

INSPECTION REPORT

BELMONT INFANT SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Haringey

Unique reference number: 102079

Acting Headteacher: Louisa Oakley

Reporting inspector: Michael Tumelty
16960

Dates of inspection: 28th – 31st January 2002

Inspection number: 243733

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rusper Road Wood Green Haringey London
Postcode:	N22 6RA
Telephone number:	020 8888 7140
Fax number:	020 8881 3400
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Christopher Moxon
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16960	Michael Tumelty	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Science History Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils' taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9405	Jo Philbey	Lay inspector		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?
23385	Suzanne Gerred	Team inspector	Learning for children in the Foundation Stage English Art and design Geography Religious education	
31075	Daphne Harris	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Belmont Infant School has 208 pupils, including 46 attending part-time in the nursery, and serves a culturally very diverse community in north London. Since the last inspection, the ethnic mix of pupils in the school has broadened considerably and school has received more pupils from refugee families some of whom are under significant stress. About 60 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and one of 26 different home languages. This is well above average. Attainment on entry to the school is well below that typically expected and many pupils are at the early stages of language development when they arrive in the school. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is at the national average. The school is in an area of significant financial hardship and a well above average number of pupils are in receipt of free school meals. Ten pupils from the Vale Special School attend full time, supported by special school staff. The headteacher retired early at the end of the summer term 2001. Her deputy was appointed as acting headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective, inclusive school with many strengths. The good quality of teaching helps pupils develop very good attitudes to learning. Despite low attainment on entry, the numbers of pupils attaining at level 2c and above in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, at the end of Year 2, is close to the national average and pupils' attainment is broadly in line with similar schools nationally. The acting headteacher and the leadership team are well focused on ensuring further improvements. The school uses its well above average level of funding effectively and gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment in art are high.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with a substantial proportion of lessons very good or better.
- The quality of relationships and racial harmony are high. The school has an inclusive ethos and the progress made by pupils who have English as an additional language is good.
- The very good leadership of and provision for pupils with special educational needs ensure they make very good progress.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- The school's links with parents are very good and parents are very supportive of the school.

What could be improved

- The school does not meet the statutory requirement to teach religious education.
- Standards of pupils' attainment in information and communication technology and of handwriting and presentation of work in all subjects are below those that should be expected.
- The consistency of subject leadership in non-core subjects needs to be improved so that all practice is as good as the current best in the school.
- The planning for subjects within integrated topics needs to be improved.
- The level of challenge for more able pupils is inconsistent.
- Pupils' attendance is well below average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the last inspection in June 1997. All the previous strengths from the last inspection have been maintained or strengthened. Even with the current staffing difficulties, the quality of teaching is now good overall, with a substantial amount of very good and excellent teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching. The leadership of the school has improved and the temporary leadership team is sharply focused on improving pupils' attainment and thoroughly evaluating the work of the school. The absence of three permanent teachers has disrupted the developments in subject leadership made since the last inspection but leadership of core subjects is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The school has not addressed the previous key issue relating

to religious education and, although some improvement has been made to information and communication technology, standards in the subject are still too low and it remains a key issue.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	E	D	E	C
writing	C	C	D	B
mathematics	D	C	E	D

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

Pupils' attainment is broadly average when compared to similar schools across the country. Despite the lower comparative grades for all schools, examination of the school's data for 2001 test results shows that the number of pupils attaining at least level 2c was very close to the national average number. By the end of the reception class, most pupils attain the early learning goals and during Years 1 and 2, they make sound progress. However, those with special educational needs make very good progress. Fewer pupils than average attained the higher levels particularly level 3 and this has had an impact on the grades above. Scrutiny of pupils' work in the current Year 2 shows that standards in reading and writing are similar to the test results, but that mathematics and science attainments are higher and close to the national average but with few pupils in line to achieve level 3. Pupils' attainment in Year 1 is relatively higher in all areas with more pupils attaining above the national expectation. Attainment in art is above the national expectation in all parts of the school. Attainment in most other subjects is in line with what is expected for pupils aged 7, except in information and communication technology and religious education where they are below what is expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. All parents report that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school. Pupils want to achieve well and are eager to learn and very responsive to teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is very good and contributes well to pupils' achievements and the calm, ordered, inclusive and welcoming feel to the school. Behaviour outside classrooms and in the playground is equally high.
Personal development and relationships	The relationships between pupils of different races, religions and cultures are very good and harmonious. Pupils from the Vale school are very effectively included and their presence contributes to pupils' personal development.
Attendance	This is unsatisfactory and well below the national average. The school's monitoring of absence and punctuality has improved under the acting headteacher and is satisfactory overall.

Many of these areas are strengths of the school. Pupils are developing high self-esteem and are confident and happy. Pupils are increasingly and effectively involved in their own learning. The adults in the school set a tone of high standards and mutual respect which pupils are happy to follow.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection despite the fact that two teachers are on maternity leave and three of the seven classes are taught by agency staff. All teaching is now satisfactory or better and more than one lesson in five is very good or excellent. Teaching is good in all parts of the school, although strongest in the classes taught by permanent staff. The degree of personal support and professional development offered to agency staff is impressive. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective. There is a strong emphasis on pupils developing their own ideas and thinking for themselves. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is strong and has a very positive impact on their learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well taught. Nursery assistants and other support staff make a good contribution to learning. The level of challenge for the more able pupils is inconsistent across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is very secure in the nursery and the reception classes. In Years 1 and 2 it is broad and strongest in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The statutory obligation to teach religious education has not been met. The planning for information and communication technology and the integrated topics are weaknesses.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very well led and managed and a strength of the school. Procedures for identifying need, setting targets and monitoring pupils' progress are very good. Pupils are very well supported by teachers and the co-ordinator who effectively plan work at an appropriate level. Pupils' progress is very good overall. Parents are well informed and involved at all stages.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good overall and resourced well. It is well led by the specialist teacher. Pupils' learning needs are effectively identified and they are well taught by class teachers who understand early language development. This enables pupils to attain broadly at the same level as their other classmates.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and a strength of the school and improved since the previous inspection. Opportunities to promote spiritual awareness are increasingly well developed. Both moral and social development are very strong and the celebration of the school's cultural diversity is a significant strength.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care to ensure the welfare of its pupils. The procedures for encouraging good behaviour and preventing bullying are particularly strong. Assessment of pupils' progress is sound and increasingly well used to improve teaching.

The school maintains very good relations with parents who value highly the work done by the teachers and other staff. Parents have confidence in the acting headteacher and her team. Reports are sound but

could contain more detail for parents better to understand how their children could improve.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is good overall. The acting headteacher, with her deputy, has had a very positive impact on the school and has shown drive and determination to secure further improvement. The school's priorities for development are appropriate. The leadership of provision for special educational needs is very good and is good for pupils who have English as an additional language. Subject leadership in core areas is at least satisfactory but it is inconsistent in non-core subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the school and have aided the acting-headteacher well. All statutory requirements are in place. The strategic role of the governors is developing soundly and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound overall and the acting headteacher has done much to develop this aspect of the school's work. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are good. Core subjects are well evaluated but little effective evaluation has taken place in non-core areas.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its funding well and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The principles of best value are developing soundly.

The school's good quality accommodation and attractive classrooms effectively aid pupils' learning. Plans are in place for the development of the library but the surface of the playground has many potholes which present a potential safety hazard. The level of staffing is appropriate. Staff are well managed and effectively developed. The school has done much to ensure that agency staff are well supported and contribute well to teaching quality. Learning resources are satisfactory and well used.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The teaching is good and their children are making good progress • The school has high expectations and children are expected to work hard and do their best • Children's behaviour is good and their personal development is well catered for • The school has very good relationships with parents and parents feel confident in approaching the school if there is a problem • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activities for children beyond the curriculum • The quality and amount of homework • The quality of reports to parents

The inspection team strongly agrees with parents' positive views. The quality of reports to parents is satisfactory and meets statutory obligations, but the team feels they could include more detail for parents to understand how their children could improve. The team does support the parental concern about the quality of homework. The school is taking this concern seriously and reviewing its policy. There are no extra-curricular activities but the school will be seeking to develop a range of lunchtime and after-school activities, possibly involving parents and community volunteers in addition to teachers and other staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have been very varied each year in relation to the national average results for national curriculum tests at the end of Year 2. This is due principally to the increase in the range of pupils for whom English is an additional language in different Year 2 groups, many of whom were recent arrivals in the country with significant language needs and from families under stress. This variation in standards, between different year groups, can still be seen in the school currently, where 6 pupils in 10 have English as an additional language. However, over the years the school's results have generally compared favourably with schools in similar contexts across the country. When the results over time are examined in detail, the numbers of pupils attaining level 2c or above has never fallen far short of the national average and has sometimes been above it. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school has been consistently below or well below that which would be typically expected nationally and the school has, in the years between inspections, consistently ensured that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have made at least good progress. This still remains a strong feature of the school's work. The attainment at the end of Year 2 by those pupils who have higher prior attainment has been less secure and the number of pupils attaining higher levels, particularly level 3, has generally been much lower than average. The acting headteacher had prioritised improvement in this area before the inspection and work has begun to improve the attainment of these pupils. Target setting, to raise attainment further, has begun but there has been insufficient time for its impact to be significant.
2. Results in the 2001 national tests were below those of the previous year and lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The governors' report to parents indicates that in this Year 2 group of 50, 19 pupils were on the special educational needs register and 31 pupils had English as an additional language. Results in reading and mathematics were well below the national average and results for writing were below average. However, when the results are examined in detail, the number of pupils attaining level 2c is close to the national average. For example, the school's results at level 2c and above were one pupil more than the national average in writing, two pupils less in reading and three pupils in mathematics. Fewer pupils than average attained the higher levels, particularly level 3, and this is consequently reflected in the comparative grades contained elsewhere in this report. Standards of attainment in science as reflected in the 2001 national teacher assessments are slightly below the national average, but the number of level 3 results attained was below average. When the school's results are compared to those of similar schools across the country, attainment in writing is above average, in reading and science it is in line but below average in mathematics.
3. Although the range of attainment on entry to the school is varied, overall it is well below that typically expected. Given this, pupils make sound achievement over time by the end of Year 2, although those with special educational needs make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs attain very well in relation to their abilities. Their individual education plans have clear targets for improvement and there is evidence that they meet their targets well. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported and, as a result of good teaching, progress in line with their classmates. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls or between different ethnic groups in any subject area.
4. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly at the national expectation. Despite their initial limited communication skills, pupils achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 listen attentively in a variety of situations, such as whole-school assemblies and class question and answer sessions. Many are confident to express their ideas and speak with the clarity expected for their age as they take turns in conversations. Some pupils with English as an additional language have speech that is limited by lack of vocabulary and comprehension, which impacts on their confidence to speak in

large groups. However, in smaller groupings, these pupils respond well to the effective support from the English language teacher, enabling them to gain confidence as speakers.

5. Inspection findings just over half way through the school year, taking into account standards of work by pupils currently in the school as well as past test results, show that standards in reading and writing in Year 2 are similar to the results of the 2001 national tests and below average overall. The number of pupils likely to achieve level 2c or above is broadly in line with the national average but far fewer than average are likely to achieve the higher levels. The implementation of the school's literacy strategy is having a satisfactory impact on standards of attainment.
6. Not enough Year 2 pupils read accurately, fluently and with expression, particularly at the higher levels expected of the most able pupils. Pupils enjoy books and make use of phonic cues to help them read unfamiliar words. Comprehension skills are weak and few but the most able can make predictions or draw conclusions from what they read. The language in some of the reading books is outside the pupils' own experience. A few able pupils effectively correct themselves when what they read does not make sense and they make use of punctuation.
7. Pupils in Year 2 write for an adequate range of purposes, including imaginative and factual accounts. For example, they can write stories using a story frame to help them with a beginning, middle and ending. They can describe in writing what they want to be when they grow up. In history they can write simple accounts, contrasting the past with the present day. Most pupils demonstrate an awareness of full stops and capital letters and the most able use them consistently and accurately. Few pupils demonstrate an awareness of direct speech or use speech marks in their writing. Only a few higher attaining pupils write at length with an adequate awareness of the reader, making use of interesting and descriptive vocabulary. Pupils form letters evenly and begin to join them when practising in regular, daily handwriting lessons. However, this learning is not yet consistently transferred to pupils' other work and handwriting is therefore a weakness throughout the school and presentation of work is often careless and untidy. Standards of literacy in other lessons are in line with those found in English lessons.
8. As a result of improved teaching, standards of attainment in mathematics in Year 2 are currently higher than the previous year's test results would indicate and close to the national age-related expectations for pupils aged 7 and broadly similar to those at the last inspection. However, there is little evidence of attainment at the higher levels from the more able children. There is an appropriate emphasis on solving number problems. Pupils in Year 2 are able to add three two-digit numbers and explain a variety of methods they use to arrive at the answer. They are beginning to see mathematical patterns and to describe with some confidence their own methods of calculation. Some average and all higher attaining pupils are secure about using a variety of different strategies for calculation. Pupils' work on shape, space and measures is at about the level expected by the age of seven. The National Numeracy Strategy is making a satisfactory contribution to the raising of standards. There is, however, little evidence of numeracy being used effectively in other subjects in the curriculum.
9. The school has invested much time and effort into improving science teaching and inspection evidence indicates that standards across the school are higher than last year's assessments would indicate. Pupils' knowledge is sound and they have good opportunities to develop the skills of scientific enquiry at an appropriate level. Standards of attainment in science are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection and broadly in line with the national expectation of level 2 in Year 2 although there is little evidence of higher attainment at level 3.
10. Standards of attainment in Year 1 are relatively higher than would be expected nationally in all areas. Standards in writing are at least in line with national expectations and standards in reading are above national expectations. In mathematics, most of the Year 1 pupils are working at the levels expected for their age group and the higher attaining pupils are achieving well as a result of the planned extension activities used in mathematics lessons. Standards of attainment in science are above the national expectation in Year 1 with a significant number of pupils reaching higher than expected levels for pupils their age.

11. Standards of attainment for other subjects are mostly in line with what is expected for pupils aged 7 and the school has broadly maintained the standards found at the last inspection. This has been particularly difficult in music, where there are no music specialists in the school and previously supportive junior school staff have since left. Standards in art are above the national expectation for pupils aged 7 and this subject remains a strength of the school. The improvement of standards of attainment in religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) were key issues for improvement after the last inspection. In both subjects, standards of attainment remain below the level expected for pupils aged 7. No progress has been made in improving the curriculum provision and teaching of religious education, despite the school being committed to a policy of religious and cultural inclusion. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to teach the subject based on the locally agreed syllabus. Consequently the progress made by pupils is unsatisfactory. The acting headteacher has ensured that the school has begun to make some progress since the last inspection with the development of information and communication technology. Resources are now appropriate and planned to be extended further. Subject specific training has been organised for all staff and there is some evidence that computers are used in subjects such as art. However, since the last inspection, national expectations as to appropriate standards have risen and the school has not kept pace with these increased expectations by teaching the programme of study.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes, their behaviour and their personal development are very good. These attitudes have improved well since the last inspection. The pupils are friendly, courteous and happy. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils trust adults in the school and are secure in the knowledge that they are valued as individuals. Within the whole school there is a general sense of warmth and good order.
13. All parents report that their children are happy and eager to come to school. Pupils want to achieve well and listen carefully to directions given by their teachers. An excellent example of pupils' attentiveness was seen in a Year 2 geography lesson. Pupils sat quietly enthralled whilst a Chinese parent described how she had learnt how to write the Chinese characters. All pupils, even the very youngest, enjoy answering questions posed in lessons and assemblies and contributing to classroom discussions. Most pupils throughout the school sustain concentration and work well independently. Pupils are most polite and are adept at smiling warmly and greeting visitors in the corridors and classrooms. Parents are pleased with the school's family atmosphere and the values their children acquire.
14. Pupils' behaviour is very good. Most of the time pupils are very well behaved in lessons and respond well to their teachers. They move around the school building in an orderly way. At lunchtimes pupils enter and leave the dining room sensibly and eat lunch politely. Pupils play very happily together in the playground. Parents report that any anti-social behaviour is effectively dealt with at an early stage by staff and no bullying was seen during the inspection. There have been no exclusions over recent years.
15. Almost all pupils form excellent relationships with each other and with teachers and adults. There is a high degree of friendship and harmony between pupils of diverse racial, cultural and religious backgrounds. On many occasions, pupils work well co-operatively in pairs and groups and listen respectfully to each other. An example of this was seen during an assembly where pupils watched quietly as others performed actions to a story. Pupils then applauded spontaneously to show their appreciation. These harmonious relationships underpin the work of the school and have a significant impact on pupils' very good attitudes, which in turn positively affects their progress in lessons.
16. The pupils' personal development is also very good. They have a clear sense of responsibility and when given tasks carry them out diligently. Pupils are anxious to help their teachers by putting out books and tidying at the end of the lessons. Parents interviewed on inspection week commented on how well pupils integrated with The Vale children, especially in the playground. They make up suitable games to play together, including sign language songs. Parents feel that

this contributes well to their children's personal development, teaching them to be tolerant and considerate.

17. The acting headteacher is very conscious of the need to improve attendance, which, for the last reporting year, was well below the national average. The school indicates a slight improvement for the current year. The school reports that unauthorised absence for the same reporting year is nil, but scrutiny of the previous year's registers does not confirm this judgement. However, the acting headteacher has already strengthened procedures, and examination of up-to-date registers indicates that they are now more rigorously completed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was judged to be a strength of the school. At that time although almost all teaching was satisfactory or better, one lesson in twenty was judged to be unsatisfactory and only a similar proportion was judged to very good or better.
19. The quality of teaching is good overall with over two thirds of all lessons (68%) judged to be good or better and over one lesson in five (21%) very good or excellent. No teaching was found to be unsatisfactory. This is a significant improvement compared to the previous inspection. The further improvement of a key strength of the school is having an impact on the progress made, particularly by those pupils of average ability and those with special educational needs across the school. This is more remarkable as, since the beginning of the current academic year, when the headteacher retired early and two class teachers took maternity leave, teaching in three of the seven classes has been undertaken by temporary teachers. The acting-headteacher has worked hard to ensure that teaching standards are maintained and that parents' confidence in teaching is justified. The quality of all teachers' practice has been well monitored and the induction and support for new teachers have been of high quality. The high levels of good or better teaching result in good learning in each year group. Teaching is particularly strong in the foundation stage classes and in those classes taught by permanent members of staff in all year groups.
20. Children are well taught when they begin school and the teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good overall, with some very good teaching in the nursery and in one of the reception classes by a permanent member of staff. Staff successfully create a secure and stimulating environment which helps children settle into school quickly. Good management of children ensures a calm, happy working atmosphere within stimulating, attractively presented and well-resourced learning environments. Parents are welcomed into the classrooms and there are very good strategies for their involvement in their children's learning. Teachers are conscientious in planning the work, in carrying out the teaching and in assessing outcomes. Teachers satisfactorily assess how well children are doing and make appropriate use of this information to guide children's next steps in learning. There is very good deployment of support staff, who make a good contribution to teaching and learning. The nursery assistants' care and commitment to young children are evident in their dealings with these young children. They reinforce teaching points effectively and provide good support, both in whole-class, group and individual activities. In instances where there have been a number of teacher changes, the nursery nurse has been a valuable source of security and continuity in learning.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school and enables very good learning to take place for those pupils. They receive effective support in lessons, with teaching assistants giving generally good quality help. The special educational needs co-ordinator carries out small-group focused teaching with specific pupils during each week to supplement class teaching. The quality of her teaching is excellent. She enthuses pupils for learning and effectively uses a wide repertoire of multi-sensory approaches in her teaching. The high quality integration of Vale School pupils within classes continues to have a very positive effect on special needs teaching for Belmont School pupils. Those pupils who have English as an additional language are well taught across the school and provision enables them to progress from a low baseline to attain in line with their classmates. The co-ordinator has ensured that all teachers

have strategies for supporting pupils in the early stages of language learning. Her time is well focused on supporting pupils in each year group at different times of the year.

22. Particularly notable among the strengths of the teaching are the excellent relationships between the pupils and all the staff in all classes. This greatly increases pupils' self-esteem and helps pupils to learn better. Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and treat all equally well. The teachers enjoy teaching and this enjoyment is infectious. As a result, pupils love being in school and want to learn. The strong emphasis in the school's teaching for encouraging pupils to investigate and develop their own ideas has been maintained since the last inspection despite the staffing difficulties experienced by the school. This is seen not only in a variety of subjects, from art to science, but also in English and mathematics. Teachers have high expectations. They expect pupils to behave well, to listen to each other and co-operate and collaborate at appropriate times. Teachers are sensitive and helpful when asking pupils to improve their work. They praise them for working hard, for behaving well and for meeting the targets set in the lesson. Pupils value the teachers' approval at least as much as they value the more tangible rewards the school offers.
23. Teachers have a good grasp of the subjects they are teaching. The teaching of literacy is effective. Most teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They give good emphasis to the teaching of phonics, which supports pupils' spelling skills. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall, with a substantial amount of good teaching. There is a very effective insistence in literacy and numeracy, as well as other subjects, on the use of subject-specific vocabulary and this is generally well understood by pupils.
24. Where teaching is strongest it is challenging, imaginative, creative and fun. Good use was made, for example, of a visiting Chinese parent to give pupils first-hand knowledge of Chinese writing and how Chinese children are taught to write in school. Pupils were fascinated as they learnt that there is no alphabet in Chinese and that children have to learn every word in the language. Lessons are well planned and the pace of teaching is generally brisk but never too fast for pupils to learn effectively. The level of challenge for more able pupils is effective and extension activities are used. Learning intentions are shared with pupils in language they understand, and great care is taken to ensure pupils know why they are doing a particular activity. Teachers' explanations and questioning are very effective and encourage pupils to think, explore ideas and work things out for themselves. Very enthusiastic pupils in a science lesson were encouraged to pose their own questions when investigating different materials. In a very good geography lesson there was "team teaching" by the class teacher and the teacher from the Vale School, who took turns in challenging the pupils by asking demanding questions. Both teachers had very secure subject knowledge, which was demonstrated in very good explanations. In the best lessons assessment is an integral part of the teaching. Pupils' mathematical learning is evaluated daily and recorded weekly. On the reverse of the planning sheets there are useful prompts such as notes on the strengths and weaknesses of individual and group achievement and areas to be addressed the following week. In an art lesson in Year 1, the teacher very efficiently assessed how well pupils were doing and by good intervention encouraged pupils to reflect and improve their work.
25. In some otherwise satisfactory lessons, the plenary sessions at the end tend to be too short and are not used as effectively as they might be to reinforce teaching points and to encourage pupils to identify what they have learnt and to think about what they need to do next. Although the level of challenge in teaching for the higher attaining pupils is high in some classes, where extension activities are planned and used well, this is an area of inconsistency. In other classes, the level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils is sometimes too low.
26. The use of homework is broadly satisfactory but is an area that the school has planned to improve further.

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

27. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which is broad and appropriate for pupils of all abilities. However some of the criticisms made in the previous report have not yet been addressed and there remain some significant weaknesses. Although the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, the statutory requirements for religious education are not met.
28. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is in accordance with national recommendations for the Early Learning Goals. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in both the nursery and reception classes are good. Together with consistently good teaching, these opportunities give children a strong start to their education and enable them to achieve well. The system for planning and organising lessons is good, particularly in the nursery, where the adult-led, "focus" activities have a clear purpose and the "stepping stones" to be achieved are identified. The staff in the Early Childhood Unit plan together as a team and share teaching strategies and resources effectively.
29. For pupils who have special educational needs, the curriculum is well planned to address their learning and emotional needs. The school's effective deployment of the expertise of the specialist teacher ensures that pupils for whom English is an additional language have access to the appropriate curriculum. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Boys and girls work and play together very well and both sexes have the same opportunities in all lessons.
30. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been satisfactorily implemented since the last inspection. The planning for the overall balance of the curriculum, however, remains a concern. The use of one day a week for integrated topic work is not planned effectively enough and the time devoted to history, geography and design and technology is inconsistent. Despite this there have been improvements made to the curriculum for geography and history since the last inspection. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) has shown some improvement since the last inspection. There are now sufficient resources to teach the subject. Staff are being trained and computers are used in some subject areas, albeit inconsistently, across the school. However, the school has not kept pace with the developments in the subject and the teaching of the programme of study is not effectively planned for. The school has made very good provision for personal, social and health education.
31. The acting deputy has overall management of the curriculum and she and the acting headteacher meet with the governors' curriculum committee on a regular basis. Each meeting has a planned agenda and the minutes are presented to the full governing body. The governors monitor by regular visits into school and have a clear vision of its current strengths and weaknesses.
32. The school fully supports inclusion and works hard to ensure full integration for all pupils. It places a high priority on the importance of equal access to the curriculum. The senior management team is analysing the performance information by ethnicity and the specialist team carefully monitors pupils with English as an additional language. They provide expertise and support by working with different year groups during the year. Pupils from The Vale Special School are fully integrated whenever it is practical. With support from their teachers and assistant they take part in PE and drama as well as most lessons. The school staff value The Vale's expertise. The special educational needs coordinator ably supports pupils with special needs. She monitors progress and supports teachers, ensuring that planning can meet the objectives on the well-written individual education plans. The new code of practice is in place and she is leading training for both staff and governors.
33. At present there is no provision for extra-curricular activities, although the school recognizes that this is an area for development. Parents are encouraged to help in the school and the school makes all parents feel welcome. Links with the community are limited but the involvement of parents in the cultural and religious celebrations that are a feature of the school ensures pupils receive a wide view of life outside the classroom. The school does raise money for a charity once a year and pupils, parents, staff and governors are actively involved with this.
34. The links with other schools are strong. The headteachers and staff from the Vale school work closely in partnership and the links with the Junior school ensure a smooth transfer for pupils into

Year 3. The headteachers and other staff meet on a regular basis using each other's expertise. The school also welcomes students from London University who are engaged in both short and long teaching practices.

35. The school provides very well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is an improvement since the last inspection. It makes good provision for the spiritual development of pupils. Assemblies are well planned and meet the requirements for collective worship. Although mainly Christian in character, they also provide good opportunities for pupils to consider aspects of their own lives and of other faiths and cultures. During the inspection one assembly focused on the story of the Good Samaritan and pupils were asked to reflect on who is their neighbour. The headteacher linked it to some Muslim teaching ensuring pupils felt included. Pupils are also given opportunities to reflect, whilst the candle is burning, on the theme that has been developed during the assembly. Opportunities to promote spiritual awareness are increasingly well developed in the curriculum and arise in subjects such as design and technology when pupils took their kites that they had made outside in the wind experiencing its power. On another occasion younger pupils were in awe when they saw the bubbles and the streamers blown by the wind as part of a planned activity. In other subjects of the curriculum, such as personal and social education, pupils develop their understanding of the deeper meanings of various issues and problems of daily living and how they might deal with them.
36. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. Good emphasis is placed on a code of conduct, called the golden rules, which are reinforced by staff in the way in which they manage behaviour. Pupils show respect for the golden rules and understand that there are clear expectations for good behaviour. They understand the consequences of poor behaviour and enjoy the rewards given for good behaviour, such as stickers and mention in either the Happy or Golden book, resulting in letters going home to parents sharing the achievements. Pupils show that they know the difference between right and wrong through their interaction with adults and during circle time sessions. Where there are problems, pupils are asked to consider the consequences of their actions. They are encouraged to make responsible choices and to show a sensible attitude to each other and to the school. Good opportunities are created in classes and in assemblies to consider moral issues. This is particularly true of the personal, social and health education lessons, where the school meets the needs of the pupils using carefully planned material sensitively as their understanding and maturity develop.
37. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils work very well collaboratively and are encouraged to relate positively to each other. They are given many opportunities to share equipment and work in pairs and small groups on topics and practical work. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to take responsibility for helping in the classroom and around the school. They form good relationships with adults and are always polite to visitors. Pupils clear away the materials they have used in the classroom or the hall efficiently. Pupils are also supported in recognising the needs of others beyond the school community.
38. The provision for cultural development is also very good. The celebration of the cultural diversity of the school is a strength. Through dance, music, art and drama, pupils come to understand both the religious and cultural diversity of the community in which they live. The pupils celebrated the Chinese New Year and also worked on a Chinese story about Ma Liang in a drama lesson during the inspection. Through both music and movement they came to understand the underlying meaning of the story as they were helped to express the emotions. Pupils' understanding of a different culture therefore increased.
39. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. In a circle time observed, pupils were provided with a decision tree to help them understand the decisions they had to make when faced with the options of doing something good or bad. Pupils felt confident enough to share their feelings and experiences about when they had done something good or bad. At the beginning of another lesson pupils were asked to say something about a child referred to as the "Star of the Day" in her presence. With spontaneity pupils responded with short positive phrases such as – "She plays nicely" – "She is careful with other people's things" – "In work time she tries her best" – "She is very cheerful". The immediate impact on the child's self-esteem was

obvious. Health education is developed within the normal school day when discussing the need to wash our hands as well as within the science curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school makes good provision for the education, personal support and guidance of the pupils. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The school provides a secure and calm environment, with a warm and friendly atmosphere, and pupils are happy to come to school. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and help to create a very positive ethos within the school in which the pupils feel valued and confident.
41. The arrangements for promoting welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good overall. This reflects the findings of the previous report. The acting headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection. Currently, she is not trained to hold this position but is due to go on a training course soon. Despite her lack of formal training, the acting headteacher copes well with child protection concerns, working effectively with outside agencies when necessary. Staff meetings are held regularly and include discussion on child protection issues. There are appropriate policies to support health and safety and there is a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid in the school. All accidents and incidents are methodically recorded and parents advised if necessary. Parents are very pleased with the care and support given by the staff to the children who feel ill or distressed during the school day. The school benefits from the meticulous work of the caretaker and his staff and there are good standards of cleanliness within the school building. There are, however, a number of potholes in the tarmac of the infant main playground which present a potential safety hazard, especially for the Vale children using rotators or wheelchairs. The headteacher and governors are well aware of this concern but cannot rectify this problem immediately due to current budget restraints.
42. Pupils understand that good behaviour is expected of them. There is a clear and comprehensive behaviour policy, and procedures for promoting pupils' discipline and good behaviour are very good. Class teachers praise pupils for good work and behaviour and this works well. Pupils take great pleasure in receiving stickers and stars and enjoy earning the prestigious awards of being 'star of the week' or having their names included in the Happy Book or Golden Book. When a pupil's behaviour is unacceptable in the classroom, a quiet reprimand by the class teacher is usually sufficient. Appropriate systems are in place to deal with the problem if poor behaviour persists. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. The school has a very effective behaviour and anti-bullying policy. Lunchtime supervisors have had training and keep a watchful eye on pupils' behaviour in the playground. When problems arise, pupils are listened to carefully and encouraged to think about what has happened and to take responsibility for their own actions. Parents are in agreement that if any bullying occurs, the matter is dealt with efficiently and effectively.
43. There are satisfactory procedures overall in place for monitoring attendance, absence and punctuality. Registration takes place before both sessions and attendance is recorded correctly in class registers. The acting headteacher is endeavouring to improve attendance rates by constantly reminding parents of their relevant responsibilities and the importance of regular attendance. The school indicates that unauthorised absence for the last academic year is nil. However, scrutiny of registers for that period discloses that some teachers regularly failed to record when an absence was authorised. The acting headteacher has tightened up the procedures and examination of up-to-date registers indicates that they are now more rigorously completed. Whilst most pupils arrive at school on time, there are still a number of parents who do not ensure their children are punctual. This presents an ongoing problem for the school as outlined in the previous report. The school monitors latecomers and letters are sent to parents when necessary.
44. The monitoring and support of pupils' personal development are good. Qualities of care, consideration and courtesy are promoted successfully. The class teachers know their pupils well and keep a close eye on their personal development, although this is not formally recorded. Both personal, social, moral and health education, including circle times for discussions, are

timetabled. In the classrooms, pupils are asked to help their teachers with monitoring jobs, tidying away and returning registers. Pupils are encouraged to think about others. A good example of this was seen when a Year 1 class enthusiastically gave their reasons why the chosen 'star of the week' pupil was special to them. Pupils' personal development is enhanced through a number of school visits including those to Central London museums and to a variety of local venues.

45. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are satisfactory overall and this judgement is in line with that of the previous inspection. The school identified the further development of assessment as the primary focus for development at the beginning of the school year. There is a newly-written policy that covers the aims, the assessment procedures, record keeping, parental involvement and the monitoring of developments. The acting headteacher has led the initiative but the impact of the developments is in the early stages. However, the staff have made good progress and are already ensuring that their assessments inform their lesson planning for all pupils, including those with English as an additional language. It is impressive from discussions with staff, how accurately members of the permanent teaching staff know their pupils' current attainment. However, the impact of assessment developments on the provision for higher attaining pupils is still inconsistent.
46. The senior management team has accomplished much in a relatively short time. The team has undertaken a detailed analysis of the results of national tests at the end of Year 2 and the middle infant tests at the end of Year 1. This has enabled them to set targets for 2002 and 2003 and from this the school is able to focus the appropriate attention on specific groups of pupils. This analysis has also led to the school being able to focus on areas of weakness such as the lack of understanding of mathematical language. The attainment of pupils who have English as an additional language has been effectively analysed individually and by ethnic group and the member of staff responsible has a clear understanding of appropriate subsequent actions.
47. The school has begun to identify the potential high achievers in the reception classes and in Year 1 to ensure that the curriculum matches their needs. Tracking of pupils from records is still under developed and individual target setting is still in the early stages. However, targets are effectively shared with parents. The school recognises that further development of staff skills is required in this area, as present targets, set for individuals or groups of pupils, are often not specific enough. The monitoring of the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good and impacts very effectively on their standards of attainment.
48. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes keep satisfactory records of what children know and can do, using the information to guide their next steps in learning. The individual profiles clearly identify the steps which children have achieved towards the Early learning Goals, although they would be more useful to teachers in measuring the rate of pupils' progress if they were dated. The recording of pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is developing well and care is being taken to ensure there is a comprehensive range of information to measure a child's progress effectively, although this is largely restricted at present to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school has identified further improvements for the recording of progress in reading and for more work to be undertaken in the assessment of writing, particularly for less experienced staff. There is a recently developed framework for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress in the non-core subjects but this has not yet had time to make sufficient impact.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. The school has successfully maintained and improved its partnership with parents, which was reported to be good in the last inspection. Parents hold the school in high regard. They confirm that their children enjoy coming to school and they are pleased with the progress they make. Parents feel that behaviour is very good overall and have nothing but praise for the school's standards of pastoral care. Parents who responded to the questionnaire, those who attended the meeting and parents interviewed on the week of inspection were particularly appreciative of the commitment of the acting headteacher and her staff

and their aims and expectations for their children. These positive views are confirmed by the inspection. A few parents are concerned that there is not a sufficient range of interesting activities outside lessons. The inspection finds that the school does not provide any extra curricular activities for its pupils and therefore parents' concerns are justified.

50. The building of good relationships between parents and the school begins before children commence school. Parents new to the school are invited to half-hour sessions to help them understand what their children will be doing in school as well as receiving general information on school procedures. Translators are provided, if possible, for parents who have limited English. Parents are welcomed into the school building before school commences and again at going-home time. On the week of inspection the acting headteacher was seen in the corridors each morning welcoming parents and their children. Class teachers are available each day before or after school for informal discussions with parents if required.
51. The quality of information to parents is satisfactory. The school's prospectus and annual governors' report for parents are both welcoming and professional documents, and clearly written for parents to understand. There is a parents' board outside each classroom, which informs parents of class activities, current news and half-termly topics. Whilst some parents are quite happy with this mode of information, others are not, pointing out that not all parents accompany their children into the school building. These parents would prefer more regular letters to keep them in touch with school activities, what their children are learning in the classrooms and how they can help at home. The acting headteacher recognises that this is an area for development and has started to address the issue by providing parents with half-termly newsletters. The school effectively provides parents with curriculum meetings each year to raise their awareness of literacy and numeracy initiatives.
52. The school holds regular, well-supported parents' meeting to discuss pupils' progress. Most parents are emphatic that, should they have any concerns, the staff will see them immediately. Whilst many parents are satisfied with the quality of the annual reports they receive at the end of the summer term, some parents at the meeting were more critical. The inspection finds that pupils' annual reports, although meeting with statutory requirements, could be improved overall as they lack sufficient detail to enable parents to understand the progress their children make and how they could improve. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of the progress made by their children and value the support that they receive from the school. The regular meetings to review individual education plans are attended by the majority of parents. Parents of pupils with English as an additional language are welcomed into the school and feel well supported, particularly when their children are in the early stages of language learning. The school does much to incorporate the various religious and cultural heritages into the curriculum. For example, during the inspection a mother of a Chinese pupil was involved in working with all pupils in a Year 2 class studying China as part of a geography topic and in a whole school assembly focused on Chinese New Year celebrations. Despite the school's efforts, some parents are still choosing to withdraw their children from school during term time for extended holidays, disrupting progress.
53. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the school and they do so wholeheartedly. They give their full support to productions, and join their children for special assemblies. Parents are encouraged to help their children at home, for example, with reading and spellings, and many parents liaise with teachers through the home/school reading diary. The school is grateful to the parents who assist in the classrooms and on school visits, help on computers and generally support the curriculum. Parents give generously of their time at school events such as the Summer Fête. Visitors come from all around to this event to sample the traditional foods from different cultures prepared by the parents. There is an active and enthusiastic parents' association that organises a range of fund-raising activities for both the infant and junior schools combined. They provide the school with much needed and appreciated financial assistance, which has helped to purchase resources such as books and safe play equipment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The previous inspection judged leadership and management as sound overall. Since then the leadership of the school has been through considerable upheaval. Six months prior to this inspection, the headteacher retired early and the deputy headteacher assumed the acting headship, replaced as class teacher by a supply agency teacher. A senior member of staff was promoted to acting deputy headteacher. Subsequently, two further members of the teaching staff, both subject leaders, left on maternity leave and were replaced by supply agency staff. The school entered this inspection with three of the seven classes taught by agency staff. This situation also caused significant disruption to subject leadership within the school. The judgement of this inspection is that despite the situation described, the acting headteacher and the leadership team have not only ensured that strengths of the school have been maintained in very difficult circumstances but have had a positive impact on the further development of the school. Overall, although there is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses, it is the judgement of this inspection that the quality of leadership and management in the school is good overall.
55. The acting headteacher with her leadership team have had a very positive effect on the school in a short time. The working relationships between members of the leadership team are excellent. The drive and determination of the acting headteacher enhance the quality of education the school offers and she is well focused on ensuring further improvements in provision and in the standards that pupils achieve. The school has clearly defined aims which are effectively used to guide its work and which are clearly being met. The team spirit within the school is impressive and involves all who work in it and not just the permanent teachers. The clear direction of the school is very strong. The impact of this can be seen in the overall inclusive ethos of the school, the excellent relationships, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils and the quality of teaching. The level of professional development and coaching that the acting headteacher has co-ordinated for agency staff, to help ensure effective induction and high standards of teaching, is particularly impressive. Parents' views of the school are very positive. Not only are parental questionnaires overwhelmingly positive but parents commented openly at the parents' meeting how leadership and management had improved. The school clearly has the capacity to continue to improve. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with similar schools nationally and relatively higher in classes for the younger pupils.
56. The school's improvement planning is developing soundly from a low base, although the plan itself is not yet clearly enough linked to the school's budget. The acting headteacher is on target fundamentally to revise development planning by the end of the financial year and has a very clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has revised the development priorities, in consultation with staff and the governing body, and they are wholly appropriate for the further improvement of the school. The school is consciously listening to parents views, and parent-governors are taking a more active role in development planning. The acting headteacher and her deputy have also improved the monitoring and evaluation both of teaching and the attainments of pupils. Baseline assessment and Year 2 core subject data have been thoroughly analysed and the school itself has identified the need to improve the progress made by more able pupils. Realistic targets for raising attainment have been set for the next two years and these include targets for level 3 attainment; targets are being set for achievement by minority ethnic pupils. Both the acting headteacher and her deputy, as well as a small amount of extra teaching assistant time, are being deployed to aid writing and mathematics achievement in the current Year 2 and help ensure that attainment is as high as possible.
57. The acting deputy's work is valued in the school. She is a very strong teacher, supports the acting headteacher well and, together with her, has borne a heavy subject leadership role as a result of the current staffing difficulties. The leadership of the Early Childhood Unit is good. The co-ordinator provides good support and guidance for staff which have a positive impact on quality and standards of attainment. The leadership of special educational needs provision is very good. She has had a major training and support role for staff and her work has a positive impact on the quality of teaching for SEN pupils and the very good progress they make. She has drafted a new policy, based on the new Code of Practice, and the administration of the SEN provision is excellent. Leadership of provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good and well planned for further improvement. The co-ordinator has ensured that all staff have a clear

understanding of how to aid pupils in the early stages of language development and is effective in ensuring that those pupils make comparable progress to that of their classmates.

58. Subject leadership is much more inconsistent. It was a key issue from the last inspection. Improvement did take place, and core subject leadership is at least sound and good in some subjects where the subject is planned well and pupils' attainment is monitored effectively. It is most inconsistent in non-core subjects, although satisfactory in art and music. Subject leadership has developed at too informal a level and there were few formal procedures laid down for non-core subject leaders. As result of the current staffing difficulties, many subject leaders are newly appointed and have had little time to make a significant impact on curriculum provision and standards of pupils' work.
59. The governing body works hard and is very supportive of the school and the changes made by the acting headteacher. Governors are effectively trained and carry out their statutory duties well through an appropriate range of committees that meet regularly. The annual report to parents is a welcoming, clearly written and professional document. There is scope for more formal governor involvement within school on a regular basis, although some governors are regular visitors during the day. The governors are very responsive to the acting headteacher's efforts to include them in all appropriate aspects of decision making. Many of the governing body are relatively new but their strategic role is developing well. Plans are in hand to use governors' expertise to explore better strategic ways of using the school's financial resources. For example, the school's funding reserve has historically been used to pay the part-time SENCO's salary. Her work is very high quality and governors want to bring her into the main staffing budget and use reserves for other purposes. They are well informed and knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The acting-headteacher has been very effective as the professional adviser to the governing body and her reports are valued by them. She has ensured that information is sent in advance of meetings, and governors value the opportunities to discuss issues in depth. The school's financial planning is good and specific grants such as for the standards fund, special educational needs and ethnic minority achievement grant are well used to ensure higher standards. Principles of best value are in place and the school does not confuse cheapness with financial effectiveness and evaluates the impact of spending effectively. Day to day financial control is very good and the able administrative officer works well with the governing body. The administration of the school is making good use of new technology.
60. The number and qualifications of staff are appropriate. The induction and professional development of staff are very effectively addressed. The support offered to agency staff has been of very high quality and has been a major factor in ensuring teaching standards have improved at a time of considerable upheaval in the school. Teaching is well monitored by the acting headteacher, with targets set for further development. Systems for performance management are developing soundly.
61. The school's accommodation is of good quality and fully accessible to all, including pupils from the Vale School using specialist walking equipment. The school's learning environment is good throughout, although the library is under-used and earmarked for major development. There are now sufficient computers to teach the curriculum for information and communication technology and the school has plans to increase the number of computers further. New technology, including email, is effectively used in the administration of the school. Good plans are in place for the development of the resources room and the outdoor play area in the Early Childhood Unit. The quality of the main school playground gives cause for concern as it has many potholes in its surface. There is an adequate level of learning resources across the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To improve provision for pupils and raise standards of achievement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Ensure that the statutory requirements to teach religious education are met and pupils achieve in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject by:

- building on the school's outline plan of what should be taught to ensure the curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus;
- ensuring good links between the subject and the school's assembly topics;
- ensuring that there is sufficient time available to teach the subject effectively;
- providing training and other supports to ensure teachers' subject knowledge is adequate;
- monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work.

(Paragraphs 11, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139)

(2) Ensure that pupils' attainment in information and communication technology improves and is in line with that expected nationally by:

- appointing a subject leader and implementing the subject action plan;
- ensuring sufficient time for teaching each subject unit;
- ensuring teachers' subject knowledge is adequate;
- developing exemplification of pupils' work at an appropriate standard;
- ensuring ICT skills are incorporated into teachers' planning in all subjects;
- monitoring the quality of teaching and evaluating standards of pupils' work.

(Paragraphs 11, 123, 124, 125, 126)

(3) Improve standards of handwriting and general presentation of their work by:

- Ensuring that the handwriting lessons are having an impact in general work;
- Clarify expectations for presentation with teachers and pupils and monitor consistency.

(Paragraphs 88, 95)

(4) Improve the quality of subject leadership in non-core subjects consistently across the curriculum so that all practice is as good as the current best by:

- ensuring that there is a clear understanding of the role by all staff;
- providing appropriate subject specific training for the role;
- ensuring that each subject leader is active in supporting the planning and teaching of the subject;
- ensuring that manageable systems of assessing pupils' achievements are set up;
- enabling each leader to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and standards of achievement.

(Paragraphs 48, 58, 104, 109, 114, 119, 122, 126, 134, 139)

(5) Improve the planning for integrated topics, particularly in relation to design and technology, history and geography, by:

- identifying what time requirement is necessary for each unit of work in each subject;
- ensuring that detailed subject planning enables all aspects of the subject to be fully covered in the topic in ways which ensure progression in learning.

(Paragraphs 30, 113, 119, 122)

(6) Improve the teaching to ensure consistent high quality of challenge for the more able pupils by:

- ensuring that the planning for each subject contains guidance on extension activities;
- enabling each subject leader to develop appropriate exemplification material illustrating standards above the national expectation;
- providing appropriate training on the needs of more able pupils;
- monitoring teaching and standards of pupils' work to ensure consistency.

(Paragraphs 1, 2, 7,8, 9, 25, 45, 47, 56, 80, 81, 83, 84, 89, 93, 96, 100, 101, 102, 104)

(7) Improve pupils' attendance rates by:

- communicating with parents the importance of better attendance;
- ensuring the continuance of the improved monitoring of attendance.

(Paragraphs 17, 43, 52)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- The improvement of the playground surface to remove the health and safety risk from potholes

(Paragraphs 41, 61)

- Actively consider the development of a parents' newsletter as a significant number of parents cannot come into school regularly

(Paragraph 51)

- Improve the otherwise satisfactory reports to parents to include more detail of how children's learning can be further improved

(Paragraph 52)

- Consider the introduction of extra curricular provision for pupils.

(Paragraphs 33, 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	21	14	0	0	0
Percentage	5	16	47	32	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	162
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	50

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	120

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.29

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.9
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	28	22	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	24	23
	Girls	18	20	19
	Total	40	44	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (85)	88 (90)	84 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	23
	Girls	19	21	20
	Total	42	44	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (94)	88 (90)	86 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	13
Black – other	2
Indian	14
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	9
White UK heritage	30
Any other minority ethnic group	117

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: Y1 – Y2

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	64

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	34
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	518,632
Total expenditure	501,853
Expenditure per pupil	2,691
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,295
Balance carried forward to next year	28,074

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	185
Number of questionnaires returned	52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	37	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	33	4	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	35	12	0	6
The teaching is good.	54	29	4	0	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	42	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	29	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	29	8	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	48	37	6	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	50	40	0	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	40	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	23	8	6	27

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

62. The good quality provision for children in the nursery and reception years has been maintained since the previous inspection.
63. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught either in the nursery or in the reception class. They are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis in the September of the year in which they become four. Currently, there are 23 children attending in each session. Most children transfer to the reception classes one year later, in the September preceding their fifth birthday. However, not all the children who attend the nursery get places in the reception classes. Currently approximately 10 per cent of pupils attending the reception did not attend Belmont Nursery.
64. Approximately 60 per cent of children in the nursery and 55 per cent in the reception class are from homes where English is an additional language and many of these children are at very early stages of learning English. These percentages are high compared with national figures. At the time of the inspection, two children in the nursery and four in the reception class had also been identified as having special educational needs. One child on the register of The Vale School was also attending part-time in the nursery and three children were attending full-time in a reception class.
65. Although the range of attainment is varied on entry to the nursery, standards overall are well below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Achievement in the nursery and reception classes is good, due to effective teaching and the provision of a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities. As a result of this, children's learning is good. Most children are well on target to achieve the nationally expected Early Learning Goals, in all the areas of learning by the end of the reception year, and the more able should exceed them. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes keep satisfactory records of what children know and can do, using the information to guide their next steps in learning. The individual profiles clearly identify the steps which children have achieved towards the Early Learning Goals although they would be more useful to teachers in measuring the rate of pupils' progress if they were dated.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Most children are likely to attain the expected standards in this area by the end of the reception year. Children in the nursery settle well. They learn to trust the staff and relax into routines quickly. At the beginning of the day, children separate from their parents or carers confidently. Well-established routines enable them to engage in the tabletop and other activities with good levels of concentration for their ages. Children play happily alone or alongside each other. One or two older children begin to play collaboratively, for example, engaging in telephone conversations in the "home corner" and taking on the roles of family members as they dress and feed the babies. They share and co-operate remarkably well, even though a good number have very limited English. In reception, children demonstrate good levels of independence in selecting activities and equipment. They have good levels of concentration and perseverance to sustain tasks to completion. Children enjoy the activities provided in both nursery and reception classes. They demonstrate positive attitudes to one another and learn to say sorry when they hurt another child. Children learn to care for one another. A lovely example of this was seen outside where two reception children held hands with a child from The Vale School and helped her to jump down some steps. In reception classes, most children are developing independence in personal care. Most can put on coats and shoes, wash their hands and settle to whole-class, group and individual activities.
67. Personal, social and emotional development is given high priority, to good effect. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both the nursery and reception classes. In the nursery, a calm and happy environment is created with consistent and well-organised routines. This provides

children with security and helps to build up their confidence. In both nursery and reception, children respond positively to the care of the staff and to the good role models they provide. Children are made to feel valued and to learn right from wrong in a positive way, enhancing their self-esteem and encouraging respect and consideration for others. Adults take care to include all children in the activities so that those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are able to participate as fully as possible. Staff are particularly good at encouraging children to take responsibility by providing opportunities for choice and by involving them in tidying their classrooms at the end of sessions. However, there are missed opportunities in the nursery to develop independence further at snack time. There is scope to allow children to be more involved in giving out fruit and drinks.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Children are well on course to attain the nationally-expected standards by the end of the reception year. They have the appropriate levels of attainment for their ages and their achievement in communication, language and literacy is good, particularly in reception classes. Children in the nursery are beginning to recognise their names. They handle books reasonably carefully and turn the pages correctly, recognising the front and back. One or two children can tell the story by looking at the pictures. They listen to stories and join in with familiar songs and rhymes. In reception classes, children listen and respond to questions attentively, with increasing levels of concentration. They are beginning to gain some confidence as speakers. They are becoming familiar with letter sounds and are beginning to link these to initial and end letters in written words, to recognise a simple sentence such as "My box is a cot". The most able and average children can write their names independently as well as letter strings and simple sentences. Children enjoy books and are keen to read. Their phonic knowledge is good and they make use of this and picture cues to help them tell a story or to read a simple text. One or two very able children have very good word recognition and can read a range of texts using phonic cues but have little comprehension of vocabulary.
69. The quality of teaching is good. Adults engage children in conversations and tell stories in an enthusiastic way, effectively promoting speaking and listening skills, as well as developing an interest in books. They take every opportunity, during activities across all the areas of learning, to develop children's understanding of language and to extend their vocabulary. This is particularly beneficial to those children who are learning to speak English as an additional language. In reception classes, teachers effectively draw children's attention to the alphabet and to initial and end sounds in words. Good use is made of storybooks, such as "My cat likes to hide in boxes," that have a repetitive text. These help children become familiar with the sounds and shapes of words. During the inspection, children in a reception class were effectively helped to recognise rhyming words as they repeated and recorded rhyming sentences, for example, "The cat from Norway got stuck in a doorway", "The cat from Spain went out in the rain."
70. In both nursery and reception, teachers provide imaginative role-play areas such as home corners and shops. These are used appropriately to promote communication and language associated with homes and shopping, especially through adult intervention. However, more use could be made of imaginative contexts, to provide meaningful 'pretend' situations through which children might develop their early writing skills.
71. Parents contribute well to children's reading through the use of the home-school reading records.

Mathematical development

72. Children in the nursery and reception classes have the appropriate levels of attainment for their ages and most are on target to achieve the nationally-expected standards by the end of the reception year. Nursery children develop an awareness of numbers through activity songs and rhymes, such as "Ten in the bed" and "Five brown teddies" and through stories like "Kipper's Toy Box." Adult interaction with children as they play with a range of boxes develops understanding of concepts such as "round", "square", "big" and "small". Outside, they develop understanding of

shape and space as they play with barrels, tyres, building blocks, sand and water. In reception classes these concepts are further developed so that children begin to recognise, for example, that a square shape has four sides. In reception classes, children are developing a sound understanding of numbers 1 to 10 and many can recite numbers to 20 and beyond. The most able children are able to count the number of objects that will fit into different sized boxes, often counting to 50 or above with support from a teacher.

73. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and in reception classes. However, there is some variation between teachers' skills in reception classes. In one class, for example, a temporary teacher is still getting to know the children and has not yet found sufficiently effective methods for challenging those children with higher prior attainment. In both classes, teachers provide stimulating and exciting activities and games, engaging children's attention and promoting the learning of mathematical skills and concepts well. The nursery assistants contribute well to children's learning, supporting teaching points and asking challenging questions that make children think, for example, when folding card to make little boxes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children achieve well in this area of learning and are well on course to meet the nationally expected standards by the end of the reception year. Children develop an awareness of their senses of sight and touch. They are encouraged to use them to investigate the world around them. In the nursery and reception classes, children explore the properties of a range of materials, including wet and dry sand, clay, dough, soil, ice and wood chippings. They have opportunities to mix cooking ingredients to make buns and to ice biscuits. Most children know that switches on machines make things happen. They can operate a mini robot to make it move in different directions and a cassette player to listen to a story. In reception classes, when using computers, children confidently use the mouse to click and drag objects across the screen and show the levels of control expected at this age. They utilise a variety of programs to support their work in literacy, mathematics and art. Children use a range of construction materials and recycled materials to make models such as different kinds of boxes. The lack of a computer in the nursery restricts their early development of information and communication technology skills. Children do well in reception classes to make up some lost ground. However, skills in this aspect are not as well developed as they could be.
75. Good teaching builds on children's natural curiosity. Teachers and nursery assistants organise activities very effectively, both indoors and outside, to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. They adapt their plans adeptly to take advantage of different types of weather. For example, on a very windy day they provided paper streamers so children could be amazed at the effects of strong winds. A reception class teacher was heard to ask children which way the wind was blowing and how they could tell this. Further foundations of early scientific investigation were laid by providing children with a trough of soapy water and a variety of objects through which bubbles could be blown, enabling the children to see different shaped and sized bubbles carried away by the wind. These exciting activities not only contributed to children's knowledge and understanding of the world but also to their spiritual development by prompting fascination and wonder at the marvels of nature. Teachers make good use of resources both inside and outside to develop children's learning about festivals such as Harvest, Diwali and Christmas through role-play, stories and creative work.

Physical development

76. The levels of attainment in physical development in the nursery and reception classes are broadly in line with the standard expected of children of this age. Children are well on course to reach the nationally-expected goals by the end of the reception year. Learning is good in the basic actions of travelling, balancing and the use of space, and children enjoy these activities, displaying a good amount of creative and physical effort. They confidently ride and push wheeled toys, developing gross motor skills well and enhancing their sense of space and direction appropriately. For example, children control tricycles with a good deal of accuracy and can move around the play area at speed. Children in the reception class follow instructions well and move safely within

lessons. They move freely with pleasure and confidence in different ways. They show the control expected at this age when using long strides and stretches to move like a cat.

77. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good in reception. Good management and control of behaviour ensure that children follow instructions and move safely outside and within lessons in the hall. Regular, daily access to a wide range of outside equipment, with good adult intervention, enables nursery and reception children to increase their confidence in climbing and balancing on climbing frames and moving through, along, over and under obstacles. A good range of creative activities, both in nursery and reception, enables children to handle crayons, pencils, scissors, glue and paintbrushes with increasing control and care, developing effective hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills.

Creative development

78. Children enjoy working with a variety of materials. They show curiosity as they explore and experiment with crayons, paint, glue, card, dough, clay and fabric. They demonstrate good levels of concentration and tackle tasks with a good degree of creative effort. They explore sounds made by a variety of musical instruments and some everyday objects by striking and shaking. They join in singing familiar songs and rhymes, participating in actions and body movements. With “small world” people and in role-play areas, they play imaginatively, entering into the roles of characters and engaging in conversations with others. A lovely example was seen in the nursery, where four children were role-playing parents, taking their babies out shopping.
79. Children start from a fairly low level of skill when they enter the nursery and teaching and learning are good throughout the foundation years. This is largely due to the provision of a wide range of both directed and free choice opportunities, which develop children’s creativity well. These include exploration and use of a variety of painting, modelling, collage and printing activities, which are often linked to topics, as well as opportunities for imaginative role-play in designated areas and with “small world” toys. In both the nursery and reception classes, teachers set up activities where children can observe natural objects such as plants and animals. They provide opportunities for children to sing, dance and play percussion instruments. Through the support of adults during these activities, including their comments and questions, children are helped to develop skills well and to express their own ideas with confidence. The reception teachers have high expectations of what children will be able to do, supporting independent learning well. This helps children to select their own materials, for example, pasta, shiny paper and fabric, when making necklaces and bracelets. Children are given opportunities to work on a small and large scale, and in two and three dimensions using recycled materials. Their work is displayed attractively on the classroom walls. Adult-led activities promote good learning of colours and develop children’s visual perception and fine motor skills effectively, so that by the end of the reception year most children are likely to attain standards that are as expected for their age.

ENGLISH

80. Results in the 2001 national tests show that the percentage of pupils who achieved at least level 2c in reading and writing was very close to the national results. However, few pupils achieved higher level 3 results so overall standards were lower than those found nationally in writing and well below average in reading. These results are lower than those at the time of the last inspection. Although the range of attainment on entry to the school is varied, pupils’ skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing overall are well below those typically expected. By the time pupils leave the reception class, the majority have attained the expected Early Learning Goals. Given this, pupils overall make sound achievement over time, although those with special educational needs achieve very well. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools nationally, attainment is comparable in reading and above average in writing.
81. The evidence from the inspection of pupils’ schoolwork shows that, at this point just over half way through the year, standards in reading and writing in Year 2 are similar to the results of the 2001 national tests. The number of pupils likely to achieve level 2c or above is broadly in line with the

national average but far fewer than average are likely to achieve the higher levels. In Year 1 standards are higher. In Year 1 standards in writing are at least in line with national expectations and standards in reading are above national expectations.

82. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly at the national expectation. Despite their initial limited communication skills, pupils achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 listen attentively in a variety of situations, such as whole-school assemblies and class question and answer sessions. Many are confident to express their ideas and speak with the clarity expected for their age as they take turns in conversations. Some pupils with English as an additional language have speech that is limited by lack of vocabulary and comprehension, which impacts on their confidence to speak in large groups. However, in smaller groupings, these pupils respond well to the effective support from the English language teacher, enabling them to gain confidence as speakers.
83. At this point, just over half way through the year, reading standards are above average for the age of the pupils in Year 1 but below average in Year 2. Not enough Year 2 pupils read accurately, fluently and with expression, particularly at the higher levels expected of the most able pupils. Pupils enjoy books and make use of phonic cues to help them read unfamiliar words. Comprehension skills are weak and few but the most able can make predictions or draw conclusions from what they read. The language in some of the reading books is outside the pupils' own experience. A few able pupils effectively correct themselves when what they read does not make sense and they make use of punctuation. Pupils in Year 1 are developing good reading habits and their attainment overall is above average for their age.
84. Writing standards are currently below average in Year 2 but at the national expectation in Year 1. Pupils in Year 2 write for an adequate range of purposes, including imaginative and factual accounts. For example, they can write stories, such as "Zippy Bus", using a story frame to help them with a beginning, middle and ending. They can describe what they want to be when they grow up, such as, "I want to be a policeman. I like to keep pupils safe." In history they can write simple comparisons between homes in the 1900s and the present day. Most pupils demonstrate an awareness of full stops and capital letters and the most able use them consistently and accurately. Few pupils demonstrate an awareness of direct speech or use speech marks in their writing. Only a few higher attaining pupils write at length with an adequate awareness of the reader, making use of interesting and descriptive vocabulary. Pupils form letters evenly and begin to join them when practising in regular, daily handwriting lessons. However, this learning is not yet consistently transferred to pupils' other work and handwriting is therefore a weakness throughout the school and presentation of work is often careless and untidy.
85. The quality of teaching in English is good across the school, although there are variations in teachers' skills. During the inspection, over half the lessons seen were good or better: none were unsatisfactory. The best lessons were those taught by permanent teachers and these ranged from good to excellent. An exceptional movement and drama lesson was seen in Year 2, based around the story of "Ma Liang and the Magic Brush". The teaching was excellent because the purpose and learning intentions were very clear. One activity led into the next at an excellent pace, with questions targeted at specific pupils enabling the more able to develop understanding of underlying meanings. Very good support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language enabled them to gain significant understanding of the various emotions experienced by the characters.
86. Most teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They give good emphasis to the teaching of phonics, which supports pupils' spelling skills. For example, in Year 1, pupils made good progress in their understanding of vowels as the middle letters in words beginning and ending with consonants. This was because the teacher used skilful questioning to develop pupils' knowledge of the construction and spelling of words, carefully varying her questions to meet the needs of all abilities. In a guided reading session in Year 2, the teacher successfully helped a group of more able pupils to improve the quality of their reading of direct speech. Through effective questioning, the pupils learnt to recognise that inverted commas mark the beginning and end of direct speech. By leading them to think about the characters and plot and the types of

voices the characters might have used, pupils developed a good level of expression when reading aloud.

87. Teachers provide good opportunities for a variety of writing such as stories, letters, lists and factual accounts. Pupils are helped to develop story structures by the use of story frames that help them to think about settings, characters and key events, such as those in the story of "Ma Liang and the Magic Brush". While there are some good opportunities in some classes to write in other subjects such as history and science, there is scope in other aspects of the curriculum to develop pupils' writing skills. There are some examples of computers being used to support spelling and writing, as was seen in a Year 1 phonics lesson, but such opportunities are also under-developed.
88. Handwriting skills are taught effectively in designated handwriting lessons. However, teachers do not expect the same standards in pupils' workbooks, in all classes, either in English or in other subjects. Whilst marking is effective in drawing pupils' attention to spelling and punctuation, it is less effective in guiding pupils' handwriting. Capital letters are frequently used in the middle of words and there is little evidence of the school's expected handwriting style in practice.
89. In a few lessons, learning is not sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils and this leads to under-achievement. In one lesson in Year 2, the pupils were given a set of sentences with some missing words. The higher attaining pupils quickly identified these from a given list and then had nothing to do, which led to some idle chatter and aimless wandering around the class. These pupils would have been more suitably challenged by composing sentences of their own or by being given an extension task. However, in the parallel Year 2 class and in one Year 1 class, teachers are careful to match work to the needs of all abilities so that all pupils are suitably challenged at appropriate levels. Pupils in these lessons are attentive and work with a good degree of intellectual effort and good levels of concentration.
90. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, often in small groups with a support teacher or learning assistant. Their individual needs are clearly identified and plans are followed carefully. This results in some good and excellent teaching, which is very well focused. Pupils themselves have a good knowledge of their own learning, recognising when their "little steps go faster." As a result of effective teaching and good support from the English language teacher and learning assistants, pupils with English as an additional language achieve well from a low baseline and make good progress in their acquisition of English.
91. The effectiveness of the school's literacy strategy is satisfactory. However, there are some discrepancies in practice, especially with regard to guided reading, which is not used consistently to develop reading skills. The school recognises this and has plans to review and revise its English policy and guidelines. In the main, the plenary sessions at the end of literacy lessons tend to be too short and are not used as effectively as they might be to reinforce teaching points and to encourage pupils to identify what they have learnt and to think about what they need to do next.
92. The leadership and management of English is good. The acting headteacher, who is currently leading the subject, has a clear vision for the subject's development. She has undertaken monitoring of teaching and has provided effective support for temporary teachers. Together with other members of the senior management team she has analysed test results carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses and to set targets for improvement. The assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory and further improvements are planned for reading records and for the assessment of writing, particularly for less experienced staff. Before the inspection the acting headteacher had already identified the need for teachers to challenge the most able pupils so that more can attain the higher levels in national tests.

MATHEMATICS

93. Standards of attainment in mathematics, as measured by the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2, were well below the national average and below average when compared to similar schools nationally. The percentage of children achieving the higher level 3 results was also significantly

below the national average. However, evidence gained from observing and talking to pupils at work in classrooms and from samples of pupils' previous work indicates that standards are currently higher than the previous year's test results would indicate. Standards in Year 2 are close to the national age-related expectations and are broadly similar to those at the last inspection. However, there is little evidence of attainment at the higher levels from the more able children. Standards of attainment in Year 1 are relatively higher. Inspection evidence indicates that most of the pupils in Year 1 are working at the levels expected for their age group and the higher attaining pupils are achieving above expected levels as a result of the planned extension activities used in mathematics lessons. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is varied but overall well below that typically expected. However, by the time they leave the reception class the majority have attained the expected Early Learning Goals. Inspection findings show that they make satisfactory achievement overall by the end of Year 2 but the average ability pupils and those with special educational needs progress well. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

94. In all year groups there is an appropriate emphasis on solving number problems. Pupils tackle these enthusiastically, often working very well in pairs and small groups. Pupils in Year 2 are able to add three two-digit numbers and explain a variety of methods they use to arrive at the answer. They are beginning to see mathematical patterns and to describe with some confidence their own methods of calculation. Some average and all higher attaining pupils are secure in using a variety of different strategies for calculation. In a Year 2 class, pupils were successful in collecting information on the weight of objects using three different categories. Pupils in Year 1 were confident when they were asked to add on in tens, with the higher attaining pupils challenged further by adding on twenties and thirties. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress as work is specifically planned for them and additional classroom support is targeted to assist their progress. Those with English as an additional language make gains in their learning as teachers take care to rephrase and develop their understanding of mathematical language. Pupils' work on shape, space and measures is at about the level expected by the age of seven.
95. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a third of lessons judged to be good; there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Where teaching is good, a range of strategies is used to support and extend the learning, such as the use of very good questioning to develop pupils' thinking. The oral work and mental calculation part of most lessons is the stronger element and this has a positive effect, not only on mathematics learning but also on pupils' language competence and is particularly beneficial for those pupils who have English as an additional language. Teachers' planning is generally sound for the four days each week that mathematics is taught and consistent in all classes, with the learning objective clearly defined. Pupils' learning is evaluated daily and recorded weekly. On the reverse of the planning sheets there are useful prompts such as notes on the strengths and weaknesses of individual and group achievement and areas to be addressed the following week. As teachers have become more competent with this format, during the previous term, these evaluations have become more precise and focused on what needs to be done next to ensure appropriate further learning takes place. The range of mathematical activities is generally appropriate and often challenging and pupils are encouraged to record the outcomes of their mathematical thinking. Despite this, the quality of the writing of numbers and pupils' overall presentation of work are not given sufficient attention by most teachers.
96. There are some weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons. The degree to which teachers successfully challenge the thinking of the higher attaining pupils varies between classes. In some classes, very effective extension activities are used, but, in others, the learning of the higher attaining pupils is not addressed effectively enough. Strategies for the teaching of more able pupils are too inconsistent to have a significant impact on standards of attainment. Sometimes activities are not effectively developed to extend learning opportunities. For example, in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were collecting information on the weight of different objects, opportunities to extend learning into a whole-class lesson on data handling were missed. In some classes the effective use of plenary sessions at the end of lessons are underdeveloped. Consequently, there is little referring back to the learning objectives and reviewing with pupils what has been learned at a sufficient depth.

97. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are generally good. Pupils listen attentively and enjoy learning. They answer questions and have the confidence to try out mental calculations. Pupils in both year groups work well in pairs and are willing to take turns. The management of pupils is generally good, including times when the use of practical activities means that there is a lot of movement around the classroom.
98. The curriculum is fully in place and the National Numeracy Strategy is making a satisfactory contribution to the raising of standards. There is, however, little evidence of numeracy being used effectively in other subjects in the curriculum. The school should question the wisdom of timetabling mathematics only on four days each week rather than five. Resources available for teaching the subject are satisfactory overall and the mathematical environment in the classrooms is good across the school. The computers are used regularly to develop understanding of concepts taught. Parents are able to see what is being taught from the information provided outside the classrooms and are spoken to individually if the teacher requires a pupil to practice some aspect of learning. Structures for setting homework are satisfactory, although their improvement is being currently addressed by staff as part of the school's development plan.
99. The role of the subject leader has improved since the last inspection and is now more fully developed and good overall. The subject leader has good subject knowledge. She attends courses to ensure that she is able to provide relevant information and has modelled lessons for the less experienced members of staff. She has led in-service training for the numeracy strategy and will be working with the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 for the rest of this year as part of her strategy to raise attainment. The senior management team has undertaken classroom monitoring of teaching and learning and used the results effectively to begin to improve provision. The subject leader, together with the special needs co-ordinator and the teacher co-ordinating the school's work for pupils who have English as an additional language, make very good use of assessment information from national tests and the Year 1 NFER tests that have been introduced recently. They have identified areas for further development in improving pupils' understanding of mathematical language and number patterns as well as their ability to solve money problems. These areas are being effectively addressed. There is a detailed action plan to highlight areas for improvement although it is not yet sufficiently linked to the school's targets for improvements in attainment. There is a subject policy and guidelines that now require some further updating.

SCIENCE

100. Standards of attainment in science, as reflected in the 2001 national teacher assessments, are slightly below the national average but are average when compared to similar schools nationally. In 2001, 86 per cent of pupils reached the national expectation, but the number of level 3 results attained by the school's more able pupils was below average. The school has invested much time and effort into improving science teaching and inspection evidence indicates that standards across the school are higher than last year's assessments would indicate. Standards of attainment in science are now broadly in line with the national expectation across the school, although there are variations within year groups. The great majority of pupils in Year 2 are attaining at the national expectation of level 2, although there is little evidence of higher attainment at level 3. Boys and girls attain similar results. Pupils who have English as an additional language attain in line with their peers and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Standards of attainment are above the national expectation in Year 1, with a significant number of pupils reaching higher-than-expected levels for pupils their age. Standards are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection.
101. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to undertake experiments and develop the skills of scientific enquiry. The least able pupils are well supported and achieve very well. Pupils for whom English is an additional language attain in line with their peers and they make good progress. Effective emphasis has been given to pupils talking about their scientific learning. The youngest pupils are able to observe accurately and can describe their findings in simple terms. Pupils' work shows

that they regularly make predictions and, with help, begin to test them out. Pupils' scientific knowledge is developing well in all aspects of the subject. In a Year 1 class, pupils were able to sort a variety of natural, processed and man-made objects into different groups. Pupils could describe the objects effectively in terms of the materials used and talk at length about the reasons for inclusion in a particular group. Higher attaining pupils were able to suggest different and more complex sub-groups and were able to compare and contrast the suitability of objects on the table for the new groups. Pupils' work on light showed good quality pictorial recording of electrical circuits, with the beginnings of diagrammatic conventions being used. Higher attaining pupils were able to justify, in writing, the reasons why shiny objects cannot shine in the dark if no light is present. Pupils in Year 2 compare and contrast different utensils that use electricity and understand the effects that electricity have. Samples of past work show that pupils have explored natural materials using a variety of senses and recorded findings well. In a lesson observed in Year 2, all pupils successfully explored the effects of pushing and pulling forces on different objects using scientific vocabulary with confidence. However, some higher attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged to achieve at level 3, despite good resources being available.

102. The quality of teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. This has a direct impact on the quality of the learning of the average and least able pupils particularly, in all classes. Teachers plan their lessons well, applying good subject knowledge. Learning intentions are clear and well communicated to pupils. Teachers use clear explanations with a high level of scientific vocabulary and questions are used well to get pupils to think for themselves. In a Year 1 lesson, good teaching enabled pupils to use their own ideas effectively as they explored the range of different materials and worked out sensible groupings. The theme of encouraging independent learning is well developed in Year 2 also, as pupils actively explored the effects of pushing and pulling forces. There is some inconsistency in the level of challenge offered to higher attaining pupils. In one lesson in Year 2, some higher attaining pupils could compare and contrast the effects of the different surfaces that their toy cars were travelling along. However, they were not challenged effectively by the planned activity to organise the testing of their predictions, measure outcomes or explain what had been found out at an appropriate level which would have enabled attainment at level 3. There is little evidence of information and communication technology being effectively used to aid science teaching.
103. In all lessons seen, pupils throughout the school enjoy their work and have a very positive attitude to science. Pupils listen well during introductions and ask sensible questions. They like to know what they are being expected to learn and are well motivated. It is particularly impressive how well pupils organise themselves into working groups and work together. Pupils are very effectively able to explore their own ideas, listen to each other attentively and collaborate well in the tasks planned for them. Pupils with special needs and those who have English as an additional language are well supported and very well integrated into all aspects of lessons.
104. Subject leadership of science is broadly sound and is being over-seen by the acting headteacher as it has been disrupted by the current staffing difficulties, although, some improvements have been made since the last inspection. The acting headteacher has a good informal understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The school has ensured that teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and that resources are of good quality and well used, but detailed monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the subject or of pupils' attainment has not taken place. The curriculum is sound but there is a lack of sufficient guidance within the school's curriculum planning to enable teachers to meet the needs of pupils with higher-than-average prior attainment consistently. Assessment in the subject is satisfactory and teachers generally have a clear idea of current attainment.

ART AND DESIGN

105. Two art and design lessons were seen during the inspection. Other evidence was gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays in corridors and classrooms. Discussions also took place with teachers and pupils. Teachers' planning was examined. Pupils' art and design work is of a high standard and exceeds that expected nationally at the end of Year 2. Pupils, including those

with special educational needs or English as an additional language, achieve well as they move up through Year 1 and Year 2. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection and the quality of pupils' work in this subject continues to be a strength of the school.

106. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of colour. They demonstrate good skills in colour mixing, with paint, and know that a new colour is created when two colours are combined. They skilfully mix colours to produce shades and tones. A good example of this was seen in self-portraits, where pupils had carefully observed and mixed colours to create accurate skin tones. In a Year 2 lesson, one pupil was heard to express a preference for "the warm yellow" when asked for a choice of colour. Pupils are secure in using a range of techniques in both two- and three-dimensional work. They work with a range of media, including pastels, watercolours, crayons, clay and felts to make drawings, paintings, artefacts and collage. They also know about and appreciate the work of famous artists such as Vincent Van Gogh. Year 1 pupils competently produce their own work imaginatively, using similar brush strokes and colours observed in the artist's work. Pupils in Year 2 successfully create gummed paper images of rockets, birds and aeroplanes, overlaying layers in the style of Henri Matisse. Pupils are becoming adept at techniques such as smudging and blending when using pastels. They show a satisfactory awareness of pattern and the influence of other cultures in a topic on China. Attractive effects are achieved in this work, for example, in observational pastel drawings of Chinese parasols and Chinese writing. Good skills of observation are shown in still life drawings of a musical instrument (sitar) executed in pencil.
107. The quality of teaching is good. It is evident from observing pupils in lessons and from the good work displayed around the school that pupils enjoy art and design and take pride in their results. In the lessons seen, techniques were taught well and built effectively on pupils' previous learning. Pupils were given a good choice of media and a good choice of ways in which to respond to the stimulus of music. In the good lesson seen in Year 1, the teacher very efficiently gave feedback to pupils about how well they were doing and, by good intervention, encouraged pupils to reflect and improve their work.
108. Good cross-curricular links are made between art and most other subjects. Good work was seen where pupils illustrated literature in paintings and collage with some attractive large-scale friezes, such as "Handa's Surprise" and "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." Some evidence was seen of computers being used for art and design work linked to science. However, there is scope to develop this further.
109. The leadership and management of art and design are satisfactory. The subject leader has recently taken on the responsibility and is enthusiastic about the subject. There is a clear plan for developing art in the school and this is in the early stages of being implemented. The subject leader ensures resources are available and supports staff when they are concerned about trying new ideas and techniques. A good lead is given to staff on the display of pupils' work and maintaining the aesthetic appearance of the school. The school recognises the need to further develop the scheme of work, which will ensure greater continuity and progression of skills and techniques. There is a framework for the assessment of pupils' progress but it is too recently developed to have had sufficient impact.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. There were limited opportunities to observe design and technology teaching during the week of the inspection. Judgements on standards of pupils' attainment are therefore also based on discussion with pupils outside of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and displays around the school.
111. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally for pupils aged 7. Attainment is high in the designing and making aspects of the subject but the limited attention given to the development of pupils' skills in evaluating their work constrains learning in some classes.

112. The quality of the teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good and was good overall. At its best, in a Year 2 class, pupils designed and made a kite, which they were able to test out in the wind at the end of the lesson. The teacher modelled the use of subject-specific language to ensure that all pupils understood why they had chosen certain materials. The very effective questioning ensured that they knew what to look for when testing their kites. The discussion at the end of the lesson enabled pupils to see the progress they had made. This feature of teaching which can help pupils evaluate what they have made, is inconsistently adopted across the school. Pupils enjoy the subject and show pride in their achievements.
113. The school does have a scheme of work for the subject but this requires updating. The subject is taught within an integrated topic day. However, the specific time allocation for the subject, the guidance for teachers as to which parts of the curriculum will be covered in each topic and how pupils will progressively develop their skills year by year are often unclear. There is a framework for the assessment of pupils' progress but it is too recently developed to have had sufficient impact.
114. As a result of the current staffing difficulties, the subject leader has only recently been appointed and as yet has had little opportunity to have an impact on the development of the subject. She has written a sound and detailed action plan for improvement which she is beginning to implement. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and have recently been reorganised. The use of ICT within the subject is under-developed. Within the lessons, there is appropriate attention given to their safety when handling tools.

GEOGRAPHY

115. It was only possible to observe three geography lessons during the inspection. In these lessons, standards were broadly in line with national expectations. Other evidence gained from the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils in Year 2 indicates that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, achieve well in geography. This is a similar picture to that found at the previous inspection.
116. Pupils in Year 1 identify features such as different types of houses in Britain and around the world. They are gaining understanding that people make use of materials around them when building homes. They are beginning to recognise the effects of climate and why, for example, people in Thailand build houses on stilts to protect their homes from flooding. By the end of Year 2, most pupils demonstrate awareness of localities beyond their own. For example, in a topic on China, they describe human and physical features of the country. They are keen to answer questions posed by the teacher, demonstrating their knowledge that Beijing is the capital city and naming some foods eaten by the Chinese. Their map skills are developing well and most are able to answer questions using maps to locate cities, rivers and "The Great Wall" of China.
117. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy learning. The teaching motivates pupils, who apply themselves well and show much interest in their work. The overall quality of teaching is good and ranges from satisfactory to very good. In the very good lesson seen in Year 1, there was very good "team teaching" by the class teacher and the teacher from the Vale School, who took turns in challenging the pupils by asking demanding questions. Both teachers had very secure subject knowledge, which was demonstrated in very good explanations. In the good lesson seen in Year 2, the teacher effectively reviewed earlier work to reinforce pupils' existing knowledge of China before moving learning forward. Good use was made of a visiting Chinese parent to give pupils firsthand knowledge of Chinese writing and how Chinese children are taught to write in school. Pupils were fascinated as they learnt that there is no alphabet in Chinese and that children have to learn every word in the language. They showed great amazement as the parent used a brush and ink to paint the words "mountains, sun, rain and horse" as Chinese characters. This contributed well to their spiritual and cultural development. In another lesson in Year 1, teaching was satisfactory but less successful because the pace was rather slow and too much time was wasted in dealing with minor interruptions.

118. Some use is made of information and communication technology as, for example, when pupils in Year 2 access the Internet to find out information about China. However, there is greater scope for its use in recording and presenting work.
119. The leadership of the subject has been adversely affected by the current staffing difficulties, although the headteacher and acting deputy have worked hard to temporarily maintain provision in addition to their other work. The leadership of the school recognise that this is unsatisfactory and an area for improvement. The subject is taught as part of an integrated topic day and it is unclear how much time is devoted to geography in each topic. There is no detailed guidance or scheme of work for geography. There is a framework for the assessment of pupils' progress but it is too recently developed to have had sufficient impact.

HISTORY

120. As no history was taught during the week of the inspection, judgements concerning standards are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays of pupils' past work around the school and discussions with pupils themselves. The scrutiny also included pupils for whom English is an additional language and a sample of pupils with special educational needs.
121. By the end of Year 2, standards of attainment in history are in line with those expected nationally. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. The school's curriculum map shows that pupils learn about familiar people and events from their own past. They also learn about the lives of famous people from the past and are able to understand why they acted as they did. For example, pupils have learned about the lives of Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks and how each made her own contribution to the removal of racial intolerance. Discussions with pupils and examination of their writing showed that they had understood what had motivated both women. Pupils in Year 2 are also able to compare and contrast life in present-day Wood Green with that lived in the 1920s. A good range of photographic resources and artefacts from the past helps to ensure that pupils understand both the similarities and the differences between the past and the present and can present their findings effectively. The quality of pupils' writing in history was generally within level 2 with the most able pupils attaining at level 2a. Indications are that history is well used to aid the further development of pupils' literacy skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is little evidence of the effective use of information and communication technology within the subject.
122. The leadership of the subject has been adversely affected by the current staffing difficulties, although the acting deputy has worked hard to temporarily maintain provision in addition to her other work. The leadership of the school recognise that this is unsatisfactory and an area for improvement. History is taught across the school as part of an integrated topic. It is unclear from the school's planning documents how much time is effectively devoted to history within each topic and how pupils' skills will progress as they move through the school. The monitoring and evaluation of the subject are under-developed. There is a framework for the assessment of pupils' progress but it is too recently developed to have had sufficient impact.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. At the time of the previous inspection standards of attainment in information and communication technology were judged to be below the national expectation and curriculum provision and resources for the subject were judged to be unsatisfactory. There is now sufficient hardware and software to teach the curriculum and the school has plans to extend this further. There are two computers in most classrooms and there is a designated one for special educational needs use and another for the use of pupils from The Vale school. Good use is also made of The Vale School expertise in this subject.
124. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below national expectations by the end of Year 2. There has been some improvement to the school's provision for the subject but it has not been systematic enough to ensure an improvement in standards. For example, in Year 2, pupils have been taught to use paint and draw programs in the context of art but there is a lack of evidence of their capabilities across the whole range of the programme of study. However, in both Years 1 and 2, pupils are able to use the keyboard with growing confidence, using the mouse to control the cursor and click on the selected items on the screen. They can drag items across the screen and use text to produce lists and record their work. When given the opportunity pupils are interested in the subject and are eager learners. They co-operate well and share their experience and expertise. Pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language make effective use of the software.
125. No direct teaching of ICT was observed and consequently no judgement on the quality of teaching can be made. Teachers' planning does not ensure that the knowledge and skills required to be developed by the end of Year 2 are systematically taught. Teachers' planning for other subjects

does not always identify how the use of ICT in is to be developed and the use of computers to support work in different subjects is inconsistent and varies widely between classes. Some use is made of the Internet in some classes but overall it is under-developed although all computers are connected. At present, no completed records of pupils' experience and competences are available.

126. The acting headteacher and acting deputy are overseeing ICT until a permanent appointment of subject leader can be made. A detailed action plan identifies the six key priorities with clear targets for the end of this year and next. The school has successfully bid for and received funding from the national grid for learning (NGfL) and will be receiving further funding shortly when it will be able to extend its resources further. The acting-headteacher has recognised that teachers' confidence and skills are variable across the school but has arranged for all staff to undergo systematic subject specific training, which has already begun.

MUSIC

127. The school's current staffing difficulties have resulted in a lack of qualified musicians within the school. Despite this, the school has maintained the standards found at the previous inspection. All teachers successfully take their own classes for music, and singing is well integrated into the day-to-day life of the school. By the end of Year 2, standards are in line with those expected nationally.
128. Only a few lessons could be seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection but the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good overall. This good teaching enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, to make good gains in their learning especially in listening and appraising music. Pupils perform readily with a variety of un-tuned percussion instruments but have less experience in composing their own music. In one Year 1 lesson, pupils named a wide variety of instruments, handled them with care and used them correctly. They enjoyed playing them and were quick to appreciate the differences between high and low and loud and soft sounds. In a Year 2 lesson exploring the use of long and short sounds, the teaching encouraged pupils to solve musical problems using their own ideas and effectively introduced the idea of musical notation by using handclaps. Pupils responded with considerable enthusiasm in all that was asked of them. Music is often used effectively as part of the teaching of other subjects. For example, in an art lesson using the paintings of Van Gogh as stimuli, music was sensitively used to highlight the mood of the pictures and encourage pupils to reflect on their feelings before beginning their own art-work.
129. Pupils sing well both in class and in assemblies. The music chosen for assemblies enhances the music programme of the school. Music is well integrated into day-to-day life of the school. In one small scale example, a teacher sang her request to the class to be attentive to which the class replied in song that they were listening. In another class during a personal and social education lesson, the teacher was using song to help pupils match the expression on people's faces with their feelings. Again with a small group of pupils with special educational needs, the teacher was using song interactively to teach alphabetical order, letter shapes and initial sounds. On a larger scale, music from different cultures is very effectively integrated into all the school's topics on festivals from the wide variety of cultures represented in the school. There are regular Christmas and summer concerts which are very well attended by parents and other members of the community. Overall, music make a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
130. The subject is soundly led and the school has an effective policy document to guide the subject's development to ensure that the good provision in the nursery and reception classes is appropriately built upon. There is a simple curriculum overview which gives appropriate emphasis to all aspects of the subject and clarifies national standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection and the school intends to refine it further. Resources are satisfactory overall. There is an extensive range of un-tuned percussion instruments but the school has identified that more tuned instruments are needed. Pupils' parents effectively supplement the school's

resources, especially when music from other cultures is being studied. ICT is not used in relation to the subject. There is a framework for the assessment of pupils' progress but it is too recently developed to have had sufficient impact.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Standards of attainment in physical education are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. During the last inspection it was stated that, although pupils were meeting the national expectations, the production of a scheme of work to guide teaching was a priority. This is now in place and is effectively used to ensure lessons are well planned and support the development of skills in all parts of the school. The curriculum is now effectively balanced and covers games, gymnastics and dance. Dance is often taught as part of the festivals and celebrations that are a feature of the school's multi-cultural provision. The subject make a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
132. The quality of teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. In a dance/drama lesson pupils were able to express emotions through movement and when working with partners showed a high level of concentration as they mirrored each other's actions. In a gymnastics lesson pupils worked hard to develop a series of movements for travelling along benches. In the lessons judged excellent or very good, pupils were encouraged to develop their thinking through specific questioning and also to respond confidently to questions such as "What are the most important things we have to remember when doing a forward roll?" In all lessons there is good range of warm-up activities as well as cooling down activities for the end. Pupils with special educational needs, including those from The Vale School, are effectively included with appropriate support when required.
133. All pupils enjoyed their lessons and most responded well to the teachers' expectations. The teachers showed a high level of skill in managing those pupils with behaviour difficulties, but, in a very small number of lessons, this limited the quality of performance skills.
134. The new subject leader only took over her role this term and is already beginning to have an impact as she talks to members of staff about their needs in relation to the subject. However, as yet the role is underdeveloped and there is little effective monitoring or evaluation of provision taking place. There is a good range of equipment to support work in games and gymnastics, and health and safety in the subject is addressed within the staff handbook. There is a framework for the assessment of pupils' progress but it is too recently developed to have had sufficient impact.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. There has been little improvement in the provision of religious education or in the standards of pupils' attainment since the last inspection and this is unsatisfactory. The school is not meeting statutory requirements in relation to religious education.
136. There were no opportunities to observe religious education lessons as the subject was not timetabled during this inspection, a situation similar to that at the last inspection. Evidence has been drawn from assemblies, talking to pupils, discussions with staff and an examination of photographs, school planning documents and the very limited amount of pupils' work.
137. It is clear from these that religious education is not taught regularly and that pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Aspects relating to social and moral development are taught through assemblies and personal, social and health education and pupils achieve very well in these aspects. Assemblies and their "follow-up" sessions are also used effectively to develop pupils' knowledge of celebrations and festivals associated with religions and cultures such as Harvest, Diwali, Christmas and Eid-il-futr and Chinese New Year. However, these on their own are insufficient to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the religious practices and beliefs, as expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education, by the age of seven.
138. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because the school has failed to identify weaknesses and rectify the issues raised during the previous inspection. The school

needs to recognise that there is a clear distinction between school assemblies and religious education, which is a statutory subject in its own right and separate from the National Curriculum.

139. A teacher has recently been identified to lead the subject on a temporary basis and she has formulated an action plan to begin to address some of the issues. However, this has not yet had time to affect standards. There is now an outline plan of what should be taught in each year group to guide teachers in planning work. There is scope for this to be the basis of more detailed guidance or a scheme of work to ensure the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus are met. The assessment of pupils' work in the subject is consequently unsatisfactory and the use of information and communication technology is undeveloped.