

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **HIGHLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ilford, Essex

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 131013

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Buttress

Reporting inspector: Colin Henderson  
23742

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 230834

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Highlands Gardens Ilford Essex
Postcode:	IG1 3LE
Telephone number:	020 8554 0044
Fax number:	020 8518 2322
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mick Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Henderson 23742	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	How high are standards? a) the school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Jenny Mynett 9334	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Janet Tomlinson 29491	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music	
Sonia Bosworth 30573	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Sanchia Pearse 4787	Team inspector	English History	
Bob Battey 2866	Team inspector	Science Special educational needs Equal opportunities	
Kuldip Rai 3588	Team inspector	English as an additional language Religious education Geography	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Highlands School is situated in the Redbridge area of north east London. It is a very large primary school. It currently has 616 pupils (318 boys and 298 girls) and a further 54 children part-time in the nursery. Most pupils live in the local area in a mixture of rented and private housing. It is an area with some aspects of significant social and economic deprivation. The school is receiving an increasing number of refugees and children from temporary housing. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. There are 540 pupils (84 per cent) for whom English is an additional language, which is very high compared with the national average. Thirty four different languages are spoken in the school. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is above the national average. There are 31 per cent of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is above the national average. Ten pupils (1.6 per cent) have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is broadly average. Attainment on entry is well below the national average.

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

Highlands Primary is a very good school with many excellent features. It is outstanding in establishing a harmonious, caring and supportive school community. Teaching and support staff work very successfully together to ensure that all pupils are valued and included fully in all aspects of school life. The headteacher provides excellent leadership to give clear direction to the work of the school. She is supported very well by effective senior management, a strong staff team and a supportive governing body. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and good teaching enables them to make good progress. Pupils' attainment is improving and promoted effectively by the school's involvement in the 'Learn to Learn' project. It gives very good value for money.

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

- It is very successful in establishing a harmonious, multi-cultural community in which relationships are excellent.
- Teaching is good overall. It is frequently very good or excellent and enables pupils to make good progress.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership, focused strongly on improving standards. She is supported very well by a strong management team and supportive governing body.
- The school's involvement in the 'Learn to Learn' project is promoting very positive attitudes to school. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and very keen to improve the standard.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are friendly, polite and work together very effectively.
- The school provides excellently for pupils' personal development. Staff know their pupils very well. They provide high quality support and guidance to enable pupils to grow in confidence and achieve well.
- The school has excellent procedures for supporting new staff. They enable staff to quickly become part of the strong team approach and further develop their professional skills.

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

- Standards of attainment in English.
- Standards of attainment in mathematics, particularly at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers using assessment information consistently to guide planning and set targets for improving pupils' work.
- Pupils' skills in word processing and their use in supporting standards in other subjects.

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

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

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in June 1997. It has made very good progress on most of the key issues in the last report. Pupils are attaining higher standards in science, information and communication technology and design and technology. Governors are more fully involved in managing the school. The school has improved procedures for promoting attendance. Teachers are using assessment information more to inform teaching plans, although not consistently throughout the school. Leadership and management have been maintained at a very good level. Teaching has improved. The school has improved its provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils' behaviour is still very good and they maintain positive attitudes to school.

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

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

Pupils are attaining higher standards overall than at the last inspection. Test results show standards at the end of Year 6 are improving. Their rate of improvement is above the national trend in mathematics and science. It is below the national trend in English. The variation in test results is affected by the high level of pupil mobility in the school. Some pupils enter the school with low level English language skills and this impacts on standards, especially in English. Year 6 results have improved significantly in science due mainly to good teaching, good subject management and pupils' positive attitudes. The proportion of pupils attaining above the nationally expected Level 4 was above average in mathematics and just above average in science. Results in English remain well below average, although the school is increasing the proportion of pupils attaining above average levels in reading. The school exceeded its realistic 2001 target of 68 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above in mathematics. It did not meet the local education authority's very challenging target of 72 per cent in English and writing remains a weakness.

Inspection evidence confirms that standards are improving and pupils achieve well throughout the school. The large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language receive good support and guidance. They achieve well and attain standards similar to those attained by other pupils with similar ability. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with well below average skills, especially in language and literacy. Many do not speak any English. They make good progress promoted by good teaching, especially in the nursery. Most achieve their early learning goals by the end of reception, except in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The school builds effectively on pupils' skills and knowledge in the infants, especially in Year 2. Pupils attain standards by the end of Year 2 that are below average in English and mathematics. Teachers use the school's literacy and numeracy strategies effectively, supported successfully by their involvement in the 'Learn to Learn' project, to focus on raising standards, for example pupils' mental mathematical ability and their writing skills. Junior pupils achieve well promoted by consistently high quality teaching. They attain standards that are in line with the national average in all subjects, except English and aspects of information and communication technology, by the end of Year 6. Year 6 pupils do not develop their word processing skills sufficiently. Pupils are taught basic skills effectively, but they do not have enough opportunities to apply and extend these skills in other subjects. There are not enough computers in classrooms. Pupils attain standards in religious education that meet those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. They have a good knowledge and understanding of their own religion and a sound knowledge of the different religions they have studied. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support, both in class and when withdrawn for focused group work. They make good progress towards their learning targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes. They clearly enjoy being at school. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are friendly, polite and courteous. They play and work together very well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships promote excellent personal development. Staff provide very good role models. They encourage pupils to show respect, take responsibility and care for each other.
Attendance	Attendance levels are well below average. The school has focused on improving levels. They have not improved consistently since the last inspection.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in the nursery is very good and enables children to make very good progress. There is some good teaching in each year group and it is of a consistently high quality in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6. Teaching was good or better in 78 per cent of the 101 lessons observed. It was very good in 23 per cent. Teaching was excellent in a further 10 per cent. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is a significant factor in enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. They are improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers manage their classes very effectively to ensure that pupils sustain their interest and concentration. They have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, especially in the juniors. In the very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, teachers did not organise their resources well enough to allow pupils to maintain their attention and make satisfactory progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good throughout the school. The school has focused strongly on literacy and numeracy. It has retained a good balanced programme, enhanced successfully by visits, extra-curricular clubs and very good links with the community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good support for individuals and groups in class activities and for those withdrawn for focused teaching. On occasions, pupils miss some aspects of class activities when in withdrawal groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Class teachers, support teachers and support assistants work closely together as a team to promote pupils' English language skills. Pupils are fully included in school activities. This encourages them to develop very good attitudes to school and to their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' personal development is excellent. It fosters respect and promotes excellent relationships. It enables pupils to have a clear sense of right and wrong. The school is excellent in promoting pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Staff know their pupils very well and provide good care and support. The procedures for assessing pupils' work are good, although teachers do not consistently use them to inform teaching plans.

The school has a good partnership with parents and encourages them to contribute to their child's learning. The high quality care and support given to all pupils, irrespective of ability, gender or ethnic-background, enables all of them to be fully involved in all of the school's activities.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, focused strongly on raising standards. She is very well supported by very effective senior management. They have successfully established a strong staff team who support each other very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	A supportive and active governing body has improved its role significantly since the last inspection. Governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher, together with her deputies and subject leaders, regularly monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. They analyse attainment data effectively to identify improvement priorities. These procedures promote higher standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of a very good improvement plan to ensure that finances are targeted efficiently on priorities. The current high budget surplus resulted from unexpected staff vacancies. The school plans to increase support staff and improve the building.

The school has a satisfactory number of teaching and support staff. They are used efficiently to provide good guidance and support to pupils. The range and quality of resources are good. They are used well to contribute to achievement, for example in science. Information and communication technology resources in classrooms are unsatisfactory. They do not enable pupils to extend their skills. The accommodation is good and has been improved considerably since the last inspection. The school applies the principles of best value effectively. It gives very good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parental responses from 137 questionnaires (21 per cent), written responses and from the 48 parents who attended the parents' meeting were supportive of the school.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of work and behaviour</li> <li>• It helps their children become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consistent use of homework</li> <li>• Information about how well their children are making progress</li> <li>• A broader range of activities outside lessons</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views. Inspectors found that teachers use homework consistently in line with the school's policy. The range of extra-curricular activities is good and enhances the curriculum. The school provides good information about pupils' progress.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. In 2001, Year 6 pupils attained standards in mathematics and science which were in line with the national average. They were well above the average of similar schools in mathematics and above the average in science. They attained standards in English which were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. Test results can vary from year to year given the high level of pupil mobility in the school. For example, out of the 102 pupils in the current Year 6 only 69 pupils started in reception. Some pupils enter the school in the middle primary years with little or no spoken English. Trends in test results at the end of Year 6 over the last three years, as illustrated in the following table, show that standards overall are improving in line with the national trend. They have been above the national trend in mathematics and science since the last inspection in 1997. The school did not meet its very challenging target in last year's tests of 72 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4<sup>1</sup> or above in English. This target was set by the local education authority and did not reflect the school's assessment information and the number of changes in pupil numbers. The school exceeded its target of 68 per cent in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that the school is likely to be close to meeting its challenging 2002 target of 75 per cent in mathematics. It is unlikely to achieve the similar target for English. Pupils with low levels of English language skills benefit from reading support in mathematics and science tests which they are not permitted to receive in English. Test results show that boys do not achieve as well as girls. The school has done a detailed analysis of test results and is focusing on raising boys' attainment as a priority issue.

A table to show the percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5.

Year	1999				2000				2001			
	L 4	L 5	L 4+	N/a 4+	L 4	L 5	L 4+	N/a 4+	L 4	L 5	L 4+	N/a 4+
English overall	56	17	73	70	43	17	60	75	36	22	58	75
Reading	53	24	77	81	41	27	68	83	50	30	80	82
Writing	44	13	57	56	45	6	51	55	24	17	41	58
Mathematics	34	32	66	69	41	20	61	71	40	31	71	73
Science	51	20	71	78	45	27	72	84	55	36	91	91

N/a – national average

2. Pupils' attainment in science has improved significantly. In 2001 more than one in every three pupils achieved above the nationally expected level. This is just above the national average. The main factors which are improving results considerably in science are:
- very good teaching, especially in Year 6
  - pupils' very enthusiastic attitudes to learning
  - very good subject co-ordination

<sup>1</sup> The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils attain Level 4 by the end of Year 6. Pupils attaining Level 5 are reaching standards above those expected for their age.

- good teaching plans based on an effective scheme of work
  - good resources.
3. Pupils attain standards in mathematics which are broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 was above the national average. Pupils' attainment overall in English has fallen well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved above average levels in reading has improved each year. However, few pupils achieve above average levels in writing.
  4. A high proportion of pupils have weaknesses in their English language skills. Inspection evidence shows that they make good and often very good progress in developing and applying their literacy skills. The school has implemented its strategy for literacy effectively. It has successfully modified national guidance in order to ensure that the strategy meets the specific needs of its pupils, for example, to improve writing. Inspectors judge that standards in English at the end of Year 6 are improving. The current Year 6 contains a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than last year and has had a high level of pupil mobility (see paragraph 1). However, most Year 6 pupils are attaining standards that are below rather than well below the national average. An analysis of pupils' work show that they are achieving well throughout the school. Children's attainment in literacy on entry to the school is well below the national average. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards which are below average. Teaching and support staff build on these skills effectively and enable pupils to apply them in a broad range of subjects. Good and frequently very good teaching, supported by the school's increasingly good use of such strategies as pupil targets and writing workshops, are raising standards in all aspects of English. Pupils have positive attitudes to literacy, especially reading. They are keen to develop their English language and literacy skills and improve the quality of their work.
  5. Pupils attain standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2 which are below the national average. They attain average standards by the end of Year 6. Most children enter the school with well below average number skills. The school receives an increasing number of pupils who have weak English language skills. This restricts their progress, for example, in describing the way in which they used mental strategies to solve problems. Pupils make sound progress overall in their learning in the infants. They make good progress in Year 2. Pupils make good and often very good progress in the juniors as they become more confident in their understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully, especially the increased focus on improving pupils' mental number skills. Teachers are successful in planning a range of activities to meet the needs of different groups within the class. Teaching and trained support staff work very well together to ensure that they provide good guidance and support, for example, to those groups of pupils with specific language and learning weaknesses. The school has increasingly focused on more able pupils, especially in the juniors for example, by withdrawing them for targeted mathematical support. This is beginning to challenge them to extend their skills and knowledge, although it is not yet sufficiently developed to raise their standard of work to a consistently higher level.
  6. Pupils attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. They are higher overall than at the previous inspection. They have improved in science, information and communication technology, design and technology, music and art and design. Pupils attain standards in mathematics, religious education, history, geography and physical education that are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Pupils attain nationally expected standards in all aspects of information and communication technology except word processing. Teachers use the computer suite efficiently to teach basic skills in all required aspects. However, the school does not have sufficient resources for information and communication technology in classrooms to give pupils enough opportunities to

extend their word processing skills. Pupils attain standards in religious education which are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the different religions they have studied.

7. The large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language attain similar standards to other pupils in their classes and make good progress in their learning. Those who enter the school with low levels of English language skills benefit from good, and often very good, support from class teachers, support assistants and specialist support teachers from the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service. They provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The school achieves a good balance between ensuring that pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully included in all areas of the curriculum and withdrawing them for focused individual or group support. The performance of pupils assessed at the early stages of English language acquisition in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is restricted by the school not being allowed to maintain specific support to them, for example, in reading and writing.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Pupils receive good levels of assistance from teaching and support staff in their classes and by withdrawal. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' literacy skills and to a lesser degree their numeracy skills. The school does not always give sufficient attention to define suitable targets to meet their social and emotional needs arising from their learning difficulties. On occasions, this limits the progress of individual pupils.
9. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with well below average skills, especially in communication, language and literacy. Many do not speak any English at all. This affects their confidence and progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children generally settle quickly into school routines. They are happy and benefit from very high quality support and guidance. This allows them to grow in confidence and to make good progress overall. Their progress in the nursery is very good due to the consistently very high quality teaching. By the end of the reception year, children achieve their early learning goals<sup>2</sup> in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Good and often very good teaching promotes children's development very effectively in all areas. Their low level of English language skills, although improving throughout their time in the Foundation Stage, limits their progress in language, literacy and mathematical aspects.
10. Given the well below average attainment on entry, the school is very successful in enabling most of its pupils to achieve average standards, particularly in science and mathematics, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage. The school builds on this soundly in Year 1 and most make good progress in Year 2. As pupils' skills improve, especially those in literacy and numeracy, they continue to make good progress in their learning throughout the juniors. Many make very good progress in Year 6. The main factors in enabling pupils to make good progress are:
  - the high quality of teaching
  - the very good school and subject management
  - the pupils' positive and enthusiastic attitudes to work

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<sup>2</sup>Early learning goals – these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer to achievements children make in connection with the following six areas of learning; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy, pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write sentences

- the school's strong focus, supported by its involvement in the 'Learn to Learn' project, on ensuring all of its pupils, irrespective of ability, gender or ethnic background, are fully included in all activities
- improving facilities and resources.

These factors will be described in more detail in some of the following sections of the report.

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

11. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes both to school and to their learning. They enjoy coming to school. Comments from a number of pupils more than adequately sum up their views of the school. 'This is the best school I've been to'; 'I like everything about the school'; 'it's a very friendly place – I've got lots of friends'; and 'the teachers are very helpful and supportive'. Pupils have very good attitudes and have a clear sense that they have come to school to learn as well as have fun. These high standards have been encouraged through sensitive teacher support and encouragement, which raises pupils' self esteem and confidence in themselves and their work. Pupils are highly motivated, enthusiastic and eager to contribute and participate both in lessons and other activities in and around school. They are well focused on their tasks and concentrate well for extended periods. Parents are particularly pleased with the high expectations of teachers and by the way the school encourages pupils to work hard and achieve their best. They feel the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.
12. The attitudes and behaviour of the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes are very good. The sensitive interaction of staff provides a happy and secure environment that promotes children's education and personal development. Children are eager to learn. They show a very mature and confident approach both to their tasks and activities and within their relationships with each other. They listen attentively concentrate well. They are developing very good social skills as they work and play together, happily sharing their toys and equipment.
13. The standards of behaviour in and around the school are very good and have been well maintained since the last inspection. Parents commented on the high standards set; they feel that pupils know what is expected and that any problems are resolved sensitively. Some pupils commented that they behave better in school than they do at home. The school functions as a welcoming, orderly community where pupils have a good sense of self-discipline. Pupils are well aware of the school's rules and they speak very positively about the 'No Put Down Zones' operating in the classrooms. On occasions, pupils were seen to effectively monitor excessive chatter or silliness in their groups. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff and adults in the school and provide a warm friendly greeting to visitors. In class, pupils are very happy to talk about what they are doing and very willing to show their work to visitors. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour in the school. Pupils feel that the school is a happy and secure place and report few incidents of bullying. If there are any they know what to do and commented that 'the '3 Step Approach' seems to work'. The school works hard to retain pupils; however, it has had to exclude four pupils on a few occasions over the last year for violence or severe disruptive behaviour.
14. Relationships in the school are excellent, both between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. All members of the school community respect and value each other. The great care and attention that goes into establishing the different collaborative groups in each class ensure all pupils feel included, with the 'tribes'<sup>3</sup> given many opportunities to learn to work together. The school works hard to promote tolerance and kindness and a

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<sup>3</sup> Pupils are grouped into 'tribes' as part of the 'Learn to Learn' project to promote group work and social development.

high degree of harmony exists between the large cultural diversity represented in the school community and pupils of all ages. The older pupils are very caring and look after the younger ones. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are particularly well integrated into school activities. This harmonious atmosphere promotes a good working environment and makes a positive impact on learning. Pupils enjoy working together in pairs or small groups with many examples observed across the school. These include the wonderful lion dance prepared by reception children to celebrate the Chinese New Year, to the well reasoned debates in a Year 4 activity supporting or rejecting the building of a new supermarket in the local park.

15. Pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on others. The personal, social and health education programme provides good opportunities for pupils to talk about important issues such as friendship and bullying, enabling pupils to share their views and feelings, values and beliefs. This promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem, providing a good moral foundation for their discussions. The clear aims and ethos of the school promote value and respect for each other and are reinforced by the very good role models of the staff.
16. Opportunities to develop pupils' personal development are excellent. Strategies have been developed to offer pupils more choice and the chance to take responsibility for their own learning. In the nursery and reception classes, pupils are given a choice of activities and resources, which enables them to explore a variety of different materials as well as helping to develop their initiative. In other years, pupils are encouraged to develop their investigative skills through independent learning and researches and to evaluate their results. Where these activities are offered, pupils respond enthusiastically and are well focused on their tasks. Pupils willingly undertake roles of responsibility around the school, bringing positive and conscientious attitudes to their tasks and activities. They take turns to act as class monitors, while older pupils have wider responsibilities. This includes acting as librarians, looking after the younger children in the playground or during 'wet play', or monitoring movement around the school at lunchtime. The school council enables pupils to air their views and become involved in the decision-making processes of the school. Members of the council spoke intently about the opportunity it provided, 'we want to make the school a better/safer place for children...to listen to their ideas and see what we can do about them....we're trying to get children to work together to make a better place'. During the inspection the school council voted enthusiastically to establish 'Friends.com', a buddy system being set up to look out for pupils in the playground.
17. Attendance levels in the school, including unauthorised absences, are unsatisfactory. They have not improved consistently since the last inspection when this was identified as an area of concern. With an attendance figure of 91.95 per cent for the last academic year, attendance levels are well below the national average. This is partly a result of the significant number of parents who take their children on extended holidays in term time. In addition, the result of high levels of pupil mobility is that the school is required to retain pupils on roll for some time after they have left the school. The school is sensitive to religious observances and family emergencies and their effect on pupils' attendance. Punctuality is a problem in the school with a large number of parents regularly bringing their children to school late in the morning. This frequently interrupts the start of the day for the rest of the class. The poor attendance and punctuality of some pupils are having a significant impact on their level of progress and attainment.
18. Attendance and punctuality are well monitored by the school and have been a focus for improvement since the last inspection. Registers are being completed correctly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions with any unexplained absence or lateness followed up promptly.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching is good overall. It is often very good or excellent. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. It is very good in the nursery. Teaching is of a consistently high quality in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6 and there are examples of good teaching in every year group. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching was good in 45 per cent of the 101 lessons observed in the inspection. It was very good in a further 23 per cent and excellent in 10 per cent of lessons. There was a very small amount (3 per cent) of unsatisfactory teaching. This was mainly the result of organisational weaknesses limiting pupils' learning. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. It is frequently very good or excellent, especially for junior pupils. Teachers have implemented the school's literacy and numeracy strategies effectively. They are improving pupils' skills and contribute significantly to raising standards of attainment. Teaching is of a consistently high standard in science and is promoting rapidly improving levels of attainment. Teaching is good in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and music. It is sound overall in physical education. There was insufficient evidence to judge teaching in history, geography and religious education. The good quality of teaching is a significant factor in enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning.
20. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good in all the areas of learning. It is very good in the nursery. This has a positive impact on children's learning, so that, by the time they reach the end of the reception year, children have made good progress. Teaching and support staff work very well together. They develop very good relationships with children, especially those with very weak English language skills. They use a very good range of teaching approaches to encourage children to become actively involved in their learning. Staff have high expectations of children. They encourage them to become increasingly independent in their learning, for example getting out and putting away any resources they need. Teachers plan in detail to cover the early learning goals for the groups supported by adults. Reception class teachers do not always plan in sufficient detail to ensure that children in unsupported groups also make good progress.
21. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils. They manage their classes very effectively to ensure that pupils sustain their attention and remain focused on the learning activity. Teachers use a very good range of strategies, many linked to the school's 'Learning to Learn' project, to get pupils' attention very quickly. This enables them to give further instructions and explanations and maintain a good lesson pace. For example, in a very good Year 4 art and design lesson, the teacher only needed to clap her hands once to gain immediate attention. She used a good example of a pupil's work to stimulate further ideas. The teacher then used soothing 'water music' to provide a calm working atmosphere to encourage pupils to focus carefully on their work. As the noise levels began to rise, a pupil then rang a wind-chime. This resulted in immediate quietness.
22. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it effectively to improve pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, in an excellent Year 2 literacy lesson linked to the Victorians history topic, the teacher's very good knowledge of the different aspects of the literacy strategy enabled him to develop an excellent balance between teacher input and pupil input. The teacher organised the lesson very successfully to enable pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of different phonemes. He then challenged them successfully to apply their knowledge to write a character description of Florence Nightingale. This resulted in pupils writing enthusiastically and making excellent use of the teacher's very good guidance, for example a flow chart to guide their writing. The excellent teaching enabled pupils to make excellent progress in improving their writing skills.

23. Teachers plan their lessons in detail, especially for junior pupils. They clearly identify learning objectives, which they share with the pupils through WALT (We are learning to...) and WILF (What I am looking for...). These give a clear focus to pupils' learning. Pupils know what they are trying to achieve and what is expected of them. Many teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils respond very positively and try enthusiastically to meet these expectations. For example, in an excellent Year 6 science lesson, the very high expectations of both the class and support teacher led to excellent progress in extending pupils' scientific skills. They worked in close partnership and challenged pupils to present their results of their investigation into shadows. Both teachers provided very high quality support to enable all pupils to be involved fully. They maintained a brisk and challenging pace and encouraged pupils to achieve the learning outcome. They were particularly successful in enabling all pupils to present their scientific results in a graph and then indicate patterns and trends in the data. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, attained standards which were close to those expected nationally for their age.
24. Some teachers use assessment information to plan activities which match closely the learning needs of pupils. For example, in a good Year 2 numeracy lesson, the teacher organised a range of group activities matched well to pupils' number knowledge and understanding. Groups of lower attaining pupils added the numbers from two dominoes, recording their results as 'sums' with the support of 'dots' to count the totals. The teacher required other groups to add more numbers, with the help of a number square when needed. She challenged more able pupils to explain the different strategies they had used to work out their answers. However, teachers do not consistently use assessment information to ensure that learning activities meet the needs of the full range of different abilities within the class. This does not always ensure that all pupils make good progress in their learning. For example, in a satisfactory literacy lesson, the teacher focused on sentence work with lower attaining pupils. She ensured that she used questions and resources effectively to promote their learning. However, she did not ensure that the other groups, especially the more able pupils, had an activity which they understood clearly and could work at independently. This led to these pupils needing extra time and further explanation from the teacher before they tackled their task with confidence. This slowed the pace of the lesson and pupils did not achieve as much as they could have done in the time available.
25. Teachers use questions very competently to consolidate then extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. They use questions to encourage pupils' participation in class discussions. Many use follow-up questions very effectively to challenge pupils to extend their initial answer. For example, in an excellent Year 6 mathematics lesson on co-ordinates, the teacher used a dynamic, rapid-fire questioning technique to maintain pupils' attention and extend their knowledge. She continually challenged pupils to explain 'What is missing? What is unusual about ...? What can you tell me about the gradient? What did you use to solve that problem?' This maintained a brisk pace to pupils' learning and required them to think constantly about the ways in which they had calculated their answers.
26. Teachers work very closely with support teachers and assistants to use good resources and ensure that all pupils are fully included in their learning activities. For example, when working in the information and communication technology suite, teachers made good use of a computer and a large white board to give clear demonstrations of particular skills to the whole class. Teaching and support staff give very good individual support to meet the needs of different pupils. This included making a series of prompt cards to identify key words, such as 'cut and paste', when learning a particular skill. Teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. Although they use listening sets and provide a good range of music to create a positive learning atmosphere, they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to



extend their computer skills. There are not enough computers in classrooms to enable teachers to extend pupils' skills.

27. The inspection of this school included a focused view of the contribution of teaching assistants to teaching and learning in literacy and mathematics. Teaching assistants, under the guidance of teachers, have a good impact on pupils' learning, both in the classrooms and when withdrawing groups, for example, for Early and Additional Literacy Strategy support. Most teaching assistants are involved in weekly planning sessions and receive good guidance from teachers in preparation for their support in the classroom. Teachers make good use of the observations and assessments made by teaching assistants to adjust planning for literacy and mathematics lessons and to focus additional support for individual pupils where necessary. Teaching assistants give good assistance to teachers in the organisation and management of the classroom and have very good relationships with teaching staff and pupils. They are hard working and willing to participate in all classroom activities. They apply school strategies for managing behaviour consistently and care very well for pupils both in and out of the classroom. The school values greatly the positive contribution of teaching assistants to pupils' learning.
28. In the very small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, teachers did not always organise the activities successfully to ensure that all pupils were involved fully and aware of what they were expected to do. This resulted in some lapses in concentration and a lack of achievement. For example, in a geography lesson, the teacher did not organise the class to ensure that all pupils could clearly see her demonstrate how to use such resources as a map and a globe. Many pupils, especially those for whom English is an additional language, were unable to see which resources were being used by the teacher as she introduced the new terms to them. Few pupils were involved effectively in the lesson. The teacher did not maintain an effective pace as she had to check which pupils had heard and understood the new words used. This limited the work which pupils achieved. Pupils' learning in a music lesson was unsatisfactory when the teacher did not organise her time or resources effectively. Pupils did not have sufficient time to use the very good range of different instruments to apply their skills fully. They found it difficult to sustain their interest and did not make sufficient progress in developing their skills and knowledge.
29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers, with good assistance from support staff, modify teaching methods and resources successfully to meet pupils' needs. As a result of this effective support, together with the good teaching they receive in class, pupils with special educational needs learn well alongside their fellow pupils. For example, younger pupils with learning difficulties in literacy successfully discussed and completed partly prepared sentences with good levels of understanding and accuracy. In science lessons, older pupils with special educational needs achieved high levels of understanding, almost equivalent to their fellow pupils. This was due to the high expectation of what they should do and the very good teaching. They completed similar work to the pupils in the rest of the class. The school has recently introduced some additional support for gifted and talented pupils and for more able pupils in literacy and numeracy. Small groups of pupils are withdrawn from class lessons to receive good teaching focused on the same objectives as the rest of their class. For example, in a numeracy session, the teacher began the lesson with a challenging mental number aspect. She maintained a brisk pace and required individual pupils to explain in detail to the rest of the group what strategies they had used to solve particular problems. She then challenged others to think of different ways to solve the same problem. This enabled pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding effectively.

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

30. The school's curriculum is good. It provides a good range of stimulating, interesting and relevant areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage and for infant and junior phase pupils. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school prepares pupils well for their next stage of education.
31. Curriculum planning is good. In response to the last inspection report, national initiatives and its own internal audit, the school has successfully undertaken an extensive review of the curriculum. The school has given high priority to the introduction and implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These initiatives have been monitored well. They have been refined to ensure that they are having sufficient impact upon the standards of pupils' work and meet the needs of all pupils. At present, the school has a particular focus on the raising of standards in writing and pupils' ability to carry out mathematical calculations. To allow for the development of language, reading and writing skills for the majority of pupils who speak English as an additional language and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the English curriculum accounts for approximately one third of curriculum time. However, the school has developed good links between literacy and other curriculum subjects in research and communication skills to ensure their effective coverage. For example, pupils used research skills to find out about plants and wrote about their experiences of a history day.
32. The school has adopted mainly the national guidance on schemes of work for science and the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. The school sets adequate times for pupils to use information and communication technology in the recently developed suite, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However, there is not enough time when pupils use computers in classrooms. The time allocations for the teaching of physical education and religious education are satisfactory. The remainder of the curriculum has been integrated into well-planned themes linked mostly to the subject areas of history, geography and science. The weaknesses in emphasis of history and geography identified in the last inspection report have been addressed. The skills of the other foundation subjects are carefully planned into the overall themes. There is a good balance between subjects across the full year. Homework is planned well and supports the curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics.
33. Subject leaders and the senior management team monitor planning and classroom practice well to ensure that pupils experience a curriculum that helps them to make good progress. The quality of weekly subject plans is good overall and sometimes very good. Where planning is very good, teachers have clear and specific objectives of what all pupils will achieve in the lesson and provide appropriate activities to challenge pupils of all abilities. The quality of medium and short term planning has improved since the last inspection report. The school is successfully implementing the 'Learning to Learn project' within classrooms. Pupils are aware of the 'big picture' of the term's work, the objective of each lesson and what teachers will be looking for by the end of the lesson.
34. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, have a good equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. The recently introduced arrangements for gifted and talented pupils is starting to provide them with a closer match of curriculum activities to their particular needs. On a small number of occasions, pupils are withdrawn for additional support at inappropriate times. This occurs across a number of curriculum areas, usually for them to receive further help in literacy, at times not always known by their class teachers. At these times they miss important parts of the lesson such as the teacher introduction or do not have sufficient time to complete their class activities. In all classes boys and girls work very well together. They are

included fully in all activities and show an exceptional degree of tolerance and understanding of each other's abilities and different cultural interests.

35. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest. Work related trips are organised to such places as museums, art galleries and farms. Visitors include police and fire officers, the school nurse and various clergy and faith representatives and pupils from Ilford Jewish Primary School who contributed by singing at the celebration of Hannukah. The school has very good links with the community, including the Redbridge Music School and the Drama School. It takes part in local music festivals and has put on productions such as 'James and the Giant Peach'. The school arranges an annual pageant, which enhances subjects and aspects of the curriculum. For example, in 2001 the whole school carnival encompassed art and music and two specialist African musicians taught pupils from Years 2 and 5 to play drums for a street procession in carnival dress. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities at lunch times and after school. This includes various recorder groups, choir, orchestra, drama, African drumming, art, rugby, soccer, Indian dance and playground games. There are good opportunities for pupils to receive peripatetic instrument teaching. The school is planning to arrange some inter-school sports matches.
36. The school's provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good. There is good provision for drugs awareness and sex education, which are part of the Year 5 curriculum at present. The themes discussed in circle time<sup>4</sup> are relevant to pupils' needs and allow pupils to communicate their feelings and concerns. Pupils are involved very well in making some decisions within the school community through the development of the school council. In many areas of learning the school has developed very successful mixed-ability groupings of pupils in each class, named 'tribes'. In 'tribes', the school encourages pupils to work collaboratively together to support those with little spoken English, with special educational needs or behaviour difficulties. Pupils have good opportunities to think about the needs of others as the school offers a large number of multi-cultural and community fund-raising and charity events.
37. There are very good links with Valentines Secondary School. Some teachers from both schools have observed each other teaching. Plans are in place for some teachers to receive professional development from their secondary colleagues and for workshops and laboratories to be used by Year 5 pupils. There are good transfer arrangements and pupils carry out a project in their final term of Year 6 that is continued in Year 7. The links with other secondary schools in the area are not so well developed. There are good links with local playgroups and social services outreach workers.
38. The good development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was a strength of the school in the previous inspection. This area has improved still further to excellent provision for moral, social, cultural and personal development and good provision for spiritual development.
39. Pupils are encouraged to think about values and beliefs in all the major religions, both during the good daily acts of collective worship and in religious education. They take pride in their own values and beliefs while respecting different points of view. Through target-setting and discussion in their class social groups, called 'tribes', they have a growing awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. These insights help build self-esteem and have a very positive effect on pupil learning.

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<sup>4</sup> During circle time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any interruption

40. The excellent behaviour policy is consistently applied, leading to pupils taking responsibility for their own actions both in terms of work and behaviour. They keep to the agreed class rules, as they discuss them regularly and feel that they have a say in what is acceptable or not. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. For example, if someone breaks the rule by 'putting someone down', they remind each other that this is not acceptable. This leads to an atmosphere where pupils can take the risk of asking questions or giving wrong answers in a positive environment without the threat of negative reaction from other pupils or adults.
41. The quality of social education is outstanding. The very positive attitude of all the adults in the school creates a firm basis for this large primary school being a cohesive community. Whole school events, such as the trip to the Millennium Dome and the annual carnivals, stimulate a sense of belonging to a large group. On a daily basis, pupils benefit greatly from belonging to 'tribes', small groups within their classes. These mixed ability groups bond pupils together through agreed ways of behaving and mutual support. This process encompasses newcomers and helps them integrate quickly and easily into the system by providing ready-made friends. It is particularly important for the significant number of pupils who are in temporary accommodation and, therefore, may only attend this particular school for a short time. Pupils take the ethos of the 'tribes' very seriously and feel well supported by other members of their 'tribe'. This system also encourages pupils to mix across the wide range of cultural and linguistic groups represented in the school. This grouping arrangement, combined with the very positive effects of the 'Learning to Learn' project, leads to a very harmonious and caring society within the school. All pupils are accepted for contributions that they make to different aspects of school life. These contributions are formally acknowledged in weekly commendation assemblies and through the regular valuing of pupils' contributions in class across all subjects as well as in circle time. The lively programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education makes a significant contribution to promoting pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about the democratic process both through their 'tribes' and the school council. They talk enthusiastically about the school council which, in itself, encourages lively debate. A recent decision to up-date the names of the pupil helpers in the playground was a good example of pupils' views being respected and acted on. Through fully involving the pupils in decision-making of this kind and in expecting them to take responsibility for their own actions and for others, the school actively promotes mature, responsible attitudes that lead to a strong sense of belonging to a secure and caring community.
42. As stated in the previous report, the multi-cultural displays continue to have a major impact by signalling the value of diversity within the school. A wide range of languages is evident around the school and bilingual teaching assistants further promote a pride in speaking more than one language. The celebrations in the school naturally encompass a wide range of cultures and pupils benefit from visitors who share their skills and experiences with them, for example, during their annual carnivals. All pupils benefit culturally from a very good range of educational visits and the good provision of after school clubs.

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

43. The school provides a caring and supportive environment where pupils flourish. The provision for pupils' health, welfare and guidance is good and contributes effectively to their personal and academic development. Pupils are very well supported and encouraged to develop their individuality. Parents spoke very highly of the school. They spoke about the friendly and supportive school, the safe environment and improved security. They reported that staff promote a sense of community where everyone is valued. The teachers know their pupils very well. They closely monitor pupils' personal development and work sensitively to challenge and support their specific needs. The impact of the 'Learning to Learn' project means that pupils know how well they are doing

and are involved in identifying and reviewing their own targets both at an academic and personal level.

44. The school most successfully seeks to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities. There are good systems in place to support the academic and personal development needs of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language and pupils make good progress. The school is also beginning to cater for the higher achieving pupils who are suitably challenged to develop their skills further. The entry process into the school and the later transition into secondary school are well planned for and handled sensitively.
45. The procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour and eliminating any oppressive behaviour are excellent. This is reflected in the very good behaviour of pupils and the orderly atmosphere in the school. The comprehensive behaviour policy provides clear guidelines and procedures for promoting good behaviour and dealing with any disruptive pupils or incidents of bullying. It clearly highlights the school's expectations and identifies the responsibilities of pupils, staff and parents. Parents reported that the school 'has a low tolerance culture for wrong doing' and that 'a high priority was placed on quick action in response to bullying'. There is a good balance of rewards and sanctions, with staff offering a consistent approach to behaviour management. Pupils are involved in devising the rules and boundaries and know what is expected of them. The sharing assemblies recognise and celebrate pupils' achievements and successes, which helps raise their confidence and self-esteem.
46. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and have been improved since the last inspection. A member of the governing body has assumed responsibility for improving attendance in the school. Parents are regularly informed about their responsibilities regarding the need to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time. The office staff closely monitor attendance patterns of pupils and contact parents who have not informed the school when their children are away ill. Appropriate links have been established with the education welfare officer who visits regularly and gets involved in following up cases where necessary, including taking parents to court. However, despite the best efforts of the school there are a significant number of parents who do not ensure their children attend school promptly and regularly. While there are a number of incentives in place to improve attendance levels, the school has yet to explore the full range of options.
47. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. As well as the statutory national tests for 7 and 11 year olds, pupils take tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 in English, mathematics and science. Teachers use information successfully from the test results to set improvement targets for year groups and individual pupils.
48. The school now makes satisfactory use of assessment information to plan the curriculum. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. For example, group targets have been set for writing because analyses of test results identified the need for improvement in that area. Teachers modify their planning according to assessments of pupils' progress in previous lessons. However, all these procedures have been recently introduced and teachers do not yet consistently apply them in every class to match work to the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment.
49. The headteacher and senior staff monitor the results of the school's assessments by gender and ethnicity. They use the results of this monitoring to make sure that no group of pupils is disadvantaged and to target areas for improvement. The assessment co-ordinator has successfully introduced a very comprehensive policy which provides a good basis for further development. The school makes good use of assessment information to decide how to use the support for pupils with special educational needs.

50. The school has good systems in place for child protection and ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. The school has appropriate procedures and guidelines for child protection. The special educational needs co-ordinator is the member of staff with designated responsibilities for child protection. She is aware of the processes involved and changes to the legislation; however, she has not attended recent training to update her knowledge and understanding. There are plans to ensure that she and other members of staff attend appropriate in-service training later this year. With a full time nurse on site there are well-established systems in place to meet the medical needs of pupils and take care of any pupil who may fall ill during the day.
51. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and effective procedures are in place to address the issues of safety and security of pupils in and around the school and when out on school visits. One of the deputy headteachers has responsibility for health and safety. She undertakes regular health and safety checks and risk assessments with the caretakers and reports back to the governing body.

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

52. The school's partnership with parents is good and parents have generally very positive views about the school. Most parents feel that there are very good links with the school. They feel the school is very accessible. They welcome the way the school encourages suggestions and takes any concerns they have seriously, dealing with them promptly and effectively. Parents reported that they feel teaching is good and that their children make good progress. Some expressed concerns over the recent high turnover in staffing and the resultant affect on continuity. Some parents were concerned about the range of activities provided outside school, which the inspection team considered good. Other concerns related to the amount of homework given and the degree to which parents were kept well informed about the progress their children were making. Supervision at lunchtime was raised as an issue by a small minority of parents. Observations during the inspection indicated that the number and deployment of staff were sufficient for the number of pupils involved and pupils reported that the midday assistants 'were very fair'.
53. The quality of information provided for parents is very comprehensive. Information regarding the school and its activities is detailed in the attractive school brochure and governors' annual report to parents. Ongoing contact and information about forthcoming events is maintained through regular notices and newsletters. Topic information is circulated to parents enabling them to see what their children will be taught during the course of the year. Because of the large number of languages spoken at home the school is not able to offer all letters in translation.
54. Consultation evenings are held regularly providing opportunities for parents to review their child's progress and achievements. These are always well attended with parents invited to attend with their children. Parents are regularly consulted regarding important issues. Details concerning the numeracy and literacy strategies are shared with parents during the family learning sessions each term. These provide a chance for parents to see and experience the type of activity their children are doing in class to enable them to promote further learning opportunities at home. The annual reports to parents regarding pupils' progress and attainment are generally quite detailed. They clearly identify what pupils are able to do and set targets for improvement. However, they do not consistently indicate how pupils are achieving in relation to others of their age or what is expected against national averages. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their child's progress through contact with teachers at any time they wish. They are involved in the termly reviews of individual education plans and yearly reviews of statements.

55. The contribution parents make to their children's learning is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. The school successfully draws upon parents' experience to help recognise and celebrate the schools cultural diversity. During the inspection week many parents had made great efforts to ensure their children came suitably prepared for Victorian day, with most pupils dressed in period costumes. The school warmly encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning by helping out in the school. Although many parents work or do not feel confident in offering their assistance, a small number of adults are volunteering to help with various activities around the school, such as helping in the library or accompanying pupils on school trips or to swimming. Parents receive details regarding the homework policy and how they can help their children to read at home. However, the reading records observed during the inspection reveals that books are not being changed very frequently and parents are not listening to their children read on a regular basis.
56. Highlands is very much a community school where all feel involved. Parents are invited to school events including the annual carnival, productions or assemblies, and these are usually well attended. The school has tried to re-launch the Friends of Highlands Association, but has had limited success in attracting sufficient parents to form a committee to run events. However, a number of fund-raising and social events are organised by the school each year. These are generally very successful with parents very willing to attend and help out on the day, but not able to organise them. These events help to generate additional funds for the school and in the past have helped to provide playground equipment and benches, and resources for the classrooms.

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

57. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The school has maintained the very high standard reported in the last inspection. The high quality of leadership and management is a significant factor in enabling the school to make very good improvement since the last inspection. It has used a very good quality improvement plan to identify priorities and give clear direction to improving standards, for example in pupils' writing. The school has addressed the key issues very successfully. Pupils are attaining higher standards in science, information and communication technology and design and technology. The governing body is involved more effectively in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. The school is making more use of assessment information to inform teaching plans, although this is not consistently done in all classes. It has improved the procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality, although these have not raised attendance levels sufficiently. The school has improved significantly the procedures for promoting pupils' personal development. They are now excellent and contribute significantly to enabling the aims and values to be reflected in all aspects of the school's life. It is a very caring, harmonious community with a very strong focus on ensuring that all pupils are included in the full range of learning activities.
58. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, focused strongly on the school's aims and on raising standards of attainment. Her personal style gives a clear direction to the work of the school. The headteacher has an excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has been instrumental, supported very effectively by a very good senior management team, in enabling the school to improve during a period of high pupil and staff mobility. The headteacher has ensured that these changes have provided the school with positive opportunities to enhance the strong staff team approach and focus increasingly on the broad range of pupils' needs and the standards attained. Working closely with key staff, she has improved the procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. These have been used very successfully to provide high quality teaching. The senior staff has supported and encouraged the development of good partnership and team teaching approaches. The school's involvement in the 'Learning to Learn' project has helped it to establish very good procedures which contribute significantly to pupils'

attitudes to each other and to their learning. The excellent way in which the school has developed and established these procedures, and their positive impact, reflects very well the high quality management.

59. The headteacher, working closely with a recently enlarged senior management team and a good and supportive governing body, has established a very strong and effective management structure. The senior management team comprises of the headteacher and her two deputies. The team has a good balance of expertise, experience and complementary skills which they use very competently to support other staff in carrying out their responsibilities. For example, they ensure that staff with management responsibilities are given support, encouragement and time to carry out their duties effectively. Most subject co-ordinators, including those new to the post, have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. They use the very good procedures to monitor teaching and evaluate its impact on learning. They use subject action plans and partnership teaching successfully to focus on improvement priorities. These have been especially successful in raising standards in science considerably. The senior management team analyses assessment information increasingly effectively to identify weaknesses and target their improvement, for example pupils' writing skills. They look carefully at the standards achieved by different groups of pupils, for example gender or different ethnic backgrounds, to evaluate how effective their support has been in improving attainment. Staff have developed pupils' literacy targets linked closely to improve the quality of writing. Inspection evidence shows that teachers are using these targets successfully to raise standards. The school plans to extend the use of target setting for pupils to focus on improvement in other subjects, for example numeracy. The headteacher has developed, with all staff, a clear shared commitment to school improvement. The school's capacity for improvement is very good.
60. Since the last inspection, the governing body has become more involved in working with the headteacher and her staff to shape the direction of the school's work. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are kept fully informed of school developments through information from the headteacher and staff; visits to observe lessons, for example in literacy and numeracy; and curriculum presentations, for example information and communication technology and 'learn to learn'. Governors are involved in identifying priorities for inclusion in the school improvement plan. They have established a pattern of termly monitoring visits, with a curriculum and another focus. A group of governors observe lessons and other aspects of school life and then complete a written report which is considered at the next full meeting. Governors were particularly helpful and supportive in improving the school building. They fulfil all aspects of their roles and statutory responsibilities conscientiously. The improved partnership between the school and its governing body is a key influence in promoting the very good improvement since the last inspection.
61. The partnership is also successful in enabling the school to establish very good financial procedures, which are very well targeted on supporting improvement priorities. Governors are involved fully in budget planning, monitoring spending levels and making good use of the principles of best value, with the support of the local education authority. Governors are aware of the need to establish a more strategic aspect to financial planning. This would enable the school to plan for the longer term, for example, on staffing issues and provide continued financial support to improvement priorities. The recent high levels of staff changes, when senior staff vacancies could not be filled, have enabled the school to build up a considerable budget underspend. Governors have already spent some of this on additional teaching assistants, improving information and communication resources and improving the building. The governing body has reserved most of these funds for further building improvements. The school makes good use of new technologies, particularly to support school administration. The quality of day-to-day financial information and clerical administration provided by an efficient team in the school office is



very good. It contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school. Considering the very low attainment of children on entry to the school and the high quality of education provided, the school gives very good value for money.

62. The management for pupils with special educational needs by the special educational needs co-ordinator is good. There is a good team approach amongst staff that supports the overall good levels of provision for identified pupils. The school uses the funds for pupils with special educational needs prudently and effectively. Staff working with these pupils benefit from good training. The co-ordinator's role in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning is being developed soundly within the overall whole school programme. The management of this aspect of the school's work and delegation of areas of responsibility are currently being reviewed. The school does not have satisfactory access for the disabled. It has a toilet suitable for access for the disabled, but the many stairs make access to other parts of the building very difficult. The governors report appropriately, in their annual report to parents, on the provision of the policy, but do not make a statement on the lack of access for the disabled.
63. The inspection of this school included a focused view of how effectively teaching assistants are managed and trained to contribute to the teaching and learning of literacy and mathematics. Teaching assistants are deployed well across the school to support individual pupils and groups within the classroom and in withdrawal groups. They are suitably matched to their work according to training that has been undertaken, for example, in teaching the Additional Literacy Strategy. Most teaching assistants have good opportunities to meet with teachers to plan for the following week's work. They feedback their observations on the work that they have done and its impact on pupils' learning. The management of teaching assistants is satisfactory. Although there are no formal appraisal systems in place, teaching assistants meet regularly with their phase manager or with the special needs co-ordinator. Due to the varied hours and deployment of teaching assistants, there are few opportunities, however, for them to regularly attend staff meetings with teachers. Under the new management structure, the two deputy headteachers are to commence a programme of more structured monitoring and evaluation of the work of teaching assistants in each phase. The '*Good Practice Guide*' has not yet been introduced into this process. Overall, the quality and effectiveness of training for teaching assistants is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for them to take part in school-based training, for example, in information and communication technology. Training in the use of the Early and Additional Literacy Strategy support programmes has given good confidence to teaching assistants who work with groups of pupils who require this additional support. However, they have not received training in any mathematics support programmes so their contribution to this area is not fully developed.
64. There are satisfactory numbers of teachers and teaching assistants for the pupils on roll. Teachers are suitably qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum, to manage individual subjects and to teach pupils with special educational needs or pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school currently has seven newly qualified teachers on its staff which, at the moment, creates some imbalance in the range of experience that staff provide. However, there is an excellent induction system of support and professional development for newly qualified teachers which helps them settle into the school and extend their professional skills. The headteacher works closely with senior staff and governors to provide very good performance management procedures and opportunities for further professional development for all staff. The school, through its strong team approach and very effective support procedures, has the potential to be a very good provider for initial teacher training.
65. Accommodation is good and has been considerably enhanced since the last inspection by the addition of an administration block which now links the two main buildings. This has created more space within the school for specialist teaching areas. Most of the

classrooms are spacious, although some of those for the older pupils are rather more cramped. There is good, self-contained accommodation for children in the nursery. The school benefits from separate teaching areas such as the computer suite, performing arts studio, activity room for children in the Foundation Stage and small rooms for group teaching. These are used well throughout the day, as are the three halls. The school is brightly decorated and well maintained. Good quality displays are used to enhance classrooms, corridors and the foyer. The playgrounds are small for the large size of the school. This creates some organisational difficulties, for example the use of different break-times for different phases. The outside areas are enhanced with seating, coloured markings and an amphitheatre. There are plans to develop these further. Although there are no grassed areas, the school has access to a public playing field nearby for physical education.

66. The provision of learning resources is good overall. Since the recent building work, the library has been located more centrally and is accessible to all pupils. There are very good resources for the teaching of science and good resources for English, music, geography, religious education and physical education. The school has improved resources for teaching information and communication technology since the last inspection in that a computer suite has been installed. However, the lack of classroom resources for information and communication technology restricts pupils' skills development.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to raise standards and build further on the school's many strengths, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) raise standards in English by developing further the recent initiatives to extend:
  - a) pupils' speaking and listening skills by
    - focusing on key vocabulary in all subjects
    - involving pupils in a broader range of opportunities to apply their skills, for example through increased drama, role play, discussions and debates;
  - b) pupils' reading skills by
    - extending the use of clearly structured group and independent guided reading sessions
    - developing the use of group and individual reading targets
    - broadening the choice of fiction and non-fiction books for boys and girls;
  - c) pupils' writing skills by
    - extending the use of well structured workshops to promote extended writing
    - increasing the use of information and communication technology
    - developing the use of group and individual writing targets
    - maintaining the good range of opportunities for pupils to write for a broad variety of purposes in different subjects;

(paragraphs 83, 86, 88 and 89)
- (2) raise standards in mathematics, particularly at the end of Year 2, by:
  - using assessment information consistently to set pupils' improvement targets in numeracy
  - evaluating more frequently the effectiveness of the use of numeracy support staff
  - extending the range of activities which require pupils to apply their mathematical skills;

(paragraphs 5, 95 and 97-99)
- (3) extend the procedures to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality;

(paragraphs 17 and 46)
- (4) continue to develop the use of assessment information
  - to ensure that recently introduced procedures, including target setting, are implemented consistently throughout the school
  - to consistently set more appropriate work that matches the range of pupils' needs;

(paragraphs 24, 48, 57 and 71)
- (5) improve pupils' word processing skills by:
  - providing more resources to increase opportunities for pupils to apply their skills
  - ensuring that pupils use their skills to support standards in a broad range of subjects.

(paragraphs 6, 26, 66, 89 and 125-128)

## THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

68. Most pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. In addition, there are an increasing number of refugee pupils. Most of the refugee pupils and a significant number of others are targeted for specialist support by 3.8 full-time equivalent MEAS (Minority Ethnic Achievement Service) teachers who are funded under the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant. The school also benefits from support provided by a bilingual assistant. This support is targeted effectively at pupils who are at the lower level of English language development. Its quality is good overall, with some of it being very good.
69. Pupils make good progress across the school and attain standards which are similar to those attained by other pupils of similar age and ability. Joint planning between class and support teachers is good. This enables MEAS and class teachers to work very closely with each other during team teaching and provide pupils with enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening. The MEAS teachers' contribution in team teaching is good overall. However, they do not always get fully involved in all lessons, for example in information and communication technology. Teachers ensure that, as far as possible, pupils learning English as an additional language are involved fully in all aspects of the curriculum. Some miss aspects of the curriculum when they are withdrawn for intensive support, for example for refugee pupils in the junior part of the school and some pupils in Year 1. The main purpose of withdrawal teaching for refugee pupils is to induct them into the school and provide pastoral support which some pupils need for long periods of time. The quality of withdrawal teaching for refugee pupils is often good and sometimes very good. A very good example of this was seen in a lesson with a group of Year 3 pupils. The lesson had a number of aims, for example the use of question words *who*, *what*, *when* and *where*; recalling parts of a story; and recognition of initial and final letters in words. These were to be achieved by pupils taking part in discussion, storytelling and playing a game. The teacher used a good range of strategies including modulation of voice, gestures, questions, prompts and pictures to involve pupils successfully. Throughout the lesson, he listened to their responses carefully and built on them, providing pupils with good models of spoken English. This made a very positive impact on their involvement and progress in the lesson. Withdrawal teaching in Year 1 takes place for pupils who are supported by the bilingual assistant in small groups to help them learn English through the use of their home languages. The quality of this support is satisfactory, with the bilingual assistant mostly making appropriate use of pupils' home languages to help them acquire English.
70. In lessons where specialist language support is not available, pupils get good opportunities to develop confidence in using English and extend their skills. Class teachers generally explain new ideas in a way that makes sense to all pupils. Teachers enable pupils to take part in whole-class introductory and review part of lessons, group work and sometimes drama activities. This gives them further opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. As a result of good provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language and the school's strong commitment to inclusion, pupils have developed very good attitudes to learning. They are well integrated into the life of the school and respond well in lessons.
71. There are good arrangements for assessing the progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Their attainment is assessed regularly and detailed records of their progress are kept. These records include information on pupils' background, stages of English and an analysis of their on-going needs. This helps to identify pupils who need additional support and those who do not require it any longer. However, there are no systematic arrangements for assessing pupils who are identified for learning English through the use of their home languages. This is unsatisfactory and the school should review the situation because the current arrangements result in some pupils receiving

inappropriate support. For example, two Punjabi-speaking boys had been wrongly placed in a group which was being taught through Urdu. Additionally, at least one of these boys had a sound command of English and did not require this type of support. There is a good range of resources to support learners of English as an additional language which are used well. The linguistic and cultural diversity within the school is celebrated well through notices, captions and resources in different languages. There are also very good opportunities for pupils to use their home languages where appropriate. The provision for in-service training for the MEAS teachers and class teachers is good. There are good arrangements for supporting and monitoring the work of MEAS teachers.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	101
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	10	23	45	20	3	0	0
Percentage	10	23	45	20	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	616
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	140

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	198

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	540

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	97
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	74

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.9
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	53	37	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	38	48
	Girls	26	32	33
	Total	61	70	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (74)	78 (80)	90 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	44	46
	Girls	27	30	34
	Total	63	74	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (73)	82 (83)	89 (78)
	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	52	51	103

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	32	45
	Girls	37	41	49
	Total	60	73	94
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (59)	71 (60)	91 (72)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	34	44
	Girls	37	41	50
	Total	56	75	94
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (53)	73 (61)	91 (54)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	16
Black – African heritage	23
Black – other	13
Indian	208
Pakistani	160
Bangladeshi	21
Chinese	1
White	100
Any other minority ethnic group	55

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

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	4	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	35.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	31.1

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

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	440

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	46
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000 / 01
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	£
Total income	1,486,246
Total expenditure	1,485,751
Expenditure per pupil	2,041
Balance brought forward from previous year	100,944
Balance carried forward to next year	101,439

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	26.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	23.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.4
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 20.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	661
Number of questionnaires returned	137

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	31	4	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	42	47	7	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	47	9	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	34	23	9	2
The teaching is good.	46	42	4	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	46	18	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	35	10	5	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	35	10	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	36	42	15	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	36	42	13	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	39	13	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	30	17	12	9

## **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**

72. The school has made considerable improvements since the previous inspection to the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The nursery has been successfully established and resources to support children's physical development are now good. There have also been improvements to assessment procedures and the progress children make.
73. Most children who start school in the nursery or reception class do not speak English as a first language. Many children speak no English at all when they start school. Their communication and language skills are very weak. The lack of English vocabulary affects the social confidence of some children. Initial assessments conducted by teachers confirm this. Teaching is good overall, for all the areas of learning, and often very good in the nursery. This has a positive impact on children's learning, so that, by the time they reach the end of the reception year, children have made good progress in all areas of learning. Teachers in reception plan carefully to ensure that the groups supported by adults are involved in activities which meet the early learning goals. They do not yet plan to ensure that children in unsupported groups also make good progress.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

74. By the time they start Year 1, most children are achieving the early learning goals in this area. In both year groups, children learn to play and work together well. They enjoy school and quickly learn to follow the classroom routines. For example, nursery children picked up their own book bags to take home after only a few weeks in school. Even after the excitement of wearing costumes and performing in assembly, reception children adapted without fuss to the normal class activities. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Adults encourage children to become independent by making sure that resources are easily accessible. The co-ordination of both year groups is good and ensures consistency in the way adults relate to children. Teaching is very good in all classes. This means that children feel secure and well supported, giving them the confidence to learn.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

75. By the time they start Year 1, most children are not achieving the early learning goals, although their communication, language and literacy skills are improving. Very good teaching in the nursery helps develop confidence in young children who speak little English. For example, Monty the Monkey is a favourite puppet in the nursery. Children enjoyed watching him take away objects beginning with 'm' and identifying what was missing. This successfully motivated reluctant English speakers to say the correct 'm' word.
76. In the reception classes, children develop their knowledge of letter sounds effectively. For example, they worked hard to find the missing letters in sentences taken from '*Mr Gumpy's Outing*'. Children with special educational needs enjoyed using animal figures on sticks to hold simple conversations based on the Mr Gumpy book. These carefully prepared resources encouraged the children to practise speaking. Teachers in both year groups treat children as readers, expecting them to join in when reading big books with the whole class. Teachers encourage early writing skills effectively by setting up areas like the reception classes' post offices. Children 'write' letters, put them in envelopes, stick on stamps and go to the post box.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

77. By the time they start Year 1, most children are not achieving the early learning goals in this area. This is often because their poor command of English results in slow acquisition of mathematical vocabulary. However, children's progress is good in both year groups because they are well taught. Teachers introduce mathematical concepts in ways that appeal to young children. For example, reception classes compared and ordered sizes through reading '*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*'. In the post offices, children counted money so they could 'buy' stamps. They identified shapes such as squares, although limited English skills restricted achievement for many children when describing properties. For example, one boy said that a square has 'Two corners up and two corners down'. Children behave very well and have good attitudes to learning new concepts. They are prepared to concentrate and persevere.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

78. Nearly all children achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of reception. They are interested in the world around them and notice changes. For example, a nursery child came in from the playground saying 'It's windy out there!' Reception children enjoyed visiting the park and selected materials to make models of objects seen. They named the key features of their park, such as trees, rocks, pond and bridge. Teachers successfully build in opportunities for children to share ideas and experiences with each other. This also helps develop communication skills. Children in reception draw pictures using a computer program. Some used the 'spray tool' with confidence when supported by an adult. In both year groups, children select resources and use construction toys successfully to make models. When there is no adult supporting a group, children in reception classes do not always derive benefit from using construction equipment.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

79. By the time they start Year 1, most children achieve the early learning goals. Teachers ensure that they include the outdoor area fully in their lesson planning. Nursery children play happily outside and move when necessary to avoid bumping into each other. They enjoy crawling through the large, plastic tunnel. Some play catch. Behaviour outside is excellent. When indoors, nursery children can stand on their toes and stretch. They can curl up and pretend to be as small as a mouse. Children in reception, when performing in the Chinese New Year assembly, made large swimming strokes with their arms to replicate animals in the water.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

80. Most children achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of reception. Teachers provide good opportunities for them to explore paint in both year groups. Nursery children select colours independently. They experiment with large brushstrokes on the paper. Reception children painted lively pictures, having chosen colours to represent happiness. Teachers and support assistants prepare resources and equipment well to ensure that children benefit from role play. In the nursery, a 'doctor's surgery' stimulated role play successfully. Children pretended to bandage wounds and give each other medicine, pulling faces to indicate an unpleasant taste. Very good support from a teaching assistant developed children's communication skills through questions like 'How's the baby's arm?' Nursery children become excited when they knew they were about to have a singing session. They enjoyed performing the actions to 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five' and many children remembered some of the words. A bilingual nursery nurse enabled the less confident English speakers to participate effectively by translating

essential instructions. Then, by careful repetition of key parts of the songs and actions, she drew all the children into the singing.

## ENGLISH

81. Pupils' work in English is improving, even though the national test results are still well below the national average. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards of work have risen from well below average on entry to the school to below average. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is still below the national average, but shows good progress within individual literacy skills. Since September 2001, there has been a sharp focus on raising standards in English. There are now many supportive new strategies in place that stimulate pupils' learning. These include: -

- a very good leadership team that demonstrates very good to excellent teaching and learning strategies and monitors teaching and learning carefully in classrooms;
- improved teaching, from sound in the previous inspection to good overall, with very good or excellent teaching in nearly one third of the lessons seen. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Most plan in detail in order to meet the wide range of needs of the pupils. Pupils are highly motivated to succeed;
- pupils beginning to understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work through explicitly shared targets for individual lessons and group activities;
- a range of new approaches to learning such as the 'Learning to Learn' project, Early and Additional Literacy Support groups, supported independent guided activities for reading (SIGAR program), and extended writing workshops;
- a strong emphasis on literacy skills in all subjects.

The test results remain at well below the national average as pupils perform less well in tests because of: -

- the low baseline scores for literacy skills on entry to the school;
- the complex language needs of the majority of pupils;
- the high level of pupil turnover.

82. Nevertheless, more pupils now attain the higher levels in the tests at both 7 and 11 years of age than in previous years. Teachers are aware that boys are not achieving as well as girls. They are actively using different approaches to help boys succeed in and improve their literacy skills.

83. With the exception of pupils who have just arrived in the school with little previous experience of speaking English, most pupils speak English fluently in a social context, but not accurately enough to fulfil the demands of the national tests. As mentioned in the previous report, pupils have a limited use of vocabulary and familiar phrases. Teachers encourage pupils to remember key words related to their English work and from other subjects. For example, in Year 3, pupils struggled to recall 'transparent' from their science lesson. However, once the whole class had used the word several times, even the newcomers had it fixed in their minds by the end of the lesson. Good or better teachers encourage pupils to extend their answers by using carefully targeted questions. They plan an exciting range of activities that demand the use of accurate and more complex language. For example, Year 4 pupils became highly motivated in a role-play that required them to defend their local park against the building of a new supermarket. Pupils had to think carefully about how they expressed their opinions. Teachers encouraged them to use persuasive language and phrases, such as 'in my opinion' and 'furthermore'. These are not phrases that the pupils would normally use, but they rose to the challenge of remaining calm and convincing the supermarket developer of their points of view.

84. Newly arrived pupils receive good support from class teachers and additional teachers employed specifically to help pupils with English as an additional language. There is good joint teaching where the additional language support teachers explain key concepts in simple terms and constantly check for understanding. They also become involved in reading stories, using additional visual clues, and acting out parts with the teacher to reinforce the main ideas. These approaches help pupils to improve their English language skills and are involved fully in whole class activities. They also benefit considerably from being withdrawn from the classroom for teaching that encourages them to use their English more confidently in a small group activity. The good use of the additional teachers and the good competence of all staff lead to newly arrived pupils making good progress in learning English.
85. The 'Learning to Learn' project encourages active listening. Pupils pay close attention during whole class and group sessions, as they know they are likely to be asked challenging questions. They also enjoy contributing their own ideas and are keen to share their insights with other pupils. Pupils listen carefully, for example, when others read their work at the end of the lesson. They identify good phrases and ideas in the writing and suggest ways for improvement. In response to the teachers' high expectations, pupils also listen attentively when given instructions for group work. This means that they understand what they are to do and settle quickly to the tasks in hand.
86. As in the previous report, pupils across the age range enjoy reading. They have good skills for sounding out unfamiliar words and use pictures and context to help them make intelligent guesses. The school is now focusing sharply on understanding. Teachers use every opportunity, in all subjects, to check that pupils fully understand individual words and phrases. They ask pupils to define key words, such as 'personality' in a Year 2 lesson that linked history and English. They encourage pupils to use dictionaries to double check that they have fully understood. They teach older pupils the inference behind many of the texts. For example, in a guided reading session in Year 5, the group explored the underlying meaning of the story by using the clues in pictures and explaining how they knew certain things that were not actually stated. They did not find this easy, but rose to the challenge. From Year 3, the 'Supported Independent Guided Activities for Reading' approach helps those who find it difficult to work on their own. The well-trained teaching assistants guide pupils carefully through the activities, before supervising the independent work. This builds pupil confidence and gives them practice in understanding details in their reading. Likewise, the guided reading sessions provide opportunities to look at texts in detail and to share ideas about deeper meanings and interpretations. In these ways, pupils move into the higher levels of reading. Teachers set clear targets for the group and pupils now know when they have succeeded and why.
87. Pupils with special educational needs receive good individual support from experienced teaching assistants and special needs teachers. Most of the support takes place in the classroom, enabling pupils to join in with everyone else. Some pupils are withdrawn for specific individual help. For example, the Early Literacy Strategy and the Additional Literacy Strategy offer good support to pupils who have not reached expectations for their age group. These opportunities for small group and individual reading help raise standards in reading, as seen in last year's national test results. However, the school is aware of the need to constantly review the advantages of this approach in improving literacy skills against the lessons missed.
88. Pupils conscientiously fulfil the requirement to read for at least 20 minutes each day at home. They talk with enthusiasm about the books they take home or borrow from the school or public library. The well-attended weekly Family Literacy class helps parents to understand exactly how they can help support their children's reading. Pupils are keenly aware of the role of non-fiction in supporting their topic work and understand how to find information from books and websites. However, they have limited access to the Internet

for research purposes within the school. The library provides a sound range of fiction and non-fiction books and there are firm plans to improve the facility further.

89. The school is fully aware of the difficulties pupils have in expressing their ideas accurately in writing. The additional time allocated to writing workshops for pupils from Year 2 onwards is improving the quantity, quality and range of writing found lacking in the previous inspection. Teachers prepare exciting prompts designed to appeal to a range of senses. For example, Year 5 pupils enjoyed thinking of how to describe an evocative picture of a haunted house. They then closed their eyes and listened to a series of eerie sounds. These activities stimulated a burst of ideas that pupils shared in pairs, before starting to do their own creative writing on a carefully structured framework designed to improve the sequencing and development of their ideas. Pupils are developing better presentation skills through the regular handwriting and spelling lessons. However, access to computers is limited to opportunities for pupils to use the information and communication technology suite. This means that little work is word-processed. Pupils do not have many opportunities to develop their skills, for example, in desktop publishing to help present their ideas.
90. Teaching is good overall, with nearly a third very good and excellent teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection. Teaching in Year 1 remains sound. There is a need to further review the appropriateness of some activities as well as the pace and challenge in the lessons. Teachers need to build on the very good foundations for independent learning provided in the nursery and prepare for the challenges that pupils enjoy in Year 2. From Year 2 onwards, teaching is predominantly good or better. A wide range of approaches to teaching and learning leads to highly motivated pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular reminders about time and how much they should have achieved at any given point. This leads to sharply focused activities. A feature of the excellent lessons was the thorough attention to detail, which leads to all pupils succeeding at the tasks set. For example, in Year 6, pupils rose to the challenge of analysing an explanation text about trainers. Through careful planning and high expectations, the teacher created a hard-working atmosphere with constant challenge to individuals. The high level of awareness of group and individual need shines through in the very good and excellent lessons. All pupils, regardless of their specific language or special educational needs, take full part in the lessons. They gain a sense of achievement, for example, when the teacher reiterated the aims of the lesson and they talked honestly about how much had been attained.
91. The new literacy team has a very clear strategy for raising standards in English. They demonstrate very good and excellent teaching by working jointly with others, as well as carefully monitoring the quality of planning, teaching and learning in the classes throughout the school. They play a key role in day-to-day planning and have introduced a series of effective new approaches this year. These strategies need time to work, but innovations such as the writing workshops have already improved the standards in the school. An improvement from the previous inspection is the good assessment now in place, which teachers use to plan future lessons. The team is aware of the need to develop assessment further by tracking individual pupil progress in detail and extending the good practice of group targets to individual targets that pupils help design and evaluate.
92. The very positive culture of 'We can if ...', prevalent amongst the adults and the pupils, and the enthusiastic implementation of recent strategies, are improving the quality and standards of English in the school.

## MATHEMATICS

93. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. At the end of Year 6, standards are close to average overall. Standards of attainment are lower in the infant phase and have been maintained in the junior phase since the last inspection report. However, since that time there have been significant changes in the school population. More pupils enter school with well below average baseline scores and more pupils are identified as having special educational needs. There is a high turnover of pupils in each year group. Pupils with special educational needs attain at a lower than average level, but attain well for their abilities.
94. In the infant years, pupils make sound progress and, by the end of Year 6, all pupils achieve well. Boys and girls achieve equally well throughout the school, although the attainment of boys by the end of the junior years is slightly below that of girls. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support and make good progress in their numeracy skills. Most of the large number of pupils with English as an additional language work extremely hard and achieve as well as others of similar age and ability. Staff are sensitive to their needs and set appropriate tasks for pupils of all abilities. They encourage them to concentrate and gain confidence. Additional adult support for special educational needs varies from day-to-day in numeracy lessons, except for those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs who receive full time support. The good level of support they receive helps them to gain skills and take part in the lesson more confidently. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged, either within classes or in identified groups that are withdrawn for numeracy lessons from Year 4 onwards. Most teachers have high expectations of all pupils to achieve in line with their capabilities. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
95. By the end of the infant stage, pupils are more focused on the independent tasks. They work with enthusiasm and interest on the well-planned group tasks. In Year 1, the teaching of basic skills is satisfactory and based well on the National Numeracy Strategy. For example, teachers used number lines and squares effectively for pupils to find the 'missing number' in a sequence and to find numbers that added up to 10 or 20. Most plan activities well to suit the needs of each group. Where the teacher is able to focus on a particular group, those pupils achieve well. Without adult support, some pupils find it difficult to keep on task in the independent group situation and this slows the learning down. Year 2 pupils add three numbers together accurately and use a variety of methods, which they share confidently with the rest of the class. They respond to the high expectations of teachers' questioning, which is related closely to pupils' ability. Some pupils use number lines to help them with numbers between 10 and 20. Most are developing their understanding of larger numbers using the number square and some pupils with a secure understanding of number bonds are beginning to solve two digit subtraction problems successfully. They are beginning to show that they understand multiplication as 'lots of' and use continuous addition methods well. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of shapes and measures; for example, they know different two and three-dimensional shapes and half and quarter hours on a clock.
96. Progress in the junior phase is good. In mental activity sessions, teachers show a good sense of fun, while offering pupils challenging tasks. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher gives a Bingo sheet to each pupil showing answers to 'division by six' in a test of the six times table. During this session the learning of the more able pupils was extended appropriately to answer problems involving the same multiplication table. A continuation of the 'fun' element in Year 3 was demonstrated by the interpretation of graphs from Dr. Zog on Mars. Pupils were keen to participate and able to work out which foods were more enjoyable than others. Year 4 pupils extend these skills effectively to construct and interpret graphs where each square is equal to two or five units on the axis. Pupils present their written work very neatly.

97. Pupils in Year 5 develop their problem solving skills successfully using multiplication and division knowledge well as they build upon the good strategies demonstrated by teachers in the introductory session. For example, pupils carried out two-step and some three-step shopping problems involving the purchase of a number of games with either a given amount of money for the purchases or finding the amount of change required. In a lesson in which the most able were withdrawn as a small group, the teacher provided very effective support and extension activities. In this competitive atmosphere, pupils were very confident in doubling numbers to 9999 and solved problems which needed understanding of decimals and large numbers. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate sound attainment in number and algebra. Inspection evidence shows that they have a good understanding of shape, space and measures and data handling. Pupils find the missing co-ordinates of shapes in two quadrants and the more able find the co-ordinates of patterns in four quadrants. However, pupils are just beginning to develop an understanding of inverse operations using three numbers. For example, using 18, 25, 43 in  $18+25=43$ ,  $43-25=18$  etc.
98. The quality of teaching in the infant classes is sound overall and frequently good. In junior classes it is good with some very good and excellent teaching. There is no unsatisfactory teaching of mathematics in the school. Teachers begin all lessons with good mental mathematics sessions. Pupils become mentally alert and stimulated to succeed. Common strong features of teaching in numeracy include good lesson planning which takes account of pupils' differing needs. The objective of the lesson is made very clear to pupils and mathematical vocabulary is explored to ensure that all pupils understand the purpose of the lesson. In good lessons there is a lively atmosphere, good management of pupils, good reinforcement of knowledge and understanding and challenge for pupils to progress further. Most teachers are beginning to make sound use of ongoing assessment when planning for the next lesson. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not manage the lesson consistently to allow pupils to be supported sufficiently and the pace is too slow. Teachers do not always pick up on pupils' lack of understanding or challenge more able pupils sufficiently. Homework is being set satisfactorily to support classroom learning. Although some good work was seen of pupils using spreadsheets, information communication technology is not used enough to raise standards.
99. An enthusiastic co-ordinator and a member of the school's senior management team manage the subject successfully. Both are new to the posts. They have promoted positive attitudes to the subject by staff and pupils throughout the school. The co-ordinator monitors the planning for numeracy, looks at work samples and observes teachers in classrooms on a weekly basis. She also analyses test results. From this analysis the co-ordinator has identified that pupils in Year 5 need extra help in using and applying their mathematical knowledge. The school plans to provide professional development for teachers to help them to meet pupils' needs in this area of study. On the basis of test results and ongoing assessment the progress of individual pupils is beginning to be tracked well through the school. Although appropriate group targets are set for pupils, they have not yet got individual targets to aim for in their mathematical development yet. Numeracy skills are used well in other subjects. For example, measurement is used widely in the making of models for design and technology projects and Year 4 pupils produced graphs and charts, showing distance covered by a toy car on different surfaces in friction investigations.



## SCIENCE

100. During the period of inspection no science was taught in Year 2. Samples of previous work, displays, and discussions with teachers, pupils and the subject co-ordinator together with teachers' plans, produced substantial evidence to make a judgement.
101. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils by the end of Year 2 as having below average standards compared to those of schools nationally. They assessed pupils of higher ability as being close to the national average. The inspection finds that pupils are now close to the national average. The improvement is due to the more careful planning of tasks matched to pupils' needs and good teaching supported by the subject co-ordinator. Test results in 2001 for pupils at the end of Year 6 show that standards were close to the national average. The inspection confirms these findings. In the present Year 6 there are a higher number of pupils with special educational needs than in the previous year. To maintain standards the subject co-ordinator supports teachers with their planning and teaches alongside the class teacher. Here, with the very good and sometimes excellent teaching and high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, standards are being maintained. Pupils across the school, with this input, achieve well and make good progress. Standards have improved since the last inspection where they were below average across the school.
102. Standards are average in the current Year 2. Samples of work show pupils have a good understanding of what happens to materials when they are bent, squashed, stretched and heated. Good displays in classrooms illustrate work of an average standard when pupils explore how foods we eat can keep us healthy. Pupils show a good understanding of how bulbs and batteries work in electric circuits and of making predictions and recording their findings of the speed of objects travelling down a ramp.
103. By the end of Year 6, when pupils leave the school, standards are also average. In Year 3 pupils, after conducting a series of experiments to find out which of four papers absorbed water, very successfully sorted and classified the materials according to their properties. Very good teaching with pupils supporting each with their recording of their results aided their very good learning and understanding of why one paper was more absorbent than the others. In Year 6, the excellent team work between the class teacher and the subject co-ordinator, together with the excellent application of pupils to their tasks, supported very well pupils' understanding of what happens to a shadow when the distance of the light varies from the source. They showed a very good understanding of scientific words such as 'umbra', the fully shaded inner region of a shadow and 'penumbra', the partly shaded outer region of the shadow cast by an opaque object. Using very well their previously recorded information from their experiments, pupils plotted points accurately on a simple graph and used them to indicate patterns and trends arising from their recorded data.
104. An analysis of pupils' previous and present work shows they consistently achieve at good levels. The scheme of work, which is in the process of being further developed by the subject co-ordinator, supports teachers' planning and the good progress of pupils. Teachers are covering equally well all required aspects of the subject. They give a good emphasis on pupils undertaking their own experiments and investigations for themselves. In a lesson where standards and teaching were satisfactory, it was less successful because the teacher did not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils to achieve well. The teacher demonstrated the experiment to the whole class rather than giving the pupils sufficient time to conduct their own experiments and to record their own findings.
105. The quality of teaching is good up to the age of 7 and very good up to the age of 11 years. The reason for the better quality of teaching for the older pupils is because of the greater impact of the subject co-ordinator. She has good qualifications in science and excellent

subject knowledge. The co-ordinator uses team teaching successfully and supports the teaching of the subject to a greater extent with the older pupils. Teachers plan lessons in good detail and they manage pupils very effectively across the school. Pupils show very good attitudes to their work, working with high levels of motivation, interest and enthusiasm. Teachers make very good use of pupils' literacy skills. Pupils are also suitably encouraged to use their numeracy skills. Many examples are seen of pupils recording data in tables and with use of graphs. Teachers encourage pupils to learn and use key scientific words. They provide good opportunities for pupils to write up their findings. The very good range of resources is effectively used to support the pupils' learning and lessons proceed at a very good pace.

106. Teachers use good procedures for monitoring pupils' work and for assessing their attainment and progress. Their use of assessment to determine the abilities of individual pupils, although satisfactory, is in need of further development. There is, on occasions, too much whole class teaching rather than teaching in groups according to different needs. Subject co-ordination is very good. The very good leadership of the subject co-ordinator is having a significant impact on standards that have risen year by year since 1997. Since the last inspection, standards of teaching and learning have improved. Teachers are now a lot more secure with their subject knowledge. They monitor and evaluate systematically and this is impacting on what is taught in the classroom. The school has improved resources and they are very well organised to promote pupils' learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and are above those expected at the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national expectation. Three lessons were observed during the inspection, all in the junior classes. Judgements are further supported by an analysis of pupils' previous work, a scrutiny of displays around the school, photographs and discussions with pupils and the art co-ordinator. Overall, pupils continue to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have good role models in the mixed ability, collaborative working groups. Therefore, these pupils make good progress in art and design.
108. In Year 1, pupils use a variety of materials to produce images and artefacts. For example, they use pencils for shading carefully, pastels to create small drawings using sound smudging techniques and make 'animal magic' collages using a good variety of colours and textures. They weave different coloured papers into their chosen design and make satisfactory comparisons to the use of wool as a medium. Year 2 pupils show good skills in colour mixing and drawing. Some pupils use coloured pencils with great care to provide colour and depth to their work. Teachers plan effectively for pupils to work co-operatively for larger projects, such as the carnival frieze. Pupils made simple but satisfactory comments on the strengths of the finished work and what could be improved.
109. In the junior classes, pupils enjoy using their art skills to produce work related to other subjects. Pupils in Year 3 created innovative designs of Egyptian cats made from modroc or papier mache. In a detailed study of the work of Lowry by Year 6, the pupils used pastels effectively to enlarge a painting by the artist and produced three-dimensional figures in a similar style to Lowry's figures. A study of the Greeks in Year 4 includes finely detailed clay tiles depicting scenes of the era as well as good silhouette depictions of Greek vases in tissue paper. Year 5 pupils used tactile and visual properties of material well to create mobiles of planets and created high quality Batik work to be used as scarves for the carnival.

110. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge of the subject and high expectations of pupils. In lessons observed in Year 4, very good lesson planning linked the art and design to the overall theme of 'water'. One group in each class demonstrated very good understanding of the skills of mixing watercolour paints to match different shades of blue to those on a card. After detailed analysis of the picture of a wave by Hokusai, pupils used pastels very well to draw a wave with 'movement'. A third group studied a small section of water from a Monet painting and on the whole were using good techniques to reproduce the same style. With skilful guidance by the teacher, a fourth group of pupils made good and informed choices of textiles to create a 'wave' collage by stitching the material on to hessian. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to contribute to the subject by enabling pupils to use different art and drawing programs.
111. The school is making good use of national subject guidance, which has been modified to provide a structured scheme of work. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge which she uses well to promote the subject within the school. She has had good opportunities to monitor classroom teaching as well as teachers' planning. This has resulted in more three-dimensional work in the school. Although some teachers make use of sketchbooks, this is inconsistent across the school. This prevents pupils looking back over time to evaluate their own progress and re-use techniques learnt.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards are in line with those normally expected at the end of both the infant and junior phases. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when attainment at the end of Year 6 was below the national expectation. It was only possible to observe one lesson in each phase during the inspection. Nevertheless, further evidence of standards and progress was gained from discussions with pupils and staff, examination of school documentation, photographs and pupils' past work.
113. Pupils across the whole school achieve well. Teaching is good. Teachers plan activities in the mixed ability 'tribes' groups, so pupils have the opportunity to work collaboratively together and support those pupils with special educational needs or those who have little spoken or written English. Consequently, the progress made by all pupils in 'design, make and evaluation' activities is good throughout the school. There are significant strengths in the planning of lessons and the teaching methods used. This is shown by the enthusiasm of pupils for the subject and their ability to describe projects they have undertaken.
114. By the end of Year 2, pupils demonstrate satisfactory skills and knowledge of techniques and materials through a range of effectively planned topics. Pupils in Year 1 find out how simple levers work and following simple instructions accurately. They used this knowledge effectively to make a moving Christmas card. They use a good variety of materials, including food in the summer term. Planning for Year 2 demonstrates a good understanding of the subject as pupils extend their skills by using a wider range of equipment and materials. In a lesson observed, pupils were given clear instructions for making a template for a finger puppet. Pupils responded well and demonstrated good independent skills in making card templates and using them to cut out two pieces of material. Photographs show good application of mathematical skills as pupils carefully measured and marked wooden strips and joined them together as a chassis for a car. They used their literacy skills satisfactorily to write instructions for making the model and to write simple but valid improvements they could make to the design. They used diagrams and pictures well to describe how to make a winding mechanism for a Christmas decoration.

115. In the junior classes, the well-designed projects give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate good skills and knowledge of techniques. They also apply knowledge from other subjects, including science and art. For example, the working models of a moving monster in Year 3 and the 'balloon buggies' in Year 6 demonstrate that pupils are making effective use of mechanisms and components. These projects and the musical instruments made by Year 5 pupils demonstrate good construction techniques with a variety of materials and careful decoration. In the Year 5 lesson, pupils were following a session of tasting and evaluating fruit for a commercial fruit salad. They were keen to participate in the discussion and gave very detailed reasons why some fruits would not be suitable. With constant links to the science work that was ongoing, the teacher skilfully questioned pupils to help them evaluate differences between dried, tinned and fresh fruit from the 'real' examples on each table. From these initial experiences, pupils are able to make well-informed decisions in their ultimate design of a fruit salad.
116. Teachers' subject expertise has improved since the last inspection and is generally secure. However, the recently appointed co-ordinator is planning an extended focus on the 'evaluation of products' in teachers' plans and pupils' work to ensure that this aspect of the subject is taught in sufficient depth. Assessment is in the early stages of development, but evaluations of the topics are taken into account when those topics are planned for the following year. This promotes a high quality of teaching.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. Inspectors observed only two lessons, one in Year 1 and the other in Year 4. Analysis of a limited amount of pupils' previous work, school documentation and discussions with staff and some Year 6 pupils provided further evidence. This evidence is insufficient to make a firm judgement on standards in Year 2. However, discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that, as at the time of the previous inspection, standards are in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in the infants. It is good among the juniors.
118. Most Year 6 pupils talk in detail and with confidence about the major physical and human features of their locality. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the effect of these features on the lifestyles of its residents. They express views on their locality and suggest improvements to it. For example, some talked at length on how they had involved the parents to reduce parking in the vicinity of the school. Pupils show a sound understanding of geographical terms as they compare and contrast features of their locality with those of Harlow which they studied as a contrasting locality. Pupils' map skills are satisfactory. They use atlases and four-figure grid references effectively to support their understanding of geography. Overall, pupils express their understanding of geography better orally than in writing, where weaknesses in literacy skills limit the detail and accuracy.
119. With only two lessons seen, there is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching. The teaching in a Year 4 lesson on 'understanding the water cycle' was very good. The Year 4 teachers had planned the lesson as a team and included some very imaginative activities for helping pupils to understand how the water cycle worked. They successfully focused on the meaning of the terms: 'evaporation, condensation and precipitation'. The teacher included a very good range of teaching methods, for example the use of mime and drama and pupils working individually to draw water cycles on discs of card which the teacher had prepared beforehand. Pupils enjoyed the whole of the lesson thoroughly and particularly acting out roles related to the processes of evaporation, condensation and precipitation. As a result, pupils worked very hard and made very good progress. By the end of the lesson, they understood how the water cycle worked.

120. All aspects of the geography curriculum are included in detailed plans. Teachers make good use of these plans to teach skills and knowledge in different units of work. Resources are good and they are used well. The arrangements for assessment are underdeveloped. There is no permanent co-ordinator for geography, but there are plans to appoint one in the near future. The school makes good use of visits, for example to a local farm, and the local environment to enhance the geography curriculum.

## HISTORY

121. As in the previous report, pupils attain in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They enjoy their history lessons. Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about the topics covered. The lively, active approach appeals to them and helps fix the key facts and skills in their minds. They delight in investigating and researching historical topics.
122. All pupils, especially those with English as an additional language, benefit from the good links made between history and literacy and the educational trips involved. For example, the infants loved visiting the toy museum and showed a grasp of new and old. Year 2 pupils had good recall of the lives of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole and the conditions in the Crimea War. Teachers encouraged pupils to describe Florence Nightingale in detail from a picture and helped them extend their speaking and writing skills by using different adjectives. The Year 2 pupils loved the Victorian day when they and the teachers dressed in Victorian costume and had lessons as if they were in Victorian times. They expressed their opinions clearly about their favourite parts, such as the teacher banging her stick on the table; and their least favourite parts, such as the girls having to stay in at breaktimes and tidy up while the boys went out to play. They benefited from good team teaching between the class teacher and the teacher, who supports pupils with English as an additional language, when they acted out a Victorian scene. This held their attention and fired their imaginations.
123. Year 3 pupils remembered in detail their project on Egypt and were fascinated by the symbolic meaning of Bastet cats. They took an interest in the process of mummifying and talked about the different burial rites according to status. The artwork and model making that accompanied this project helped consolidate their learning. Year 5 pupils were highly motivated by their visit to a Tudor Hall. They dressed up and, as with the younger pupils, it was impressive to see the efforts they and their families had made to make costumes and enter into the spirit of the day. They learned about food and how clothes were made and felt that the experience had given them a good idea of what life was like during the Tudor times. They could reel off the names of Henry VIII's wives and described what had happened to them. They expressed opinions clearly about how unfair the king had been to his wives. Many Year 6 pupils showed empathy with the evacuees in their imaginative writing about World War II. All pupils benefit from exploring artefacts and acting as detectives when studying photographs of the times. These approaches are particularly helpful to pupils with special needs as they respond well to the tactile and visual stimuli.
124. As there was only one lesson seen during the inspection, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. However, from the work seen and from talking to pupils, it is clear that teachers use interesting and lively teaching methods and make effective use of good resources. Through these lively approaches that motivate pupils and stimulate debate, history is making a significant contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. A new co-ordinator is about to be appointed and the school has yet to develop effective assessment procedures.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected nationally of pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in all required aspects except word-processing. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' skills in word processing are below those expected for their age. Teachers make good use of: a) good subject knowledge; b) improved resources for information and communication technology; c) national subject guidance. They ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities to develop their key skills and make sound progress overall in their learning. Pupils' knowledge and skills are promoted effectively during their weekly lesson in the well-resourced computer suite. For example, Year 6 pupils extended their knowledge and understanding of using multi-media facilities to create 'electronic pages', successfully bringing in digital photos, graphics, animation and also adding sound. Teachers give clear instructions and demonstrations to enable pupils to develop their word processing skills soundly in these weekly lessons. However, pupils have too few opportunities to apply and extend these skills frequently to support their work in other subjects. The school does not have enough resources in classrooms. Pupils' weaknesses in their English language skills restrict the rapid development of keyboard skills. These, together with too few opportunities, limit significantly the standards attained in word processing.
126. The new subject co-ordinator is building on the effective work of the previous co-ordinator to provide a sound curriculum programme. She is fully aware of the impact of the lack of classroom resources. She is planning to increase the availability of resources. The school makes very good use of a technician to ensure that the resources in the computer suite are ready for each lesson. This allows each teacher to make an efficient start and make full use of the limited time available to them. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding. They use programs such as spreadsheets and Internet search engines confidently to demonstrate key points on the large white-board. Teachers maintain a good pace to lessons and illustrate key features to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. They ensure that pupils' basic skills are promoted effectively during their timetabled weekly lesson. Pupils have some opportunities to use information and communication technology to extend their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, some Year 1 pupils used a word recognition program to extend their knowledge of using a word bank to create a sentence on the screen. They showed sound mouse control skills to highlight and select a word to add to their sentence. For example, two pupils completed a sentence beginning with 'My toy is ...' by selecting and adding 'soft, blue and fluffy'. Year 5 pupils used a spreadsheet successfully to reinforce their numeracy skills when adding the total cost of the food needed for a class party. However, teachers cannot promote these opportunities fully to extend pupils' skills due to the limited classroom resources.
127. Pupils with special educational needs and the large numbers for whom English is an additional language receive equal opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills. They benefit from good quality support within lessons. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on getting information from the Internet, the teaching assistant used a series of prompt cards very successfully. She put each one next to the computer to describe the next step to be covered, for example 'click on paste', and to reinforce and extend the pupil's language skills. The use of such strategies enables these pupils to make sound, and often good, progress in their learning in class lessons. However, the school does not use information and communication technology enough to provide specific support towards helping these pupils to make more rapid progress towards their individual learning targets.
128. Some more able Year 2 pupils entered instructions confidently into a programmable robot to control its movements. They guided it accurately around a 'course' marked out in tape on the carpet. They showed a sound understanding of using directional vocabulary, for

example, 'left, right, forward and backward'. Other Year 2 pupils used sound mouse-control skills to move around an on-screen maze. Most applied their mouse skills effectively to create a castle drawing linked to their history topic. They showed a secure knowledge of the use of different icons, for example 'fill' and shape', to create accurate 'paintings'. Some more able Year 2 pupils used their word processing skills to add a sentence describing their picture. They knew how to change the style and size of the font to improve the presentation. The school builds soundly on these skills in Years 3 and 4. For example, Year 3 pupils use their editing skills to change the style and colour of the text to emphasise such key words as '*special friends*'. Many pupils have weaknesses in their English language and literacy skills and these restrict the accuracy and amount of work achieved. For example, in describing snakes, several Year 3 pupils only achieve one or two sentences with spelling or grammatical inaccuracies, such as 'Snaks are eveil and mean not nice'. Year 6 pupils use word processing to extend their use of more interesting sentences, for example 'the hairy dog looked carefully at the tall tree'. There was limited evidence in lessons or in the range of pupils' work inspected of Year 6 pupils using their word processing skills regularly.

129. The teaching of information and communication technology skills is good and frequently very good. Teachers work very closely with support staff to enable pupils to make good, and often very good, progress in lessons. They share their good subject knowledge and use it to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a good Year 5 lesson on spreadsheets, the teacher and support staff worked in very good partnership to clearly illustrate to pupils the specific technique of how to quickly total the overall costs. This improved pupils' understanding of how to use spreadsheets effectively to limit the number of calculations which they would have to work out. They achieved more work in the lesson. Teachers have excellent relationships with their classes. Pupils clearly enjoy working with their teachers and have a very enthusiastic attitude to working on computers. The teachers use this positive attitude to maintain excellent control. They continually encourage pupils to focus on what they are trying to achieve in the lesson. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on creating a poster from information gained from the Internet, the teacher maintained a very brisk pace to the lesson. She used very good control strategies to ensure that she got pupils' attention instantly, for example, saying 'Clap hands if you can hear me!'. She then provided more instructions or explanations to ensure that all pupils were continually challenged to extend their skills. This helped all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve the learning outcome. They confidently accessed the Internet to gain information on their science topic on 'light'. All of the class then used this information, illustrated by diagrams, to create a 'scientific' poster. More able pupils used the final few minutes of the lesson to improve the quality of their poster, for example, by changing the style and size of the font to emphasise its title.

## MUSIC

130. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities. Good improvement has taken place since the last inspection. The school has set up a choir and orchestra and is now very well resourced for music. Pupils' attitudes to music and their behaviour in lessons were good at the time of the previous inspection. They are now very good.
131. The broad range of extra curricular activities and the tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers enable pupils with musical talent to make good progress. Pupils in the orchestra performed confidently during the Chinese New Year assembly. They followed the conductor carefully and played their instruments tunefully and in time.
132. Young pupils sing enthusiastically, showing good control of rhythm. They used their voices effectively to sound cross like a dragon when practising for an assembly. Pupils in Year 2 sing with changing tempo and copy rhythmic patterns using unpitched percussion

instruments. In one lesson, half the pupils maintained a steady beat while the others played the rhythms of nursery rhymes successfully using African drums.

133. Junior pupils sing with expression in assembly. Year 3 pupils select instruments to represent different sounds. For example, in one lesson they chose percussion instruments to replicate noises associated with a park. Older pupils use musical vocabulary and notation correctly. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils composed rhythmic patterns in pairs using xylophones and glockenspiels. They performed the pieces to the class, reading from musical notation cards. Some pupils successfully included a 'rest' in their compositions.
134. Inspectors only observed a small number of lessons. It was not possible to observe music lessons in all classes during the inspection. Teaching varied from very good to unsatisfactory. From the lessons seen and from talking to staff and pupils, teaching and learning are good overall. Very good teaching was observed in Years 2 and 6, where teachers' good subject knowledge enabled them to challenge and extend pupils' skills. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher used the familiar 'Old MacDonald had a Farm' to analyse song structure effectively. She did this by a carefully planned, staged approach using singing, clapping and musical notation. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher did not organise the musical resources well and did not maintain a brisk pace to the lesson. This did not enable pupils to have sufficient opportunities to develop their playing skills.
135. The co-ordination of music is good and successfully promotes pupils' achievements. The resources for music are of very good quality and reflect a range of cultures. Musical performances promote and celebrate cultural diversity and enrich pupils' experience. Teachers from the local music service provide good specialist support. This support is particularly successful when used strategically to improve teaching. Although the policy provides useful guidance on pupil assessment in music, there is no formal system for recording pupils' progress. Teachers need this information in order to plan challenging activities for pupils of different abilities within lessons.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

136. Pupils attain standards which are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has maintained standards at a similar level to that reported in the last inspection. During the inspection the focus was on the development of pupils' skills in games and gymnastics. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are fully involved in all activities and make sound progress overall in their learning. Sound and frequently good teaching enables most pupils to develop their skills effectively in lessons. However, there was little evidence of more able pupils being challenged consistently to extend their skills and achieve above expected standards, especially in games activities. Teachers do not evaluate pupils' performances consistently to identify ways in which they can improve their standards. All pupils have enthusiastic attitudes to the subject. They clearly enjoy physical activities. This encourages them to work hard and to build their skills soundly. The school's involvement in the 'learning to learn' project has increased its focus on physical development aspects and is contributing successfully to developing pupils' physical skills.
137. Pupils develop their games skills soundly throughout the school. For example, Year 3 pupils showed sound passing and receiving skills when passing a netball to a partner or in a group activity. Most showed effective technique; for example, they extended their arms and wrists correctly to complete an accurate chest pass. Most Year 4 pupils threw a tennis ball accurately and caught it successfully when using these skills in a group cricket activity. They showed a developing understanding of the need to co-operate closely in



team activity, for example when fielding and returning the ball quickly to the bowler. Most Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the roles of different team members in cricket. Some describe accurately how the body position of a wicket-keeper changes as he or she prepares to receive the ball. Many pupils bowl accurately using an under-arm technique. They find it very difficult to maintain a correct technique or accuracy when trying to bowl over-arm. Most Year 6 pupils show a sound understanding of how to use space safely and effectively in group and team activities. The wet weather during the inspection limited the opportunities for pupils to extend their games skills in outdoor activities. Teachers used good organisation and control to enable pupils in the large Year 6 classes to apply their skills successfully in games activities in a restricted indoor area.

138. Inspectors only observed one gymnastics lesson. Many Year 4 pupils used a good range of rolling and balance movements in developing a short sequence. They link different movements together well, for example moving with good control from a forward roll into a bridge balance. The teacher used her good subject knowledge to enable pupils to improve their work. For example, she gave a very good demonstration of a headstand and pointed out clearly the key features which enabled her to hold the shape. Many pupils then used this demonstration to improve the quality of their own performance.
139. The quality of teaching of games skills was sound overall and often good. Teachers control and manage their pupils competently to enable them to sustain interest and concentration. They encourage pupils to get actively involved and participate fully. Teachers use good resources to focus pupils' attention and to ensure that they provide activities in which pupils practise skills effectively. Some teachers challenged pupils to extend their skills by applying them in competitive activities. For example, in a Year 4 games lesson, the teacher organised the lesson in detail to enable pupils to practise their throwing and catching skills individually and then with a partner. The teacher then organised a group activity in which pupils were required to apply their skills competitively. This generated further interest and led to pupils trying even harder to be successful and to improve their skills.
140. Where teaching was less effective, but still satisfactory overall, the teacher spent too long giving detailed explanations or demonstrations of what was required. This restricted the pace of the lesson and the time available for the pupils to practise their skills. In these lessons, pupils did not always attain the standards of which they were capable. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher demonstrated all the different types of passes which pupils could use. The teacher explained in detail the main points to practise for each pass. Although this informed pupils, it did not allow enough time for them to practise their passing skills. Some teachers required pupils to observe the performance of others. They encouraged pupils to recognise attainment by applauding each other's efforts. Few teachers challenged pupils to evaluate what was good and what could be improved. They did not identify ways in which pupils could have improved their skills. This did not enable pupils, especially the more able games players, to achieve above expected levels of performance.
141. Physical education is a current priority in the school improvement plan and is part of this year's School Carnival. The subject co-ordinator only took on the role at the start of this school year. As she did not have a class teacher's role last term, the co-ordinator was given time and support to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. She has gained a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She has used national subject guidance and improved lesson planning to give a clearer structure to developing pupils' skills. The school uses some extra-curricular clubs, for example, rugby, football and dance to enhance the range of activities. It plans to increase the number of clubs, for example, through contacts with the local tennis club. Year 6 pupils have an intensive focus on swimming and the school makes good use of the local authority's swimming facilities.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. Inspectors observed only three lessons, one in Year 2 and two in Year 4. Further evidence was gathered from an analysis of a limited amount of pupils' previous work, school documentation and discussions with staff and some Year 6 pupils. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards which meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Infant pupils' achieve soundly. The achievement of junior pupils is good.
143. Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of the work they have covered in religious education. For example, they know the names of the holy books of Christians and Muslims and that they should be treated with respect. They also know that churches and mosques are places of worship for Christians and Muslims respectively. They talk about the major festivals in their own religions and how they are celebrated. Year 4 pupils discuss with confidence questions related to the creation of the world by sharing with each other stories of creation from different religions. They express a good range of views on how to create an ideal world which, for example, does not include wars, drugs, robberies and pollution but includes peace, kindness and consideration for each other. By Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the religions they have studied. They know the importance of religion and prayer in the lives of the believers and how belief in God can help them. They talk about rules of behaviour such as sharing, caring and kindness which can help people in their daily lives. They are developing positive attitudes towards people whose religious beliefs and traditions may be different from their own. Pupils across the school have a greater knowledge of their own religions than that of others. Their understanding of religious ideas is better than their knowledge of factual information about different religions. Although pupils are able to express their understanding of religious education orally with confidence, they produce a limited range of written work.
144. With only three lessons seen, there is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching across the school. In the lessons seen, it was good overall, with some of it being very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure, which they use well to plan their lessons. Their instructions and explanations are clear and they introduce lessons in an enthusiastic and lively manner. Teachers manage pupils very well and their lessons are well structured. They make good use of questions to challenge pupils' thinking, to draw out their knowledge and to build on it successfully. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher made very good use of questions to develop pupils ideas. The pupils contributed successfully to a discussion and a written task on 'what makes an ideal world'. Some evidence of religious education making a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development was seen when a teacher provided a quiet moment for Year 4 pupils to think about their personal feelings about the earth. As the pupils closed their eyes, with very uplifting music playing in the background, she asked them to visualise what the earth would look like from above. To help them, she used a number of questions, for example 'Can you smell anything? Are these nice smells? Can you see the trees?' This approach stretched pupils' imagination and had a profound effect on their level of concentration and interest in the lesson.
145. The religious education curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The arrangements for long, medium and short term curriculum planning are good. Teachers use them effectively to ensure that all required aspects are included fully in the different units of work. There is a new co-ordinator who is in the process of taking over responsibility for managing the subject. The previous co-ordinator has provided very good leadership in the development and monitoring of the subject. The quality and range of resources in religious education are good and they are used well. Currently, the arrangements for assessment are underdeveloped. The subject is enriched through visitors from different faith groups and visits to different places of worship. Teachers also use pupils as a valuable resource for

learning as was seen in a Year 4 class where pupils shared with the class creation stories from their religions.