction and development of the subject. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection in the area of assessment and record keeping, and also in the positive changes being effected by the co-ordinator and senior management team. They support teachers very well through effective monitoring and support and by the provision of suitable in-service training for teachers. This is beginning to have an impact on the implementation of strategies to improve standards at Key Stage 1.

## SCIENCE

117. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 in the 2001 teacher assessments were very low compared with the national expectations. Attainment has varied considerably over the last few years but the trend is an upward one. The results are big improvement on the 2000 level, although still well below similar schools. The pupils' attainment in the 2001 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average, which means that they are very high compared with similar schools. Again the results vary considerably over the years and this year the higher attaining pupils did not do so well as in the 2000 tests. Overall, there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
118. The inspection shows that by the time they are at the end of Year 2, the pupils' attainment is below the national average. Most pupils are able to observe animals and plants, noting differences and similarities. They can, with help, record these observations in the form of simple pictures and names. The higher attaining pupils can talk about investigations they have done and say, for instance, what conditions plants need to grow and survive. Few pupils know how to make measurements or record results of experiments in the form of tables. This represents satisfactory

achievement considering their attainment on entry, the many pupils who have English as their second language and the disruptions due to movement of pupils joining and leaving the school.

119. The pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is very good resulting in attainment that is in line with the national average. The pupils' knowledge of the properties of different kinds of materials is particularly good. They can describe the processes of evaporation and work how to separate a mixture of salt, sand and rice or remove iron filings mixed with sand. Higher attaining pupils have a very good understanding of forces. Based on their experiments to measure the effects of various types of friction they can apply this knowledge effectively to say, for instance, what causes a bicycle to slow down if you stop pedalling. Less secure is their understanding of the effects of changing variables in an experiment, although most pupils can say whether an experiment is 'fair'.
120. Overall teaching is good and as result, pupils learn well, making good gains in acquiring new scientific knowledge and skills. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. In the juniors, the teaching ranged from good to excellent and the best teaching was in Year 6. In the best lessons, the teachers made science challenging and exciting both visually and intellectually. They planned work at different levels for pupils of different attainment and constantly reinforced the use of language and technical vocabulary. In a Year 6 lesson to discover the link between heart rate, breathing and body movement pupils were treated to dynamic demonstrations, excellent visual stimulus in the form of models and demanding experiments. This inspired exceptionally high standards of behaviour, involvement and interest. The brisk pace ensured that pupils were continually reinforcing and adding to their knowledge and understanding. Also in the best lessons, the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs were fully involved. Well-briefed assistants, continual assessment and appropriate support meant that they made equally good progress. Teachers employ good strategies to involve and stretch pupils whose home language is not English. This means that discussions in science can often be at a high level. No unsuccessful lessons were seen. In Years 1 - 2, teachers are less rigorous in the range of challenges that they offer. They do not use time as well and pupils have fewer opportunities to work independently. Nevertheless, pupils achieve satisfactorily because of the good coverage of the National Curriculum, well-planned resources, experiments and visits.
121. Since the last inspection the leader for science in the school has steadily developed the curriculum and the new scheme of work has meant improvements to the curriculum which have helped maintain and consolidate attainment in Years 3 - 6. Experiments and investigations are now more thorough. In year 2, more needs still to be done in developing the higher attaining pupils through work targeted specifically at these pupils. In Year 5 and 6, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to devise experiments for themselves, to develop independent thinking and the understanding of variables. Links with a nearby secondary school enable classes to work in specialist laboratories. Some exciting work has been developed in the electronic testing of sound insulation, for instance, which is highly memorable for the pupils. Otherwise the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped.
122. The school's assessment process is thorough and gives a good indication of the National Curriculum level at which the pupils are working. To make assessment more useful in developing the curriculum and teaching, the school needs to ensure that the work assessed by teachers is compared to ensure accuracy. Then some useful statistics can be generated to see how pupils progress as they move through the school. The school already compares its results with those of schools locally and nationally and this has proved important in developing certain aspects of the curriculum. The reports provided for parents meet statutory requirements: they show the National Curriculum levels that the pupils reach. They are variable in quality, sometimes only making general comments about the work covered, others showing clearly what the pupils know and can do and saying what could be done to improve.
123. Given the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff and, providing that the good practices in teaching can be shared amongst all staff, the school is very well placed to improve further.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

124. The pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations. Pupils are able to express ideas and feelings in a good range of media, such as paint, drawing, collage and clay. Younger pupils produced imaginative designs for 'aliens', cutting shapes from clay with pastry cutters, finishing with colour and feathers. Pupils learn to mix paint effectively and to explore portraits by famous artists and make their own in pastels. At the end of Year 6 attainment is also in line with national expectations. Pupils are able to select and use appropriate materials, developing sculpted work from junk materials and cast pieces from clay originals. Year 5 pupils produce tonal shaded landscapes in collage which effectively complement work in shaded still life drawing.
125. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, and make steady progress throughout the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching overall is satisfactory and pupils make sound gains in their learning. They understand the importance of effort and hard work in order to improve and apply themselves to art activities. It is not possible to make a judgement about Years 1 and 2 as no lessons were seen in the infants during the inspection. Judgements about attainment have been made from work on display as the school does not save or photograph work. In Years 3 - 6, teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. In the best lesson, the class teacher was assisted by another teacher. Year 6 pupils were inspired by an entertaining demonstration of 'Cubist' drawing by both teachers simultaneously. An obvious knowledge and love of Picasso's work enabled the teacher to set a good challenge to the pupils who worked hard to understand how viewpoint and emotion can affect the artist's depiction of the model. Lower attaining pupils were given a simpler but equally challenging task. In an unsuccessful lesson with younger pupils the teacher departed from her plans and failed to develop the pupils' skills effectively. The paintbrushes were too big and the paint too thick to enable pupils to make the delicate watercolour effects the task demanded. Pupils worked hard but did not make the progress they could have done. All teachers employ similar strategies to those they use in other lessons to involve and stretch pupils whose home language is not English. This means that discussions in art can often be at a high level.
126. The time available for art has been considerably reduced due to the concentration on the core curriculum. However, the progression in learning is maintained by the school's enthusiasm for art and the development of a scheme of work based on national guidelines. It is also considerably enriched by workshops and events run by local artists and links with local schools and businesses. The school has exciting displays of pupils' and artists' work done during these sessions. Batik, casting, collage and papier maché frames help display pictures and posters done in regular lessons and the influence of art of other times and cultures is evident everywhere. The school is beginning to use sketchbooks as a means of recording pupils' progress but this needs to be developed, so that all teachers know how they can be used to raise attainment. Although some pupils have used a computer paint program this was not connected to work in art. The inspection found no evidence of the use of ICT in art.
127. Art and design has recently come under the umbrella of 'expressive arts', including dance and drama, led by a dynamic and enthusiastic specialist. The school has maintained standards and made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. If the very good practice shown by the best teachers can be shared, the school is well placed to make further improvements in the pupils' achievements.



## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations. Pupils use skills in cutting, joining and finishing to make a range of artefacts such as model houses. Designing is less well developed, in line with limited writing and drawing skills, although the level of discussion and evaluation is good. This was evident in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were able to think of alternative ideas for their models. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is below national expectations. Pupils know how to make models using pneumatics, levers or pulleys and develop considerable skills during special workshops in weaving or dying fabric. However, making and finishing skills are below average and the design process is only partly used. No evidence of appropriate levels of research, accurate measurement or development through evaluation was seen in the juniors during the inspection.
129. This represents satisfactory achievement and steady progress in Years 1 and 2, where design and technology is used to develop understanding in other curriculum areas such as science. In the juniors achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards have declined since the last inspection. Teaching in the infants is good overall, with a clear focus on the development of language and basic skills as a key to raising attainment. It is not possible to make a judgement about teaching in Years 3 - 6 as only one lesson was seen in the juniors during the inspection. Judgements about attainment have been made from the limited work on display as the school does not save or photograph work. The Year 6 lesson seen was brilliant. Using teaching techniques developed in the 'Success for All' programme, combined with a theatrical approach, the teacher used the pupils' own speaking and listening skills to develop their understanding of different types of mechanism. The main resources used were the teachers' and pupils' own bodies so that by the end of the lesson the terms 'reciprocating' and 'circular motion' had a real, physical meaning.
130. The headteacher is acting as a temporary leader for design and technology. The curriculum is still under development. It meets statutory requirements as it is based on the National Curriculum. The inspection did not see any evidence of food technology, models using electricity or information technology, such as control technology or computer design. These are in the schemes of work and the school needs to consider saving samples of graded work to help teachers make assessments and raise attainment, particularly in Years 3 - 6. Accordingly, since the last inspection, improvement has been unsatisfactory.

## HUMANITIES

131. Pupils by Years 2 and 6 reach broadly average standards in both history and geography and achieve well. Standards have stayed the same since the previous inspection and, similarly, limited evidence was available in both subjects. However, from a few samples of work in books and on display and from talking to pupils about what they know standards are in line with expectations for this age group. For example, pupils in Year 1 skilfully used photographs and maps to make comparisons between features of the local area such as the Archway, now and in the past. They worked hard and made appropriate links between history and geography because the teaching was good and enabled them to use historical vocabulary to describe their findings. In geography in Year 2, pupils are making sensible comparisons between the climate in the Caribbean and in London this winter in their study of Caribbean Islands they recognise different fruits that grow in the warm climate and clearly enjoy eating mangoes and coconuts.
132. In Year 5, pupils greatly enjoyed a visit to a local Victorian house where they experienced what life would be like as a servant in Victorian times. Good teaching provides a broad range of interesting activities to extend the pupils' learning and they work hard. The achievement of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language is appropriate and by the end of Year 6, pupils show an appropriate understanding of Greek mythology and the Greek alphabet. They accurately describe what would be sold in the Agora, a market, and made sensible links between the Olympiad and the Olympic Games today. They were captivated by their study of Ancient Egypt but they could not describe the impact of ancient times on Egypt today. There are gaps in their skills and knowledge related to the passage of time, historical language and famous people.

133. In geography, pupils in Year 6 had a good understanding of the water cycle and recalled having been previously taught how water evaporates and forms clouds that cool and release water. A good example of this was when one child introduced the idea of storm drains and the urban water cycle. However, although progress was satisfactory, the teachers managed the pupils' learning too closely. As a result, some pupils' progress was limited because the worksheet following the direct teaching was undemanding for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils in Year 6 could not recognise human and physical processes and how they affect change, other than transport and pollution. They have a limited knowledge about the United Kingdom but are keen to demonstrate how they could use a range of sources for information, including the Internet.
134. There is too little evidence to make a secure judgement about teaching in history and geography. From the very few lessons observed, teachers have a sound knowledge of both subjects and are skilful at asking questions that probe the pupils' understanding of what they are taught. For example, in one geography lesson the strong emphasis on geographical language and skilful links with science enabled pupils to use appropriate language to describe what they have learned. Planning provides a helpful framework to lessons and effective use of pupils working in pairs to discuss their ideas contributes significantly to their progress.
135. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced covering a sound range of programmes of work in both history and geography. However, there are weaknesses. While the school uses the nationally recommended schemes of work to support teachers' planning and agreements about what will be covered during each year, there is no agreement about how historical and geographical skills will be developed as the pupils progress from year to year. Aspects of each subject are repeated but there is limited evidence to show how they will be taught to extend pupils skills, knowledge and understanding. This is because the school has rightly concentrated their efforts on raising standards in English and mathematics and not yet agreed how pupils will be able to practise what they have learned in the successful language programme 'Success For All', and numeracy lessons to history and geography. Assessment, identified as an area for development in the last inspection, is still not systematic and coherent. The school does not keep samples of work to help teachers make judgements about pupils' progress. Resources are generally effective and good use is made of the Local Resource Centre. Limited use is made of information communication technology to support pupils' learning in both subjects.
136. Subject leadership is satisfactory but still at an early stage of development and does not yet have a comprehensive impact on standards and pupils' achievement. The subject leader has a complex role leading three subjects. Clear targets have been set for the next year and the subject leader is well placed to make further improvements.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

137. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in the infants have had very little experience of computers except what they may have gained at home. Higher attaining pupils manage the mouse and pointer system effectively and can explore the tools provided by a simple computer painting program. Lower attaining pupils need considerable help in the simplest of tasks. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have experienced a range of computer applications, programmed a floor robot and used the Internet. However, they are not independent in their use of information technology and do not know, for instance, how to set up a database or use a spreadsheet for calculations.
138. Since the last inspection, when ICT in the school was judged to be unsatisfactory, the school has made important improvements to the curriculum, the accommodation and resources and the expertise of the staff. An unfortunate setback occurred last March when a disastrous system failure resulted in the school being without any computing facilities until the week before the inspection. This was entirely beyond the control of the school although, with hindsight, it is clear that the school was not well-served by the advice it was given nor by the supplier of the system: all the school's curriculum computers are connected to the one server; none will work effectively

on its own. In addition, the limitations in the nationally funded staff training and the arrival of new teachers during the 'down' period, has meant a serious shortage of staff expertise.

139. Judgements about attainment have been made on the basis of discussions and working with Year 3 and Year 6 pupils. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching. During the inspection only one full Year 6 lesson and one part Year 3 lesson were observed. These were two of a series run by the ICT leader in order to get pupils logged on and used to the new system. In both lessons, pupils were excited and challenged by the opportunity, which was well-planned and delivered and enabled the vast majority of pupils to access their appropriate tools. Year 6 pupils quickly recalled skills in running programmes and searching the World Wide Web and were eager to discuss what they had achieved in previous years. The ICT leader who had, fortunately, saved some year 6 multimedia presentations on floppy disc, provided the only visible evidence of previous work. These illustrated an appropriate grasp of the possibilities afforded by combining pictures, text, movement and sound. Overall, the pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory; progress having stalled for over half a year.
140. Talking with the Year 6 pupils also showed that the provision for ICT for older pupils had been good, meeting statutory requirements effectively and providing interesting experiences. On the other hand, not only did the school's documentation reveal the limitations of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 - 2, so did talking to the pupils in Year 3. The school does not yet have a satisfactory system for assessing pupils' work that can be used effectively by all teachers to raise standards although there are plans for this.
141. After experiencing these setbacks, the school is poised to make a full recovery. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed. The computers are now working and new equipment, such as electronic whiteboards, has begun to arrive. The school has good links with local secondary schools, colleges and industry as well as support from local and national education initiatives. Providing that staff training can be regenerated the school is well placed to raise attainment to levels commensurate with the pupils' interest and enthusiasm.

## **MUSIC**

142. The attainment of pupils in music is in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum by Years 2 and 6. Pupils work hard and achieve soundly in the subject. Their achievements are enhanced by the successful use of specialist teaching. The teaching observed was at least satisfactory and occasionally good. As a result pupils learn effectively and show a genuine appreciation for the musical opportunities, particularly with music specialists. Pupils use musical vocabulary well and understand musical terms. For example, Year 6 pupils are able to define beat, pulse, stave, structure and pentatonic scale due to the effective teaching and musical instructions provided.
143. Pupils enjoy using instruments and singing and are particularly enthusiastic when attending music clubs like choir, guitar, recorder and percussion. They work well together, especially when composing musical pictures and sustaining rhythms on a variety of drums. During lessons all strands of music-making were observed. The youngest pupils had opportunities to listen to and dance to a variety of styles of music, as well as clapping rhythms. Older pupils have opportunities to make compositions which link to work in the classroom. Teachers are creative on their use of music, for instance, using a Victorian theme, they encouraged pupils to sing music hall songs with great enjoyment and make a musical picture to describe what poor and rich child might hear in the morning. Similarly the effective teaching enabled pupils to compose a sound poem, describing a story from Greek mythology.
144. Singing sessions with the subject leader incorporate opportunities to extend musical vocabulary and understanding of dynamics. In a well chosen moment a child was able to control the volume of singing by using hand signals and pupils could consolidate knowledge of terms like piano, fortissimo and crescendo. In some classes, pupils have good opportunities to record a dynamics sequence using their own symbols for loud and soft music.

145. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to record and listen to their own compositions and use electronic keyboards. There was, however, no observed use made of information and communication technology to support the curriculum.
146. The subject leader and specialist percussion teacher work well together. Both have high levels of musical skills and are making significant contributions to the school's musical achievement. Marked improvements have been made to the scheme of work and the music clubs effectively extend and enrich the curriculum. Pupils are making good progress in a short time, with three recorder groups, two guitar groups, and a school choir, which now sings in parts and has enjoyed producing its own composition for a competition. The well established percussion group is very popular. Regular assessments are made of pupils' progress when attending sessions with the specialist percussion teacher and a more formal approach for class teachers has been identified within the careful action plan.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

147. Only a few lessons in games were planned to take place during the inspection. However, from those lessons, a sample of extra curricular activities and talking to the pupils, standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These standards are similar to those identified by the previous inspection, although there is less variety in the experiences currently provided for the pupils each week.
148. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in skills such as throwing, catching and invasion games such as 'touch rugby'-the sport all pupils throughout the school are currently learning as their half-termly physical education focus. By the end of Year 2, the pupils throw and catch with reasonable accuracy and high attaining pupils have physical skills that enable them to change their body weight appropriately when passing the ball. The majority skip with a rope, although some pupils find skipping a hard skill to master. Standards by the end of Year 6 are also average and when teaching is good and challenges the pupils' to be accurate, they respond by ducking and weaving and passing the ball accurately to their classmates. A good example of this was in Year 5, when teaching was based on good subject knowledge, with high expectations of the pupils' physical achievements. Praise is used effectively to encourage the pupils and consequently they work hard and concentrate and this helps raises standards of work.
149. Some lessons observed were very brief because they started late or were designed to be very short periods. While there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about teaching, the few lessons seen indicate that teaching is good overall and it was never less than satisfactory. In Year 2, lessons are lively and brisk and this motivates the pupils and challenges them to work hard. All pupils, including those with significant special needs, make at least appropriate progress in lessons and for some progress is good because the teaching focuses on raising standards. Teaching was generally good in the two lessons observed in Years 5 and 6. Pupils were appropriately challenged and their achievement from Year 2 is satisfactory. Consequently, they enjoy touch rugby and work hard in lessons to improve their ball skills. While teachers use pupils to demonstrate good standards of work, too few opportunities are planned into lessons to enable pupils to plan, evaluate and modify the skills they have learned. Care is taken to ensure that pupils are gaining an understanding of their bodies and how important it is to raise their heart rate and become fit.
150. All the elements of physical education are planned but there are gaps between when each element is taught. Consequently, pupils sometimes forget what they have been taught and the two weekly lessons lack variety. Swimming is taught appropriately and the school uses a local swimming pool for pupils in Year 5. The curriculum is planned to overcome the restrictions due to a lack of field and the use of a local field takes place during the summer months, when there is a stronger emphasis on athletic and other team sports. The use of three halls and two playgrounds enables several opportunities for physical education. However, several classes are not getting their full second lesson because time is sometimes restricted. Subject leadership is sound and the two new leaders have a good subject knowledge and are beginning to have an impact on the curriculum. Resources are generally good, although more balls and games equipment would

enhance the provision. A broad range of extra-curricular activities enhances the physical education curriculum. The pupils thoroughly enjoy the fitness programme. Standards of gymnastics reached by some of pupils in the gym club was high because the visiting teacher, a specialist coach taught the pupils specific specialist skills and challenged them physically and intellectually. The teaching demonstrated a very good eye for detail and demanded accuracy, whilst encouraging pupils, and as a result, they quickly learned new skills and worked very hard.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the statements of attainment in the Locally Agreed Syllabus by Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily although the quality of their speaking and listening skills in lessons are better than the quality of recording in Years 3 – 6.
152. By Year 2, pupils are able to retell the story of Rama and Sita, and link this to the celebration of Diwali as part of a topic on light. They relate this to their own experience by recording a comment about the person who brings light into their life. These pupils also have the opportunity to produce an assembly sharing their work with others.
153. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate that they understand significant features of the Islamic faith traditions, like events in the life of Mohammad, some of the messages contained in the Qur'an and Islamic ways of worship and prayer. They are able to name places of worship associated with the main religions studied and understand that the Bible is the Christian holy book. Within their study of Christianity pupils are beginning to associate an understanding of emotions linked to a knowledge of parables. For example, in examining the concept of forgiveness when learning about the parable of The Prodigal Son. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 understand facts related to the Jewish New Year and The Day of Atonement. They relate ideas of making judgements about others to making personal targets for themselves.
154. Only a few lessons were observed in the inspection, but using analysis of planning, work completed and discussions with pupils, teaching is satisfactory and pupils make sound gains in their learning as a result. Lesson planning is clear and, for older pupils, successfully links their knowledge to a discussion of feelings or values. For example, pupils discussing the messages from the Qur'an were able to relate to their own lives that the way you behave towards others is most important.
155. The subject leader has incorporated the suggested topics from the Locally Agreed Syllabus within the curriculum map for this subject, indicating satisfactory improvement from the last inspection, although there are often long gaps between topics, due to the nature of the humanities curriculum. She has identified the need to look more carefully at festivals from different faiths and build this into the long-term planning. In Year 3, pupils have the chance to compare festivals in different faiths, discussing what happens, and who celebrates. Displays showing artefacts concerned with the Chinese New Year contributed to the effectiveness of this discussion. Members of the class were happy to talk about their forthcoming celebration of Eid-al-Fitr and what happens. This was a significant feature of the carefully thought out lesson and pupils were able to design their own Eid card.
156. The good use of "pair and share" activities enables pupils to participate well, rehearsing answers, recalling facts, and consolidating knowledge. They like to take part in the lesson and are happy to share their experiences and knowledge with others. Displays around the school and in the classroom satisfactorily support the current studies, for example Islamic and Christian artefacts and books related to the study.