

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROBERT BLAIR PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Islington, London N7

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100422

Acting Headteacher: Ms C Loftus

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Wotherspoon  
22199

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 November, 2002

Inspection number: 246058

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Brewery Road  
Islington  
London  
Postcode: N7 9QJ

Telephone number: 020 7607 4115

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs B Riddell

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22199	Mrs J Wotherspoon	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9537	Ms C Marden	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20832	Mr M Galowalia	Team inspector	Education inclusion, including racial equality English as an additional language Science Design and technology Geography	
27426	Mr T Aldridge	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10827	Mr M Marjoram	Team inspector	English History Physical education	How well is the school led and managed
15600	Mr C Richardson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Information and communication technology	The work of the language and communication resource

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Robert Blair Primary School is situated in the middle of an area of light industry. Low socio-economic features are reflected in the number of pupils eligible for free schools meals, which at 55 per cent is well above the national average. The school population has grown since the last inspection and is now above average with approximately 300 boys and girls aged between three and eleven. For the first time this year, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Pupils have full-time provision in the nursery and transfer to reception in September or January depending on the date of their birthday. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low, especially in communication, language and literacy. A significant proportion of pupils start school with low levels of English. A high proportion of pupils (almost half) come from ethnic minority groups and speak English as an additional language. This figure has doubled since the last inspection. The main languages are Bengali, Turkish, Somali and Cantonese, but overall 29 different languages are spoken by pupils at the school. Some of these pupils arrive at the school at various times during the year and midway through their school career. Over 100 pupils are supported through funding from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. Although the numbers joining and leaving the school at different times of the year are not huge, there is a cumulative effect. Almost a third of pupils in the main school have been identified as having special educational needs. Their needs are wide ranging, but include moderate and specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical needs. Five of these pupils have statements of special educational need. In addition, the school makes provision for 26 pupils in a local education authority unit - the Language and Communication Resource (LCR) - who have statements for speech and communication difficulties. Taken together, the figures for pupils with special educational needs is above the national average, and for pupils with statements it is well above average. It is part of the school's philosophy to integrate the pupils from the LCR as much as possible. In common with many schools in the London area, the school has found it difficult to recruit permanent staff and there has been a high turnover of temporary teaching staff. At the time of the inspection, several vacancies were filled by temporary appointments and teachers who are technically unqualified because they trained overseas. Two class teachers are new to the profession. The headteacher is on maternity leave and the deputy headteacher is the acting headteacher until her return. The school is involved in a large number of initiatives through its membership of EPIC (Education Partners in Islington and Camden Excellence in Cities Action Zone), which provides additional funding for projects to improve the curriculum and raise pupils' standards.

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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education with strengths in several areas. Teaching is good overall but has inconsistencies which reflect the high turnover of staff. The school is led and managed well and there is a strong team spirit and commitment to further improvement that is shared by the whole school community. Standards are low in English and mathematics in comparison with all schools but are close to those of schools in similar circumstances. Pupils achieve soundly during their time in the school. The strong ethos of care and positive environment for learning ensures that pupils from a wide range of backgrounds are integrated well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Cares very well for pupils and creates a very good ethos for learning, where all pupils are valued as individuals
- Provides very well for pupils in the LCR
- Good leadership from senior staff sets a clear direction for further improvements
- Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage
- Strong provision for moral and social development fosters very good relationships and behaviour
- Gives pupils a very wide range of learning opportunities outside of lessons

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

- Standards attained in English, mathematics, science and religious education
- Consistency in the quality of teaching, particularly in the use of assessment information when planning for different ability groups
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress in the foundation subjects
- The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring the curriculum
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997 when it was judged to be an 'improving school'. Most of the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed soundly. However, although schemes of work are in place and systems for assessing pupils' progress are developing, there is more to do to ensure that planning caters for mixed-age classes. Subject co-ordinators' roles are at different stages of development as a result of continued staffing changes. Teaching has improved, the curriculum is broader, and provision for pupils' personal development is stronger than at the last inspection. However, there is more to do to raise standards. On balance, the school has made satisfactory improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	E	E	C
mathematics	D	E*	E	C
science	D	E	D	B

**Key**

well above average      A

above average            B

average                    C

below average            D

well below average      E

very low                    E\*

The table shows that test results are frequently below or well below national figures in all three subjects. The fall of 2001 has been redressed this year. The gradual improvement, especially in the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels, has been restored. Standards are close to those achieved by pupils in schools with similar circumstances. Standards in the current Year 6 are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. However, pupils are on course to achieve the challenging targets set for them and the improvement of 2002 is likely to be sustained. Standards in ICT are rising but standards in religious education have not improved much since the previous inspection. Standards seen in other subjects are broadly in line with the levels expected. However, pupils' skills in writing are weak and this often limits their ability to show what they know and understand in other subjects. Standards are good in art and design and pupils' singing is good. Test results in Year 2 were very low in reading, writing and mathematics in 2002 and were in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country. Inspection evidence suggests that results are likely to be better at the end of this year, if the school can maintain pupils' current level of good learning. Pupils start school with low levels of attainment. Despite making good progress, few are likely to attain the standards expected by the end of the reception year.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and the activities on offer. They listen well and take part with enthusiasm. They usually work hard and concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils conform well to the school's high expectations and simple rules, but behaviour slips where teaching is not strong. At play and in assembly, behaviour is very good. Pupils say there is no bullying. There have been no exclusions. They are exceptionally polite and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show a high level of respect for each other. They are patient and usually kind to each other. Relationships are a strength of the school.

	Pupils genuinely show concern for each other. Pupils from all ethnic groups work and play well together. Pupils could be given more opportunity to use their initiative and independence in learning.
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Aspect	Comment
Attendance	Satisfactory. Figures are slightly above the national average and have improved year on year. Punctuality has improved significantly since the last inspection and there is now very little lateness.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	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 is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Unsatisfactory and poor teaching was seen in a small proportion of lessons in Years 1 and 2, where all staff are relatively new to the school. Teaching was good in the Foundation Stage, where staff work well together to give pupils a bright and stimulating environment. A good range of activities ensures that children learn to get on well with each other and gradually increase their independence. Teaching is good in English and in mathematics. Where it is best, activities are matched closely to pupils' different learning needs. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught soundly, but pupils' skills in ICT are not practised regularly through other subjects. In the main, teachers manage pupils well. There is a strong ethos in the school in which teachers value individuals. Very good relationships between adults and pupils lead to a positive environment for learning. Pupils concentrate well and work hard. However, pupils' rate of learning is constrained at times by weaknesses in their prior knowledge and poor recording and writing skills. Although teachers plan lessons satisfactorily there is scope to improve the way that assessment information is used to adapt activities to take account of gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. The teaching of pupils in the LCR is very good. These pupils are integrated very well. Support staff are deployed well to give pupils with special educational needs effective help.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented soundly. A very good number and range of clubs, visits, including annual residential trips, and visitors make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and broaden their experiences. The arts are promoted strongly.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream	Good. Pupils make good progress towards their individual targets. They receive good support from learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the LCR	The provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties is very good. This is a reflection of the very good and appropriate teaching and support they receive.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Specialist support from the designated teacher is good for pupils in the early stages of learning English. Teachers give pupils sound support in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for social and moral development is a particular strength. Spiritual and cultural development are good and this is an improvement from the previous inspection. However, religious education could make a greater contribution to these two elements of pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares	Good. Pupils are looked after very well on a day-to-day basis. The school is

for its pupils	working on improving procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in all areas of the curriculum.
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## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. A strong lead from the headteacher with good support from senior staff sets clear priorities for improvement. Many subject leaders are new to their roles and yet to have a significant influence on developments. The shared commitment to improvement is strong with good teamwork between all staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and are supportive of the school. They have become increasingly involved in setting the school's priorities and in monitoring the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Regular and systematic monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' achievements has helped senior staff to identify the key areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Systematic procedures ensure that finances are carefully targeted to the school's priorities. The school actively seeks additional funding for initiatives that will enrich the provision for the pupils and makes good use of such grants. The school applies the principles of best value for money satisfactorily.

There is a good number of teaching and support staff. A high turnover of teaching staff and difficulties in appointing permanent teachers has affected the continuity of pupils' learning. Senior staff have worked hard to minimise the impact of this by giving teachers new to the school a good level of support, guidance and training. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, with additional specialist rooms and plans to develop a library. The space for pupils' play is small. The roof leaks when it rains, causing puddles in the top corridor. Resources have improved significantly since the last inspection and now all subjects are at least satisfactorily resourced.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• The school expects them to work hard and they are making good progress</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• The school helps pupils develop into mature and responsible people</li> <li>• The staff are approachable when parents have queries or problems</li> <li>• The pupils behave well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents commented that homework is not given consistently</li> </ul>

Although the number of returned questionnaire was small (77), parents were full of praise for the school. Parents at the meeting with inspectors were also positive about the school's work. In particular, they appreciate the way in which all pupils are integrated and taught to get along with each other. Inspectors endorse these views. The school enjoys a satisfactory partnership with parents. Although the school works hard to keep parents informed and seeks ways of encouraging the involvement of parents from all sections of the community, there is sometimes a limited response.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Many pupils start in nursery with very low levels of skill in communication, language and literacy. Skills in mathematics, in children's knowledge and understanding of the world and in their personal and social development are similarly low. Although many children make good progress in nursery and reception classes, few are likely to achieve the early learning goals in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, hand/eye co-ordination and creative development by the end of reception. Many are still well below expectations in communication, language and literacy. However, in personal and social development, pupils make greater gains and roughly half are likely to meet expectations at the end of reception.
2. At the end of Year 2, National Curriculum test results were very low in reading, writing and mathematics in 2002. They fell well below those of similar schools as well as being in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country. Although the school's results have been consistently well below average at Year 2, this represented a dip. This was not unexpected because a significant proportion of the pupils have learning difficulties but their achievement was also affected by a high turnover of teaching staff. Teachers assessed pupils' levels of science knowledge and understanding as well below average. Inspection evidence suggest that results are likely to be better at the end of the year, particularly if the school can maintain pupils' current level of good learning.
3. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 have been below or well below the national figures in all years since the previous inspection in 1997. In that year they were below the national figures in all three subjects. Since then, results have risen gradually but dipped significantly in 2001. However, there has been an inconsistent pattern of results across the three subjects and in the results of boys and girls. The drop in results in 2001 has been redressed to some extent in 2002, although the school did not reach the targets set for these pupils in English and mathematics where results remained well below average. In science, results were just below average. However, of note, is the increasing proportion of pupils who attained levels above those expected for their age. Comparisons with other schools of a similar type show that results are average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
4. Standards of work seen during inspection show that the improvement in results of 2002 is likely to be sustained, although standards remain low in English and mathematics. A significant proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. In particular, skills in writing are weak and this frequently slows the pace at which pupils work and limits their ability to show what they know and understand in other subjects.
5. Good use of assessment information in the core subjects of English and mathematics is helping the school to focus attention on those areas that need improvement. Results in Year 6 last year suggest that teachers are more aware of the need to challenge pupils with the potential to achieve above average standards. However, the instability in staffing suffered over recent years has hampered the school's continued progress, and affected pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Another factor affecting overall achievement is the proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at various times. In addition, an increasing proportion of pupils join school with low skills in English, both in nursery and in other year groups. The local authority's analysis of pupils' results from Year 2 to Year 6 indicates that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress during that time.

6. Standards in speaking and listening are sound because, throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in many areas of the curriculum. Pupils express their views confidently in circle time, during lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and in subjects such as history. Standards in reading are well below average, with many pupils in Year 2 still unable to recognise many words or use a range of strategies to decode unknown words. In Years 3 to 6 standards remain well below average but many pupils are beginning to develop the skills necessary to ensure some success. Some pupils talk enthusiastically about their reading choices, about different authors and the types of books that they enjoy. The development of pupils' skills in using a library is hampered by the absence of a library in the school at present. However, this deficit will be addressed when the plans for a new library come to fruition. Writing standards are well below average. A small proportion attains standards that are sound in Year 2. Sentences are well structured and punctuation is used appropriately. Standards of spelling are unsatisfactory and remain a weakness throughout the school. By Year 6, pupils are introduced to an increasing range of styles of writing, but the pace of their writing is often slow and pupils rarely write at length. Basic grammar is generally correct and pupils' handwriting is neat.
7. Standards in mathematics are well below average. In each year a small proportion of pupils attain the standards expected for the pupils' ages. However, a larger proportion works at levels below this. Pupils are being taught strategies for carrying out calculations but often have too little time to practise these in depth in lessons. This is partly because lessons are short and because pupils work at a slow pace when recording their work. Even by Year 6, many pupils do not always have essential number facts at their fingertips to help them work quickly.
8. Standards in science are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Pupils are achieving soundly and increasing their knowledge of scientific processes at a simple level. However, standards in investigative skills, planning tests, recording observations and drawing conclusions are weak.
9. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are rising and are similar to the levels expected for pupils' ages. This is an improvement on the standards reported at the last inspection. However, although ICT skills are improving at a good rate now that pupils have regular access to the computer suite, pupils have too few opportunities to apply these skills in other subjects to reinforce and consolidate their learning. Standards in religious education have not improved much since the previous inspection and pupils' achievement is affected by weaknesses in literacy skills. Religious education has not been a focus for development and the introduction of a new syllabus this term has not yet had time to make an impact on standards.
10. Standards seen in other subjects are broadly in line with the levels expected. However, where pupils have to rely on their writing skills to convey what they know, standards are lower. Pupils can talk about and achieve soundly in developing the knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history and geography but their writing skills are poor and this slows the rate at which they can work. Since the last inspection, standards in design and technology and geography have improved to a satisfactory level that is broadly as expected for pupils' ages. Pupils now achieve satisfactorily in these subjects whereas at the last inspection their progress was judged as unsatisfactory. Standards are good in art and design. Standards in music are similar to the levels expected but pupils' singing is good.
11. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. In withdrawal groups, and when being closely supported within class, pupils are provided with good levels of help from the learning support assistants. In the main, teachers give pupils suitable levels of work. In the LCR, very good provision with teaching and support from specialist staff ensures pupils make very good progress. Pupils

who speak English as an additional language and speak little or no English on entry into school are supported soundly in their classes. Targeted pupils receive regular and well-focused support from a specialist teacher and at such times make good progress.

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

12. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have good attitudes to learning. Together with the very good relationships these features contribute much to pupils' achievement.
13. Pupils behave very well in all aspects of school life. They are exceptionally polite and go out of their way to help visitors by opening the door for them or asking if they need any help. Pupils play happily together at break times and move sensibly around the school. In lessons, pupils' very good behaviour contributes to the calm working atmosphere that pervades the school; the only exception to this is in one Years 1/2 class where the teaching is not always effective. Pupils' interruptions in this class affected the learning of others as the teacher had to keep stopping to deal with them. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
14. Attendance has improved steadily over the last three years and is satisfactory and was just above the national average last year. The school's efforts to improve punctuality have also been effective. Punctuality has improved significantly since the last inspection and there is now very little lateness.
15. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are excited by activities such as carrying out an experiment in a science lesson. They listen attentively to the teacher and are keen to take part in the lesson by answering questions and quickly settling down to individual or group work. They usually work hard throughout the lesson, often being totally engrossed in their work. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the LCR, are well integrated into lessons and into pupils' play. Pupils are patient with each other and frequently show their appreciation of one another's efforts with spontaneous applause. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities available and many take the opportunity to join one of them. During the inspection the choir performance in assembly was enthusiastic and confident, giving pleasure to all those present.
16. Relationships within the school community are very good. Pupils genuinely show care and concern for each other. They respect each other's right to express opinions, listening with interest to different pupils' views in class discussions. By Year 6 pupils are able to assess each other's work in dance and make helpful suggestions how the performance could be improved. The degree of racial harmony is commendable with pupils from all ethnic groups playing and working together effectively. The relationships between the staff and the pupils are also very good and make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Staff are always supportive and praise pupils' efforts even if the answer is not correct. The very high level of respect teachers have for the pupils is fundamental to pupils maturing into good citizens. Pupils have confidence in themselves and know they are valued as people. Pupils are happy to take on responsibility, for example helping clear the plates at lunchtime, but their independent learning skills are not well developed because teachers do not provide enough opportunities to develop them in lessons

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

17. Teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory with good features. There was a greater proportion of lessons, nearly two-thirds, in which teaching was good during this inspection. The quality of teaching was good in the Foundation Stage, and good in English, mathematics, ICT and art and design. These are the subjects where the school has invested much of its effort in training and supporting staff, and the impact can be seen in the quality achieved. The specialist teaching of pupils from the LCR is

very good, and for pupils who speak English as an additional language it is good. Since this accounted for the majority of the lessons seen, the proportion of lessons where teaching was good outweighed those that were satisfactory or had weaknesses. Teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in a small proportion of lessons (3 per cent) and these were all in Years 1 and 2 where the teachers are new to the school, new to teaching or new to the country. Teaching is satisfactory overall in those years where the school is supporting the teachers with planning and additional teaching support.

18. Teaching in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception class) is good. It is consistently good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class with good features. Staff in the nursery work well together to create a warm, welcoming, calm atmosphere with consistent and well-organised routines. This helps the children to settle well. The environment is bright and stimulating with plenty to do. Despite having a long day, nursery children are kept fully occupied through carefully planned activities which ensure they have a continuous learning experience. Overall, teachers have a good understanding of the needs of children in the Foundation Stage. Activities are well planned and firmly based on the early learning goals although there are different approaches to planning and assessment in the nursery and reception. The development of pupils' personal, social and emotional needs has a high priority and pupils gain increasing independence and confidence in the reception class. All staff work very closely together and provide good role models in their relationships with each other and with pupils. Sensitive but firm management helps pupils to relate to others and to develop good attitudes towards learning. Activities are stimulating. Daily notes help to build up a picture of how each child is developing and this information is used well to ensure activities build on pupils' learning. Activities to develop pupils' communication and language skills are well planned and stimulating with plenty of opportunities to speak and listen to others. More could be done to develop the writing skills of the more able pupils in the reception class. Interesting and imaginative activities stimulate the development of pupils' mathematical skills. There is a good balance of direct teaching and play activities that promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Plenty of opportunities to investigate objects and materials lay the foundations for scientific enquiry. A good range of activities fosters creativity and physical skills. Good use is made of all available resources.
19. Teaching in English in Years 1 to 6 is good and, when lessons for pupils from the LCR and those for pupils who speak English as an additional language are included, accounted for just over a quarter of the lessons seen. All lessons are planned consistently in line with National Literacy Strategy requirements. At its best, good subject knowledge and a brisk pace encouraged pupils to achieve well in the lessons. Tasks are matched appropriately to the pupils' levels of ability because teachers use assessment information well. Where the pace of learning is slower, it is restricted by pupils' weak writing skills. This is a familiar theme that affects pupils' progress in many lessons.
20. In mathematics, teaching is also good overall. The National Numeracy Strategy is followed closely and teachers are making good use of the latest 'model' plans. In most classes, teachers use assessment information to plan tasks at different levels to match pupils' different learning needs. However, pupils' past work in Years 1 and 2 shows that this is not always the case, and where pupils are set into similar ability groups across Years 5 and 6 there is scope for greater difference in the activities planned for pupils. Teachers explain new concepts well, and the emphasis on learning new vocabulary helps all pupils to grasp important mathematical language.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in small groups by specialist teachers is frequently very good. Many of the methods used to support pupils in the LCR, such as using Makaton to sign, are beneficial to other pupils with special educational needs. Teaching is good when these pupils are fully integrated into mainstream classes. Teachers take account of the targets in pupils' individual education plans when planning lessons, and support staff are deployed well to give pupils effective help. However, at times there is too little

difference in the format of the work given to pupils with special needs and the rest of the class. This is mainly in foundation subjects where assessment is not well established.

22. The specialist teaching of pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language is good. Well-focused tasks and plenty of practical activities that use visual stimuli help pupils to make the link between objects, sounds, words, and the structure of language.
23. Teaching is good in ICT lessons in the computer suite, although teachers do not make enough use of ICT in daily lessons to help pupils consolidate their skills. Teaching is mainly good in physical education, with well-organised activities that build on pupils' previous skills. At its best, teaching is brisk and good feedback helps pupils to improve their performance. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects.
24. The school has addressed the unsatisfactory quality of planning in some subjects noted in the last inspection. Lesson planning is based soundly on nationally produced schemes of work and usually, but not always, pitched at different levels to meet the needs of mixed-age and mixed-ability classes. However, there is scope for assessment information to be used better to sharpen the clarity of the learning objectives for pupils of different ability, and to make greater adaptations to activities in some subjects to take account of gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is particularly the case in science, where pupils do not always have a strong enough background knowledge or previous experience for teachers to build on. As a result, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. This is a key issue for the school to address. Teachers often tell pupils what they are expected to learn and sometimes, but not always, return to the lesson's objectives at the end in order to review what pupils have learned.
25. Strengths exist in the management of pupils, especially those who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Although in two lessons, the management of pupils was poor, this was unusual. There is strong ethos in the school in which teachers value individuals and the responses they make in lessons. This gives pupils the confidence to answer questions. These very good relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves underpin the positive learning environment in classes. It was not unusual to witness pupils spontaneously applauding the efforts of others. Adults work together effectively to give pupils a positive model of good social behaviour. Daily routines and expectations are well established and this prompts a keen response from pupils who generally behave well and work hard. They show interest and enthusiasm for learning in most lessons, and good levels of concentration. However, pupils' rate of learning is constrained at times by weaknesses in their prior knowledge and poor recording and writing skills. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and where it is most effective, marking offers comments that clearly tell pupils what to improve. Homework is used satisfactorily to reinforce the skills practised at school.

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

26. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It provides a wide range of interesting and well thought out learning opportunities and enriching experiences. It is well planned and organised, especially in the nursery, to ensure that children make good progress along the 'stepping stones' that lead to the nationally recommended early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Outdoor play provision is now much improved. The quality and range of curriculum activities is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, where pupils' learning is enriched with an extensive range of clubs, visits and visitors. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. There are strengths in provision for art and design and music.

27. At the time of the last inspection, the school provided a generally broad curriculum although it was not balanced. Statutory curriculum requirements were not met in design and technology, geography, ICT and religious education. Too little time was spent on these subjects. Since then, progress has been good and the curriculum now meets legal requirements. Curriculum plans, based on national guidance are now in place for all subjects. Religious education is now planned in accordance with the recently revised locally agreed syllabus. Although the curriculum is now broad, balanced and relevant, and all subjects have an appropriate allocation of time, difficulties stem from the way that the school day is organised. Some lessons are too long and pupils find it difficult to maintain interest and pace. Where literacy and numeracy are timetabled straight after each other, without a break, younger pupils have difficulty sustaining their motivation. Lessons do not always start on time following assembly or an 'off-site' activity such as swimming.
28. Satisfactory policies are now in place for all subjects and these provide sound guidance for teachers when planning lessons. There is a clear subject-planning framework in place based on a two-year cycle to allow for the mixed-aged classes which have only been introduced this term. Teachers of similar aged pupils plan lessons together using national guidance to ensure that their pupils receive similar experiences. This is usually successful but depends on how well teachers interpret the planning. Analysis of pupils' work shows that teaching in some subjects does not consistently match the learning needs of a range of pupils. The diverse needs of pupils in mixed-ability, mixed-age classes are not always met well enough. Subject co-ordinators are encouraged to monitor planning against what pupils actually undertake in lessons. However, this is inconsistent across subjects and is an area for further development. Some subjects, such as religious education, are not always taught with the same depth and rigour so that pupils in parallel classes do not cover the same learning. The use of ICT to support learning in all subject areas is not yet developed and this is a major area for improvement as computers in classrooms are rarely used.
29. Strategies for teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory and are beginning to be effective in raising standards. Pupils in the three Years 5/6 classes are taught in ability sets in literacy and numeracy which means activities are more closely matched to their needs. A similar pattern operates for the three Years 3/4 classes in literacy. The early literacy and additional literacy support programmes are in place to support the lower attaining pupils and raise standards, as are 'catch-up' programmes in mathematics.
30. The school has a strong commitment to, and is successful in achieving, equal opportunities for all its pupils. Different groupings, such as setting by ability, and groupings within classes are used to cater for pupils' learning needs. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes is good. Teachers plan activities with pupils' targets in mind and frequently they receive good support from a learning support assistant. Occasionally pupils are withdrawn for small group or individual work to focus on a specific skill in literacy. Tasks are often adapted to match pupils' needs in English and mathematics but this is less rigorous in other subjects where analysis of pupils' work shows that teaching does not consistently match the learning needs of a range of pupils. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are given good support in line with the requirements of their statements and, as a result, make good progress. Provision is satisfactory for pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils at the early stages frequently have specialist support that is of good quality. General support given in classes by class teachers is satisfactory. Support staff are deployed effectively to ensure that individuals can gain as much as possible from lessons. The school values highly the diversity of its pupils and does its best to ensure that all needs are met fully. All staff are well inducted into the school's aims and act as very good role models to reinforce sensitivity, respect and care. The school is well aware of the diverse social and emotional needs of its pupils and so is able to meet these through the taught and extended curriculum. For example, the very good breakfast and lunchtime clubs cater for pupils who need additional support. All pupils have opportunities to take part in clubs after



school, and all pupils from Years 3 to 6 are actively encouraged to take part in the school residential visits. Financial constraints are not a barrier.

31. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This shows an improvement from the previous inspection when pupils' moral and social development was a strength but provision for spiritual and cultural development was judged to be underdeveloped. The provision for moral and social development is very good and for spiritual and cultural development it is good. The present very good provision makes a very good impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships and the very good ethos that exists in the school.
32. The school gives high priority to promoting pupils' social and moral development through implicit and explicit means. Moral values of right and wrong are discussed in assemblies and classes. Pupils are expected to show high social and moral responsibility in all spheres of school life at all times. The rules are minimal. Assemblies are very effective in promoting ideals of fairness, justice, compassion and care. The need to avoid conflict was the theme for the inspection week. Expectations of pupils to observe the theme were high. Pupils' good effort and improvements are celebrated to serve as examples for others to emulate. Social interaction is promoted strongly through the very good extra-curricular activities which are a strength of the school. There is a wide range of clubs, which take place on a Wednesday evening over a ten week period. These include art, choir, cookery, computer, dance, drama, football, gardening, magazine and music and involve about one third of the pupils. Some, such as rounders and gardening, are seasonal and depend on better weather. Many clubs are over subscribed and so membership changes termly. The school monitors club attendance carefully so that pupils have a chance to attend a range during the year. There are regular league and tournament sports meetings with other schools for older pupils, such as football and rounders, that foster team spirit. Through these activities, pupils experience the need for co-operation and co-existence, irrespective of gender, age or cultural background. Pupils frequently work together in pairs or small groups in class. A school council is planned to start from January 2003 to develop further pupils' understanding of social responsibility. Pupils are given various responsibilities, especially Year 6 pupils, for example as helpers in the dining hall and the playground.
33. Good provision for spiritual and cultural development is promoted through the exploration of values and beliefs of individual and groups of people that represent the present British society. Events that concern and confront human beings are talked through in assemblies. Learning in art and design and music promotes enjoyment and achievement of success in performances. In geography and science, pupils explore the environment and wonder about the natural processes and events. The very good range of educational visits within the local area and further afield contributes much to pupils' cultural development. These include the opportunity of very good residential visits for all pupils in Years 3 to 6. For example Year 3 pupils visit York as part of their study of Vikings, Year 4 visit the Isle of Wight as part of geography, Year 5 spend five days in Cornwall comparing Newquay and Islington, and Year 6 visit France. Pupils' experiences are also enhanced well through visits to museums and art galleries such as the Natural History Museum and British Museum. A wide range of visitors, which includes storytellers, theatre groups, artists and musicians, as well as a 'Black History' month extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world very well. However, links with the local churches and other faith groups are underdeveloped and currently do little to enrich the curriculum or contribute to pupils' social and cultural development.
34. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school is involved with the Healthy Schools Initiative and a whole-school policy is being developed by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. Sex education and drug education is taught through the science curriculum and, more specifically for the Years 5/6 pupils, with targeted lessons.

35. Sound links are maintained with other schools through sporting activities and co-ordinator meetings. Community links are good. The school is linked with Arsenal Football Club for ICT support and makes use of local swimming and tennis facilities. It has good links with the Pop-up Drama Company and Visual Learning Foundation who share the building and support the school well. The school has recently formed an Internet link with a school in South Africa to develop an awareness of other lands. However, the use of the Internet and ICT needs further development. Members of the local ambulance service, fire brigade and prison drug squad also visit, developing pupils' knowledge of the local community well.

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

36. The school cares very well for the social and emotional needs of its pupils. It is very successful in promoting good behaviour. The strong school ethos of valuing each individual effectively promotes an environment where racism and bullying are virtually non-existent. Staff are very clear that such behaviour is completely unacceptable and all such allegations are rigorously investigated and dealt with. Parents and pupils both support this view. Pupils spoken to felt that bullying never happened but if someone was made unhappy by another pupil a member of staff would 'sort it out'.
37. Procedures for monitoring and promoting both punctuality and attendance are very effective. The school is very clear that pupils should line up when the bell is rung at 9.15am. As soon as the last class has entered the school the door is locked and any pupil arriving after that time is then late. This rigorous approach has effectively improved pupils' punctuality and lessons now start promptly without late arrivals interrupting them. The home school liaison worker closely monitors pupils' attendance and is very effective at following up any unnotified absences. Where attendance or punctuality is unsatisfactory, she works with parents to try to resolve the issues that are causing the problem. In addition, she liaises with the educational welfare officer over any concerns and involves other professionals, such as the school nurse, if it is appropriate. Pupils respond very well to the weekly trophy for the class with the best punctuality and spontaneously cheer if their class has won.
38. Child protection procedures are securely in place and the child protection officer (CPO) is very knowledgeable. There are sound procedures in place to deal with any child protection issues that occur when she is not in school. Staff are all made aware of the procedures when they join the school and in each class folder there is a copy of a summary of the procedures. The headteacher is fully trained to deal with child protection concerns but the deputy headteacher who is the acting headteacher at present has not had the full training, therefore the CPO has agreed that she can be contacted at home if the acting headteacher needs any advice on the two days the CPO is not in school.
39. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory and the headteacher and the premises manager have recently undertaken a risk assessment of the premises. At present, the governing body does not have a formalised role in monitoring the safety of the site or for reviewing the risk assessments. Instead, it relies on reports from the headteacher.
40. The school makes very good use of its links with specialist staff and support agencies in providing for pupils with special educational needs. The school's educational psychologist, for example, works closely with the Foundation Stage staff to obtain early identification of children that may have special educational needs.
41. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistent across subjects and therefore unsatisfactory overall. This was the judgement of the previous inspection, although there have been improvements since then. They are good in the Foundation Stage, English and mathematics, satisfactory in science and very good for pupils with special educational needs. The school uses a wide range of monitoring and assessment procedures and standardised tests in English and mathematics. This ensures that some monitoring is

being undertaken in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, the procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic progress over time are unsatisfactory in all other subjects. The school started a system to check pupils' progress in National Curriculum Programmes of Study in all subjects but found it difficult to manage. It is now developing its own systems that will need time to become established.

42. For English and mathematics the school uses the optional tests each year to support planning. Each English set has its own targets and mathematics has a whole-school target for problem solving. There are also tracking lists available for pupils in Years 1 to 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is also going to use the new QCA optional tests which, it is hoped, will provide a more accurate assessment than the present tracking lists. Additionally each pupil has an 'I can' target for English and mathematics in the back of their books. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly and their progress towards their individual education plan (IEP) targets is reviewed at a termly meeting of all staff. The inclusion co-ordinator gives advice and support to teachers for writing IEPs. She meets with the school's educational psychologist and speech and language therapist to discuss pupils' progress in meeting their targets, particularly those pupils with a statement of special educational need.
43. The school had intentionally prioritised assessment procedures for the core subjects. However, it is aware that assessment in the foundation subjects needs to be developed, in order to ensure pupils' continuity and progression of subject learning, and this has been identified as a priority for this academic year. As part of this, the assessment co-ordinator has been set the task of producing a whole-school assessment and monitoring procedure.
44. Where the school has assessment information, teachers use it satisfactorily. The information is used well in English and mathematics and in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils who need additional support or challenge are identified and grouped accordingly. Assessment information is used soundly to identify and support the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. In the other subjects, teachers evaluate their weekly planning in order to help them plan what pupils need to learn next but do not assess the learning of individual pupils. The school is aware that such a system is needed which is based on the current schemes of work.

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

45. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Parents are supportive of the school, they feel the teaching is good and that their children work hard and make good progress. They say their children enjoy school and the school helps their children become mature responsible people. In addition, parents find the staff very approachable. A few parents felt that homework is not consistently given. The inspection team endorsed parents' positive views and found that homework was satisfactory.
46. Information for parents is satisfactory. Regular newsletters inform parents about the life of the school. At the beginning of the school year parents meet with teachers and are told about class routines, in addition they receive an outline of the curriculum their child will be studying that year. The school has run family literacy and numeracy courses. Recently the school has held meetings with Bengali parents explaining how education is organised. A Bengali speaker was present to assist with translation. The school plans to hold similar meetings for Somali and Turkish parents.
47. The annual reports to parents give good information about pupils' progress in English and mathematics as well as the National Curriculum level they are working at. Information in the other subjects is very variable. Art and design and design and technology are reported under one heading and often there are no comments concerning design and technology. The same problem occurs with history and geography as they are reported under humanities and there

are not always comments about both subjects. Therefore, reports do not meet statutory requirements. Parents have the opportunity to discuss the report with the teacher in the summer term. This, in conjunction with teachers being very accessible to parents, results in parents having satisfactory information about their children's progress overall. When necessary the school tries to provide translators to enable parents to take a full part in discussing their children's education. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress. They are involved in reviewing and setting targets in pupils' IEPs each term. In addition, the educational psychologist and co-ordinator for special educational needs meet with groups of parents half-termly to discuss their concerns and to give them support in helping their children at home.

48. Parents have a satisfactory impact on the work of the school. Parent governors play a full role in the governing body. The school sends home occasional questionnaires and responds to the parents' views. Recent examples of this are the siting of the school crossing patrol and to clarify the homework policy. The school has tried to encourage parents towards a more active involvement with the school by running courses such as 'hearing children read', with the intention of parents then helping in the classroom. However, parents do not always respond positively.

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

49. Since the previous inspection there has been a period of considerable change within the senior management of the school. The leadership and management provided currently by the headteacher, senior staff and governors are good; this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning and the quality of education provided by the school.
50. The headteacher provides good leadership and a very clear educational direction for the work of the school, setting clear priorities and targets. Following her promotion to the headship of the school from her position as incumbent deputy headteacher, she identified several areas for development. These included the need to raise standards, provide greater consistency in teaching and learning and develop further the inclusive nature of the school. Staff and governors were consulted in identifying areas of priority. Work to achieve the agreed objectives, although taking time to have the required impact, has been managed very well. The headteacher, together with the deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team, has cultivated a positive teaching and learning environment within the school which was very evident during the inspection. The school is running smoothly during the headteacher's maternity leave. All systems are in place and, with the support of a consultant headteacher from the local education authority for two days a week, the acting headteacher is leading the school successfully until the headteacher's planned return. The shared commitment to improving the quality of education provided for all pupils in the school is strong. It is testament to the good relationships within the school and to the level of support given to new staff, that temporary teachers are prepared to commit themselves to long-term contracts and to taking posts of responsibility. Induction procedures, and support for staff new to their roles, are good.
51. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has enabled the headteacher and members of the senior management team to begin to improve the consistency of planning and teaching. Performance management procedures are well established and due to be extended later in the year to encompass a review of the work of support staff. To date, the main focus has been on English and mathematics and there is still more to achieve to improve consistency in other subjects. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science, art and design, music, special educational needs and inclusion manage their areas of responsibility effectively and have begun to make important contributions to improve curriculum planning. The effectiveness of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has begun to impact beneficially, leading to improved planning and teaching and sound achievement. Most other subject co-ordinators are at different stages of development following their recent

appointments but have made a good start in exercising their responsibilities. The management of special educational needs is very good and the resources allocated to pupils with special needs are used efficiently. Arrangements for compliance with the new Code of Practice are good. A designated governor works closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator.

52. Governors have become increasingly involved in the work of the school. In this respect, the school improvement plan for the three years commencing 2002 has an important strategic role in identifying a range of short- medium- and long-term priorities and targets very clearly. This is soundly based on a wide-ranging evaluation of the current position in each subject and area of the school. The plan sets out very clearly the action that will be taken to secure improvements. The main focus is on improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards and also on developing the role of governors. Currently the governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities although links to the community are not developed well at present. The school's aims and values are very relevant and communicated effectively to staff and parents, reflecting the positive team commitment among staff and governors. The school places great importance on its inclusive nature and in providing equal opportunities for all its pupils. In this respect it succeeds very well.
53. There is a good number of teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the pupils and to teach the curriculum. In recent years, there has been a high turnover in the teaching staff and difficulties in appointing staff to the school. This has depressed pupils' attainment as many subjects lacked stable leadership, and many staff required training for the subjects they were teaching. The school has worked hard to stabilise the staffing situation and is providing good support for overseas trained teachers to gain qualified teacher status in this country as well as supporting newly qualified teachers. Despite this turnover, the school has been successful in sustaining its positive ethos for learning which is manifested in the very good provision for pupils' personal development. Learning support assistants work very well with class teachers. Staff from the LCR are well trained to undertake their specialist roles, for example all have had training in Makaton signing. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
54. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. There are more than sufficient numbers of classrooms but many of them are small, making it difficult to carry out practical lessons such as science experiments. There are specialist rooms for art and design and music, and a new ICT suite, which is not adequately ventilated at present. Although there is no library the school has plans to provide one in the near future. The school has limited outside play areas that it is able to use and consequently these become crowded at playtimes. There is a rooftop play area that would significantly increase the play and physical education area but the school cannot use it because of the uneven surface. Another result of this unsatisfactory surface is that the roof leaks and causes puddles in the top corridor when it rains. The premises manager works very hard to counter the effects of this and to provide the pupils with a bright stimulating learning environment. The school successfully addressed the issues identified in the last report over unsafe wiring and the condition of the boys' toilets. However, the floor in the boys' toilets is still uneven allowing puddles to occur.
55. Resources have improved significantly since the last inspection and now all subjects are at least satisfactorily resourced. The resources for ICT are good with 21 networked computers in the ICT suite, two interactive whiteboards and a multimedia computer in each classroom. Resources in art and design and music are good.
56. The overall efficiency of the school is good. Since the last inspection the school has improved its standards of financial planning. The headteacher and governors have developed suitably structured and systematic procedures that effectively support the school's educational priorities. Good use is made of new technology to improve efficiency levels, especially in office administration. Within this context, the work of the recently appointed office administration manager has had a particularly beneficial impact on improving efficiency. The

school makes good use of specific funding to promote improvements. This includes, for example, national funding for ICT and grants obtained through the Education Action Zone to improve the environment.

57. The school applies successfully the principles of best value for money and has been involved in consulting and involving those concerned in decision-making about spending. Some limited consideration has been given to alternative providers for services and resources in order to acquire cost effectiveness. Overall, money is spent carefully. The school's day-to-day financial controls and procedures are good, enabling the headteacher and governors to monitor and evaluate closely all spending decisions. The most recent financial audit took place in March 2001. Subsequently the various minor recommendations have been implemented successfully.
58. Taking into account the very low levels of attainment on entry, the sound achievement of pupils leaving at the end of Year 6 and the standards of teaching and learning, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

59. The school is effective in ensuring that pupils learn in an environment that recognises them as individuals. Many systems are in place to make further improvements to the quality of education and there is a strong willingness and commitment to do so. Senior staff and governors have a good awareness of what needs to be improved further and the issues below, relating to standards, the use of ICT, assessment, and the subject leaders' roles, have been recognised already. In the past, developments have been hampered by instability in staffing. Staffing is more stable now and the school has a very good capacity to make, and sustain, further change.

- Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education, with an emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills  
*Paragraphs 2-9, 83, 93, 97-99, 105, 106, 116, 117, 156-159.*
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching, especially in the use of assessment information when planning activities for pupils of different abilities  
*Paragraphs 17, 21, 24, 28, 131, 136, 142, 160*
- Devise procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects to bring them into line with those subjects where procedures are well established  
*Paragraphs 41-44, 123, 126, 132, 137, 143, 148, 155*
- Increase the use of ICT in other subjects so that pupils can practise and consolidate their skills  
*Paragraphs 28, 65, 104, 112, 119, 123, 126, 129, 136, 144*
- Ensure that subject co-ordinators develop their role in monitoring the quality and consistency of provision in their areas of responsibility  
*Paragraphs 51, 119, 122, 126, 132, 144, 161*

In addition

- Review the timings of subjects within the day  
*Paragraphs 28*
- Ensure that pupils' annual reports to parents contain an evaluation of pupils' progress in all subjects  
*Paragraphs 47*

## THE LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION RESOURCE

60. The language and communication resource (LCR) makes very good provision for its pupils. Although pupils' attainment is well below national expectations their achievement and progress throughout the school are very good. This level of achievement is due to the very good quality of teaching of the LCR teachers, in particular the detailed planning and knowledge that the teachers have of their pupils' needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection when provision was found to be satisfactory.
61. The LCR has at present 26 pupils, all of whom have statements of special educational need before they enter the school for specific speech, language or communication difficulties. Some of the pupils have associated difficulties such as autistic spectrum disorder or dyspraxia. For pupils both in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 there is a teacher and learning support assistants. No pupils are disapplied from National Curriculum subjects but some are disapplied from some National Curriculum assessments.
62. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 remain in the resource base in the mornings and work in a small group for literacy, numeracy, science and circle time lessons. They join mainstream classes for art and design, music, PSHE and physical education each afternoon and are well supported by learning support assistants. As a result of this successful small group teaching every morning, pupils make sufficient progress to enable them to be integrated into mainstream lessons in Years 3 to 6, although they continue to receive specialist support from the speech therapist and a specialist teacher. However, this organisation is kept under review to ensure that individual needs are met.
63. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to write instructions for cleaning teeth. In this the teacher made very good use of a Smartboard which presented the various objects for teeth cleaning in two dimensions which the pupils could relate to. In their discussion of the objects the teacher encouraged some pupils to use cued articulation, which helped them articulate the initial sounds in the words. This was linked to targets in the pupils' IEPs. In guided reading sessions, pupils are emerging as quite confident readers but still rely on their teacher to prompt and support them. In a lesson on time, most pupils were able to set the hands of a model clock to a given o'clock, with more able pupils setting the hands to given half-past times. In this lesson, the use of praise and appropriate questioning by the teacher enabled the pupils' learning.
64. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are set for literacy and numeracy. Of the five sets, the LCR pupils are in the lower two for literacy but more evenly distributed for numeracy. In literacy, in lessons taken by the specialist LCR teacher, pupils in Year 6 pupils were able to find three reasons why they think a character in a book deserves sympathy. In a role play towards the end of the lesson the experienced teacher set scenarios that made pupils think about their own feelings. Good lesson planning and questioning by the teacher deepens pupils' understanding of the meaning of a simile and encourages them to go on to give their own examples.
65. From Years 1 to 6 the quality of teaching is never less than good and is mainly very good. The teachers have a very good knowledge of the ability of their pupils and provide appropriate support and sympathetic questioning to guide their learning. In all lessons observed the teachers have a very good rapport with their pupils. All staff have had training in Makaton signing which they use well to reinforce and emphasise their teaching points or to tell a pupil to wait. Three staff have trained in cued articulation which is used effectively to support pupils' communication skills. The learning support assistants work very well as a team with the teachers which has a positive effect on pupils' learning. ICT is used well in Years 1 and 2 but is underused in Years 3 to 6.

66. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very good. They often show enjoyment in their learning and in their ability to complete set tasks and to work well in groups. They usually wait their turn in activities and in asking questions.
67. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum although some pupils are given a modified National Curriculum to provide teaching and learning that is more appropriate for their IEP targets. Although some pupils from the LCR are disapplied from the end of key stage tests and tasks, they are all included in the school's overall figures. Meetings are held between the LCR teachers and the speech and language therapist to discuss the coming week's literacy and phonic teaching to ensure appropriate provision for each pupil. The LCR teachers have a very good relationship with the class teachers. For example, the respective class teacher gives a copy of the coming week's lesson planning to the LCR teacher. The LCR teachers and support staff then meet to discuss what is going to be taught and what support the LCR pupils will need. This ensures that the LCR pupils follow the same teaching and learning objectives as their mainstream peers. The formative assessment and recording of pupils' progress towards their IEP targets is ongoing. In addition to the annual review meeting with parents, pupil, speech and language therapist and school staff, review meetings are also held termly when all staff meet with parents to discuss pupils' progress towards their IEP targets.
68. The school sees the LCR as being an integral part of its inclusion policy. The school's inclusion co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating the work in the resource and provides very good support and management of it through weekly meetings with staff. Support is also extended to parents of LCR pupils. The co-ordinator meets with the parents half termly to discuss any issues they may have. Additionally, the partnership approach to setting targets in pupils' IEPs has resulted in parents and families being much more involved.

## **PROVISION FOR PUPILS WHO SPEAK ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

69. Overall, the provision in ethnic minority achievement support is satisfactory. It provides for the needs of about 49 per cent of the ethnic minority pupils in the school. About 43 per cent of pupils in the school have English as an additional language. There are 29 languages spoken in the school. Approximately 50 pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Most of these pupils are in the nursery, reception and Years 1 and 2, and most support is focused here. Two support teachers support early stage learners. They make up the equivalent of 0.8 teacher. Pupils in the nursery and reception classes have additional support from a learning support assistant. The school was unable to appoint another part-time teacher (0.4) and so this is covered on a temporary basis by a teacher of special educational needs and a learning support assistant.
70. Pupils make good progress when supported by specialist staff. Overall, they make satisfactory progress. A small number make very good progress and are among the high achievers of the school. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory because their level of specialist support is reduced.
71. Teaching by specialist staff is good and leads to good learning. For example, ten Years 1 and 2 pupils developed good phonic skills in an effective ten-minute intensive withdrawal session. The pupils were brought into a room, quickly sat in a circle and the teacher introduced a tray full of objects, such as a feather, brush, pine cone, fork, ring, ball, pencil, battery, marker and models of a fish and pig. The pupils had seen some of these in a previous session and some of these were new. The activity began with the game 'I spy something beginning with ---'. The game was very lively and induced a high level of motivation and the pupils quickly learnt the sounds of 'b', 'p', 'r' and 'f'. Repetition, 'if you have something beginning with ---, put it on the tray and line up', consolidated learning and concluded the session. This was followed by a very effective whole-class session, 'how to brush your teeth'. The class teacher and the support teacher collaborated very effectively during the session. The teachers made effective



use of objects such as toothbrush, toothpaste, tap and large pictures of these for sticking on the board and matching word cards. This was followed with a writing-up session. These activities promoted all aspects of English effectively. The lesson concluded with asking pupils to change simple sentences into instructional ('bossy') sentences. All pupils thoroughly enjoyed the session, were involved equally and made similar progress. In another withdrawal session, four Year 1 pupils effectively learned instructional language associated with designing and making finger puppets. They then enjoyed designing and making finger puppets and practising language. In a reception class, the support teacher read the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' very effectively and enhanced involvement by asking prediction questions, 'what is the gingerbread man going to do now?' The pupils thoroughly enjoyed listening to the story and were fully involved in making gingerbread men biscuits.

72. Pupils participate in learning with very good interest, concentration and zeal and made good progress. Learning in the mainstream classes without the support teachers is satisfactory. Many teachers are new to the school and lack the specialist knowledge to be able to give these pupils good support.
73. Leadership and management of the provision are good and provide effective support and guidance. Contact between Bengali speaking parents and the school has improved as a result of the school's efforts to hold information meetings with a translator. This provision has helped parents to become involved in the education of their children. Following the success of this initiative the school plans to repeat the event with other parental groups. The school cultivates good links with parents through interpreters at parents' meetings and letters translated in pupils' home languages where English is a barrier to communication. Teaching equally involves all pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory. At the moment the school is changing from using the local education authority's language stages to the nationally recommended one. When fully in place, this will help the school to analyse pupils' progress.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

89

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	20	38	27	1	2	0
Percentage	1	23	43	30	1	2	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	51	250
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	22	149

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	30
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	100

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	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	29	13	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	16	19
	Girls	5	8	7
	Total	18	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	43 (59)	57 (50)	62 (59)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	17	18
	Girls	8	8	9
	Total	21	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	50 (53)	60 (50)	64 (53)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	10	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	13
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	12	13	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	46 (53)	50 (33)	77 (70)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	12
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	12	14	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	46 (63)	54 (53)	73 (70)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	115	0	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	28	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	17	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	10	0	0
Black or Black British – African	23	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	6	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	11	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4
Average class size	27

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	407.5

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1,264,911
Total expenditure	1,221,566
Expenditure per pupil	4,169
Balance brought forward from previous year	79,068
Balance carried forward to next year	122,414

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	301
Number of questionnaires returned	77

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	26	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	36	4	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	43	0	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	27	9	5	10
The teaching is good.	62	31	0	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	36	8	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	22	4	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	56	34	1	0	9
The school is well led and managed.	60	38	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	31	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	34	6	1	8

## **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**

74. The good provision for children in the Foundation Stage found at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and continues to be a strength of the school. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in the nursery and satisfactory overall in the reception class with some good lessons seen.
75. The all day nursery has an admission limit of 52 children. They are admitted to the nursery after their third birthday provided they are toilet trained. There are currently 47 children in the nursery, most of whom attend full-time. Nursery accommodation is good occupying three interlinked classrooms which contain a wide range of stimulating activities and provide a very good learning environment. There is access to a well-planned outside play area which is an improvement since the last inspection when facilities were limited. Admission and induction arrangements are good and parents are happy with these. Lunch arrangements are well organised and provide children with good opportunities to develop social skills. Nursery children have a very long day but are kept fully occupied through carefully planned activities which ensure they have a continuous learning experience. Staff are innovative in what they do and grasp every opportunity to develop children's learning. For example, a windy day was used very well to make kites from plastic shopping bags during the lunch break and develop children's knowledge and understanding.
76. The reception class has an admission limit of 30 and there are two intakes a year. Children are admitted in September or January depending when they are aged five. There are currently 17 pupils in the class and another 14 are expected to join in January. Almost all children have attended the nursery. Reception accommodation is spacious and there is access to a satisfactory outdoor play area which is in need of development and this has been identified by the school.
77. Baseline assessments show that many children begin nursery with very low levels of attainment in all areas of learning. Most make good progress but records show that most are still well below expectations when they enter the reception class. Although many children make good progress, especially in personal and social development, few are likely to achieve the early learning goals in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, hand/eye co-ordination and creative development by the end of reception. Many are still well below expectations in communication, language and literacy.
78. The curriculum in the nursery and reception class is consistently well planned and firmly based on the early learning goals, although a more consistent approach across the Foundation Stage needs to be developed. All staff work very closely together both in the nursery and reception class, are all fully involved in weekly planning sessions, and know what to do. Relationships are very good which is a major strength of the Foundation Stage. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership and management and monitors planning satisfactorily. However, there is a lack of cohesion between the two areas and this is an area for development so that there is a similar approach to planning and assessment. There is a clear Foundation Stage development plan which identifies actions to raise standards. Careful planning, monitoring and assessment in the nursery ensures that children receive similar experiences. The consistently good teaching and learning in the nursery and at least satisfactory teaching in the reception class, ensures children, including those identified as having special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and most achieve well.

79. Overall, teachers have a good understanding of the needs of children in the Foundation Stage. Assessment procedures are in place in both the nursery and reception classes but are not consistent across the Foundation Stage. They are not clearly focused on all the recommended 'stepping stones' and this is an area recognised for development. In the nursery, staff carefully monitor activities children undertake on a daily and weekly basis to ensure a balance is maintained. Each adult takes responsibility for assessing and monitoring a group of pupils. In the reception classes, although there are sound procedures for assessing children's daily progress in taught tasks, procedures for monitoring children in less formal activities are not so well established and this is an area for development. Staff are aware of the need to improve this to ensure that children undertake a balanced range of activities. All children are fully integrated and adults make sure that children have equal access to all activities.
80. Nursery accommodation is secure and spacious and contains good storage facilities. Classrooms are roomy, well equipped and well organised with good displays to stimulate learning. Outdoor facilities are good and are very much an extension of the classrooms. There is a large safety surface with fixed climbing apparatus, sand and water play facilities, large wheeled toys and planting areas. Plans are in place to develop the area further. There is a small covered area equipped with role-play facilities so that children can work outside during wet weather. The reception classroom is spacious and well organised into activity areas. Good use is made of all available space both inside and outside and the rooms are attractive and stimulating with quality displays which encourages learning. Facilities for daily outdoor activities are not as good, though still satisfactory, in reception. Reception children also make regular use of apparatus facilities in the hall on a timetabled basis.

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

81. Many children enter the nursery with low levels of personal, social and emotional development and this area is given a high priority. The nursery provides a very good start to school life by providing a welcoming, calm, and happy environment with consistent and very well organised routines and activities. This provides children with security and helps to build up their self-confidence and self-esteem and they want to come to school. Children learn to trust the staff and relax into routines quickly. For example, in the morning, children self register, have access to a drink and fruit and then move to the various activities available. They enjoy the carefully arranged activities provided which develop concentration and independence. Children are encouraged to play and work together, sharing materials, showing consideration for others and building relationships in all activities. By the time children leave the nursery, most can put on coats unaided and go to the toilet and wash their hands independently. They learn to sit and talk together as they share their morning snack. This develops self-control and encourages good behaviour. Across the Foundation Stage adults promote personal development and independence by ensuring equipment and resources are easily accessible. In both groups children follow the clear instructions from adults and try hard to please. Children in reception build on the good experiences learnt in the nursery. Most persevere for extended periods of time at an activity of their own or the teacher's choosing and they are beginning to collaborate well together showing independence and confidence.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both nursery and reception classes. Children respond very positively to the care of the staff and to the very good role models they provide. From the time they start in the nursery, teachers encourage children to take responsibility by providing opportunities for choice and by involving them in jobs such as tidying away at the end of sessions. Children are taught right from wrong from their earliest days in the nursery in a firm but positive way. This ensures they develop good attitudes to school and form very good relationships with adults and with each other. Staff in the reception class maintain these very good relationships with children and build on previous experiences providing good opportunities for children to work and play together. This leads to children developing good



levels of independence by the end of the reception year. At least half are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave reception.

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

83. Standards on entry to the nursery vary but the majority have very limited speaking and listening skills and nursery staff place a high priority on developing this area. Many good opportunities are provided to stimulate speech, such as through role-play in the 'playhouse', in matching and counting activities and sharing of books, so that children gain confidence as speakers. Discussion and questioning are used very well to encourage children to listen and speak throughout the nursery. However, when they move into reception there are still very many who are not confident speakers. Adults in reception give children good opportunities to talk to the class in a range of activities. Children in the nursery develop an enjoyment of books through a designated weekly text and by the time they enter the reception class most can turn the pages correctly and are beginning to understand that print and illustrations convey meaning. Reception children are taught to recognise the title and the author and enjoy talking about pictures in books. At this stage in the year, however, about a third can read and write their own names correctly. They are becoming familiar with letter sounds and a few are beginning to recognise these in their names and initial letters in words through spoken and written activities. Writing activities need to be developed further in the reception class to challenge children who are more able.
84. The overall quality of teaching is good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception. Children's literacy skills are developed effectively through daily sharing of stories and books. In the reception class this is through shortened elements of the National Literacy Strategy. Staff in the nursery and reception class use every opportunity during activities across all the areas of learning to develop children's understanding of language and to extend their vocabulary through careful questioning. Imaginary settings such as the 'play house' and 'office' in the nursery and the 'doctors' clinic' in reception, provide good opportunities for children to engage in conversations with others, to use their imagination, and contact imaginary people by telephone. Such activities are most beneficial for children at the early stages of learning English. Few children are likely to achieve the expected standards in communication, language and literacy by the end of reception.

### **Mathematical development**

85. On entry to the nursery, pupils have limited understanding of mathematics. However, staff encourage children to develop an understanding of number, shape and measures from an early stage through carefully thought out activities. For example, in the nursery, children recite numbers in everyday situations and through counting games, matching coloured pegs to number cards and singing number rhymes. They develop an understanding of balance using conkers. Staff help children to see mathematics all around, for example looking for shapes around the classroom. In reception, children are beginning to recognise and name colours, count and match objects at least to five and order numbers to ten through games and counting activities such as 'ten green bottles'. A few currently recognise and name two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles and rectangles and are beginning to understand words such as 'more' and 'less', 'heavier' and 'lighter'.
86. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good across the Foundation Stage. Effective planning and organisation, together with interesting and imaginative activities, resources and games, ensure that children are well motivated and learn well. In the nursery, adults take every opportunity to develop mathematical language, grasping opportunities for reinforcing number activities. In reception, children are encouraged to use number lines to count on and back and find missing numbers and match snacks and drinks to those present.

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

87. Children's attainment is very low on entry to the nursery and, despite good teaching, few are likely to achieve expected standards. In both nursery and reception, children are given regular opportunities to develop their competence in using computers. Most control what happens on the screen by using a mouse or keyboard, for example to draw pictures on the screen or move shapes. Children use a range of construction materials and recycled materials effectively to make models such as 'boats' in the nursery. They know about people who help them from a visit from the dentist, ambulance service and visiting the school kitchens. In the nursery, they learn to appreciate celebrations and festivals of other cultures by listening to stories such as Rama and Sita. Other children's languages are acknowledged and valued through labels. Children in both nursery and reception classes develop a sense of the past by finding out about present and past events in their own lives and those of their families and friends. Most reception children talk, using a limited vocabulary, about their homes and families and where they live. Through religious education lessons, children learn about festivals and celebrations of others such as Divali and the Chinese New Year, developing an awareness of other cultures.
88. The quality of teaching is good in both the nursery and reception classes because activities are well planned and organised and build on children's natural curiosity. Many successful opportunities are provided through direct teaching as well as independent play. Visits and visitors develop children's understanding of the local area and wider world. A good range of interactive displays in the nursery such as 'rough and smooth' and investigating torches in reception, encourages independent thought and investigation and prepares early foundations for scientific enquiry. Children show good attitudes and interest in activities. When making 'gingerbread men' in reception they are encouraged to think about how the ingredients will change and how the biscuits will look after cooking.

## **Physical development**

89. Children enter nursery with varying standards of ability with many below that expected in handling small items. Standards are still below when they enter Year 1 despite many mark making, painting, cutting and sticking activities provided during the Foundation Stage. Nursery children have regular, daily access to a wide range of outdoor equipment, including climbing, riding and pushing large wheeled toys as well as small apparatus such as balls which develops co-ordination and enhances their sense of space and direction. They are developing an awareness of others and a few in the nursery are beginning to co-operate and share large toys. Good opportunities are provided for children in the nursery to increase their confidence in climbing, sliding and balancing on the permanent climbing frame in the play area. In the reception classes provision is less well developed for independent daily use of large wheeled toys and there are limited opportunities. However, these children have regular access to the larger apparatus in the hall and enjoy climbing and balancing activities. They carefully carry mats and safely erect and put away apparatus at the beginning and end of the lesson.
90. The overall quality of teaching is good. Good management and control of behaviour ensures that children follow instructions and move safely in the outdoor play area. Good quality adult intervention challenges the more able children and gives support to those with less confidence. Planning indicates that lessons are well thought out and organised and that good use is made of apparatus by the nursery children in the outdoor play area. A good range of activities teach fine-motor skills using pencils, brushes, scissors and small apparatus such as jigsaws and construction toys.

## **Creative development**

91. On entry to the nursery most children's creative development is very low. Despite a wide range of activities children are unlikely to attain the early learning goals for creative development by the time they finish in reception. Children in the nursery are given many opportunities to experiment with paint and colour working in small and large scale. Displays such as 'three little ducks' pictures and self-portraits show children that their work is valued. In role-play areas they engage in imaginative play and act out the 'office' and the 'doctors' clinic'. Nursery children use glue and shapes with developing care as they make sailing boats and decorate 'frog' biscuits. Reception children soundly manipulate tools such as scissors, glue sticks and printing materials, both imaginatively and in a more directed fashion, as they make pictures linked to partitioning in mathematics. Children are beginning to explore what happens when they mix colours to paint writing patterns. Children in both classes enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes from memory and all join in well.
92. Teaching is good in both nursery and reception classes and children learn well. This is largely due to the children's positive attitudes to their work and the planned provision of a wide range of both directed and free choice opportunities, which develop children's creativity effectively. 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 such as the 'office' in the nursery, the 'doctors' clinic' in reception, and with 'small world' toys. During these activities children are helped to develop skills well and to express their own ideas with growing confidence through the good support of adults.

## **ENGLISH**

93. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards attained by pupils in English are well below the expected level. This is lower than was reported in 1997, when standards were below average. However, results in national tests have risen gradually in the intervening years and, overall the school has made satisfactory improvement in raising standards.
94. Raising standards in English was identified recently as a whole-school priority. However, the good measures that have been taken to improve this aspect of the work of the school have not yet had a significant impact on improving standards especially in reading and writing. This is because the new arrangements are at an early stage of implementation. In addition some of the overseas-trained teachers are taking time to become familiar with National Curriculum requirements in English. In the past the high rate of mobility amongst teachers and pupils has had a detrimental effect on teaching and learning. Upon entry to school in Year 1 and at other joining points throughout, many pupils have limited skills in English, especially the significant number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. In spite of this however, pupils make sound progress in speaking and listening and by the end of Year 6 attain better than in other aspects of their learning in English. This is because teachers provide frequent and purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop these particular skills in English and in other subject lessons such as history. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the good teaching and the effective help that they receive from learning support assistants. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress because they also receive specialist help that is of good quality. The school is making effective use of the Islington guidelines to plan appropriately for the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. It has introduced good policies and procedures for reading, spelling and handwriting. Consequently there is a clear and consistent structure for literacy lessons and teachers have a much better idea of what is expected of pupils and themselves.
95. The school has set challenging targets for all pupils indicating their expected levels of attainment at the end of each year in writing as well as the statutory targets for English for pupils in Year 6. Teachers set and share short-term targets with their pupils. A good feature in

many classes is that teachers remind pupils of the learning objectives for particular groups of learners. This helps provide a sharper focus for their work. Targets for pupils with special educational needs are linked to the targets that are set on their individual education plans. These are reviewed each term. As a result both teachers and pupils have a good understanding of the standards for which each pupil is aiming and the steps in learning to achieve this.

96. Standards in speaking and listening are sound with occasional good features. A good feature is that throughout the school pupils are enabled to develop their speaking and listening skills not only in English but also in other areas of the curriculum. For example in history lessons in Years 5 and 6, pupils described accurately some of the differences between the social circumstances of the Victorian era and those of today. They reached their own value judgements relating to the working conditions of Victorian children and expressed their views confidently. In these lessons pupils listened attentively to their teachers and their peers. They showed strong empathy with our less fortunate predecessors. Consequently, this learning made a good contribution to developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in English and history and in furthering their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
97. Standards in reading are well below average. By the end of Year 2 most pupils still do not recognise many words and make little use of pictures and context to help them decode unknown words. However, in some guided reading sessions pupils do sometimes talk confidently about what they are reading and enjoy talking about the text. Pupils with speech and communication difficulties attain well in relation to their ability. This is due to very good teaching. For example in a group activity involving Years 1 and 2 pupils, the teacher used a variety of resources and strategies very effectively. This included Makaton, the Smartboard and cued articulation to motivate and inspire the pupils.
98. In Years 3 to 6 standards in reading remain well below average but many pupils are beginning to develop the skills necessary to ensure some success in this aspect of their development. They clearly enjoy their guided reading sessions. They can describe accurately the distinguishing features between biographical and autobiographical texts and read these texts aloud fluently, using intonation and inflection to good effect. Pupils read regularly to themselves and to others both at school and at home. Some pupils talk enthusiastically about different authors and the types of books that they enjoy. Reading records are maintained accurately throughout the school. These records show useful comments from teachers and parents. At present the school does not have a library and therefore it is not possible for the pupils to develop library skills. However, a new library is to be established in the near future and this should redress the current imbalance in provision.
99. Standards of attainment in writing are well below average. By Year 2 some higher attaining pupils have standards of writing that reflect the expected norm for their age. Within this group handwriting and presentation are sound and pupils are beginning to produce work in a neat joined-up script. Sentences are usually reasonably well structured. Full stops and capital letters are used appropriately to mark sentence boundaries. However, standards of spelling are unsatisfactory with most pupils showing little understanding of basic spelling patterns. Furthermore these are not applied well by pupils when writing independently. By Year 6 pupils increase their repertoire of writing activities. In the pupils' analysis of biography and autobiography there are some sound examples of recount text, for example writing from the other person's perspective. Pupils do not often write at length. Nevertheless there are some examples of extended writing for specific purposes. In guided report writing pupils developed their ideas over a two-week period. They show a good understanding of issues related to conservation. They report accurately about the effects that damage to the environment has on the existence of a range of living creatures. Pupils take pride in this work. Their handwriting is mostly neat and in joined-up script and they apply the basic conventions of grammar correctly. Rightly, each completed piece has a bibliography. In a purposeful grammar lesson, pupils learned about similes and were able to generate and use similes of their own. This

good achievement resulted from effective teaching as the group of learners in question all required a high level of support due to their specific learning needs. In poetry, some higher attaining pupils have applied their wordprocessing skills effectively to produce work on the theme of 'night'.

100. The teaching of English is within the range of unsatisfactory to very good in Years 1 and 2. Overall it is good. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching in English is within the range of good to very good. Overall it is good. Throughout the school all lessons observed were planned consistently and well and were in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and the school's own procedures. In the best lessons teachers showed good subject knowledge. The pace of lessons was brisk and the pupils worked industriously in well-established routines. Teachers most frequently led whole-class introductory sessions and then set differentiated tasks that were matched appropriately to the pupils' levels of ability. In turn, pupils worked well either individually or in small groups. Teachers' planning provides scope for extension activities for higher attaining pupils but there was little evidence of high levels of accomplishment during the inspection. Where there are weaknesses the pace of lessons is slow and pupils are unable to write extensively because of the limitations in their writing skills. This restricts progress. Teachers are conscientious in marking pupils' work. In the best examples of effective marking, teachers offer comments that set clear targets for improvement. Homework is used appropriately to support learning in classes.
101. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are included effectively in the provision for English. Teachers plan for and support these pupils well in whole-class lessons. The support provided by the classroom assistants is of good quality and has had a beneficial impact on the good progress that these pupils make. Small group work and withdrawal sessions are effective in focusing specifically on individual needs. In spite of their overall very low attainment the majority of pupils achieve soundly in relation to their ability in most lessons and over time.
102. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in Years 1 and 2. In response to the good and very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 pupils' attitudes are very good. The older pupils in particular concentrate hard and listen attentively. This aids their progress. For example in an excellent lesson in dance in Years 5 and 6 the pupils listened with rapt attention to their teacher's instructions and to the mood music selected for their dance. Combined with excellent teaching the pupils made good progress and attained well.
103. The experienced English co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has an excellent overview of the subject throughout the school. She has led several initiatives that are designed to improve standards, for example the introduction of new policies and scheme of work and the provision of professional development for her colleagues. In conjunction with the headteacher and other members of the school senior management team she has implemented a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
104. Resources are satisfactory in range and quality. Literacy, particularly speaking and listening, is used appropriately to support other subjects. The use of ICT in English is very limited and cross-curricular links using ICT are not used effectively to promote learning in other subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

105. National Curriculum tests result at the end of Year 2 have been consistently well below those attained nationally, but close to those of schools with similar features. In 2002, the figures dropped alarmingly into the lowest five per cent of schools nationally and well below those of similar schools. Although this group of pupils contained a significant number with special educational needs, pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory, mainly because of lack of continuity in teaching caused by several staff changes. Standards seen during the inspection

were well below average levels but with signs that pupils are making better progress now in response to some good teaching.

106. Results of tests at the end of Year 6 have frequently been below average but dropped significantly in 2001 into the lowest five per cent of schools. That dip has been halted to some extent in 2002 and although figures remained well below the national average they were broadly in line with schools with similar circumstances. Despite these low figures, pupils achieved soundly during their time in the school. Of note, is the fact that the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level was broadly average; this figure was well above the achievement of similar schools. In the current Year 6, standards remain well below average but pupils are on course to achieve the targets that have been set for them.
107. Pupils are making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to help them make progress in line with their targets. Many who lack confidence are benefiting from working in a small group with pupils of similar abilities in Years 5 and 6. Those who speak English as an additional language are achieving as well as their peers once they have grasped the language of mathematics. They are well represented in the higher teaching sets. Higher attaining pupils are attaining the levels expected for their age; few pupils are regularly working at levels beyond expectations. No significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls were observed.
108. In Year 2, pupils are learning to tell the time from analogue and digital clocks. However, few progress beyond recognising 'o'clock' and 'half past'. Higher attaining pupils count on in tens starting at any number on the 100 square but cannot extend this yet to counting on multiples of ten. Many pupils have little recorded work in their books
109. By Year 6, pupils carry out simple calculations using a range of strategies. Many pupils have a slow recall of number and multiplication facts which hampers them when they are making calculations. This knowledge is developing, but slowly for many pupils and they still need to resort to practical aids such as number lines or 100 squares to check their answers. Many average pupils are working at a slow rate and achieve only a small amount of recorded work in each lesson. A small proportion of higher attaining pupils are learning to recognise and name shapes from their properties and measure angles accurately using a protractor. They convert fractions to percentages and to mixed numbers, and are beginning to understand the links between percentages, fractions and decimals. Their work is neatly presented and they work at a good pace. In lessons in the ICT suite, pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use mathematical skills, for example when drawing graphs and using databases.
110. The rate of pupils' learning is sometimes affected by their lack of prior knowledge and slowness in recording their work; this is especially so for lower attaining pupils. This is related to weaknesses in writing skills. In Years 3 to 6, where many lessons are at the minimum time recommended, pupils often do not have enough time to practise and consolidate their understanding of the strategy or concept being taught. In two lessons, the review at the end of the lesson was cut short because of time constraints and so the teacher missed opportunities to check on pupils' understanding and to consolidate what they had learnt. In Years 1 and 2, where mathematics follows, or immediately precedes, literacy, some individuals struggle to maintain concentration and effort, and become restless towards the end of the lesson.
111. The quality of teaching is good overall and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers are following the National Numeracy Strategy closely and there is a good focus on teaching pupils strategies for carrying out mental calculations. As a result, pupils are developing the confidence to explain these strategies and to use them well. New model plans are used as a basis for teaching but are being adapted soundly to take account of mixed-age classes. In most classes teachers are providing tasks at different levels to match pupils' different learning needs and so there is an appropriate level of challenge. In the very best

examples, plans are adapted from day to day with follow up assessment notes so that, for example, pupils have more practice at those areas they find difficult. Often lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by learning support staff. This enables them to stay on task, to complete activities, and to make satisfactory progress, but does restrict their level of independence. However, pupils' past work frequently shows that sometimes all pupils do the same work and there is too little adaptation within the planning to take account of their learning needs. This is the case in several of the teaching sets in Years 5 and 6, where the activities are not challenging for the more able pupils within the set. The staff in Years 1 and 2 are new to the school, new to teaching or new to the country. They are working hard to get to grips with the curriculum, and with planning for two age groups, but at present, older more able pupils have too little challenge in some of the activities provided. More thought is needed about how to cater for wide differences in abilities during whole-class sessions.

112. Many teachers are skilled at introducing new learning to pupils in a step-by-step approach which is demonstrated clearly on the board. Good explanations, with a clear focus on learning key vocabulary, ensure that pupils, including those with English as an additional language, can understand and learn new terminology. In all classes, adults and pupils enjoy good relationships. This positive environment for learning, with well-established routines and expectations, and good management of pupils leads to good behaviour and a keen response from pupils. They show interest and enthusiasm for learning in most lessons, and good levels of concentration. Teachers use praise well to encourage pupils to answer questions and so they are not afraid to have a go. At times, pupils are positively bursting to get the chance to answer. Any errors are dealt with sensitively and used to reinforce teaching points. A good focus on practical activities helps to engage pupils' interest and reinforces their learning. The co-ordinator made excellent use of the interactive whiteboard as a teaching tool during the mathematics lesson observed, but computers were used rarely to reinforce pupils' skills in lessons. This weakness was noted at the last inspection. Teachers plan regular and relevant homework that reinforces pupils' skills.
113. Assessment procedures are good. The school uses a regular programme of testing to track pupils' attainment and the progress they make. A rigorous analysis of the errors pupils make highlights what needs to improve and helps the co-ordinator to set targets for curriculum improvement. At present there is a whole-school focus on problem solving which is reflected well in teachers' weekly planning. Assessment information is used well to set pupils into groups and to identify those who may need additional support or additional challenge. However, more use could be made of assessment information on a daily basis to sharpen teachers' planning of different activities for pupils.
114. The knowledgeable co-ordinator gives good leadership and support for colleagues. She is a good role model in her own teaching. Good monitoring of teaching in lessons, of planning and of pupils' work identifies areas for improvement. This has led to the formulation of a good quality subject action plan with relevant action to raise standards and clear targets for improvement. Regular training for staff has been given but has been undermined by the continuous turnover of teachers new to the school.
115. Despite weaknesses in pupils' attainment and the impact of instability in staffing the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is fully in place, and assessment procedures are good. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and good systems are in place for the subject to improve further.

## **SCIENCE**

116. Seven-year-olds attain well below average standards. Eleven-year-olds attain below average standards. Both make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning.

Pupils' attainment in test results during the recent years has been erratic. However, these figures rose in 2002 to be just below the national average, but above average in comparison with similar schools. Although the current standards show a decline from those reported in the previous inspection, there have been satisfactory improvements to provision in the subject. Boys and girls show similar attainments. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress when specialist staff support them. At other times, they make satisfactory progress. Pupils' progress is hindered by weaknesses in their writing skills, which restricts their capacity to write what they know and understand and to show what skills they have. Pupils with special educational needs frequently make good progress as a result of the good support they receive from classroom assistants.

117. Overall well below average standards of seven-year-olds are seen in all areas of science, especially in scientific enquiry. They know whether an object is pushed or pulled in order to move them. They know several appliances that use mains power or battery power. They understand that appliances use power to produce light, sound or movement. Below average standards of eleven-year-olds are reflected in all areas of science. By the age of eleven pupils use simple apparatus, such as a force meter. They know that water has upthrust and objects weigh less in water. Pupils understand some of the forces that act on moving objects. However, they do not relate the relative size of the forces that make the objects move in a particular direction. They understand and describe reversible change but the majority have not grasped the idea of irreversible change, especially that involving chemical change. There are weaknesses in their understanding of how to separate dissolved solids. Standards in investigative skills – planning independently, recording and drawing conclusions – are particularly weak.
118. Learning is satisfactory because of satisfactory teaching across the year groups. Learning is good or better in a few lessons. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils learned very well in a lesson which was very well planned, structured, organised and resourced and took account of pupils' previous knowledge and understanding of science and their weaknesses in English. Lesson objectives were clearly shared. The teacher made sure that pupils understood the key vocabulary. This was also helped by a good range of everyday objects, such as watch, clock, camera, game boy, Walkman, torch, battery operated toothbrush, mobile phone and toy car. Group work and clear direction ensured that pupils talked about appliances that might or might not use batteries. Effective discussion and close observation of batteries ensured that pupils understood that batteries have a positive end and a negative end. It also ensured that pupils understood that they need to insert these in appliances in the correct way in order to provide power. The use of one torch and two batteries per pupil and asking them to make the torch work reinforced new learning. Those few who were able to make it work more quickly than the others could not hide their enjoyment and immediately volunteered to help others. The lesson concluded by reinforcing learning by making each object work. However, the recording task was not well matched to pupils' differing needs. While overall teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, pupils' learning is sometimes depressed by pupils' lack of previous skills, knowledge and understanding of science. Teachers do not always take account of these gaps when planning using national guidance. For example, pupils' understanding of chemical change as an example of irreversible change was hampered by their lack of understanding of previous work on dissolving and separating mixtures. Learning of scientific enquiry is partly constrained by the size of classrooms, especially for Years 5 and 6 and partly by shortage of resources. Pupils' learning is also hindered by weaknesses in writing and insufficient matching of tasks to pupils' needs and, occasionally, teachers' lower expectations of pupils' recording. The way that adults work together in the classroom to promote the learning of all the pupils in the class and the management of pupils are common strengths of science lessons. Pupils are invariably co-operative and well motivated to learn effectively. They are keen to show appreciation of other pupils in class by spontaneous clapping.



119. The recently appointed co-ordinator has made a good start in leading the subject. She has analysed the performance of pupils in recent tests and identified weaknesses to help Year 6 teachers improve standards. She has audited resources and is continuing to order these where shortages have been identified, for example for scientific enquiry. She has also identified some other areas of weaknesses such as pupils' vocabulary, the use of ICT and tailoring tasks to pupils' needs. Currently there is insufficient focus on monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching in science. Procedures for assessment and the use of this information are satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

120. Pupils enter Year 1 with limited creative skills and by the age of seven, attainment in art and design is below that expected for their age. This is especially the case when they draw illustrations in their books or work on observational drawings where results are often disappointing because they have limited hand/eye control. However pupils generally make at least satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. By the age of eleven, many pupils including those identified as having special educational needs and English as an additional language, attain standards that are above expectations for their age. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Good teaching and access to the expertise of the Visual Learning Foundation teachers who work closely with classes during the year have helped to raise standards. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
121. The quality of teaching is good overall, which is better than that seen at the time of the last inspection when it was satisfactory. However, one poor lesson was seen in a Years 1 and 2 class which was due to weak pupil management. Very good teaching was seen in a Years 5 and 6 class and in a lesson taken by staff from the Visual Learning Foundation. Teachers of similar-aged pupils plan carefully together to ensure pupils have the same experiences and most interpret plans well. The purpose of the lesson is usually clearly shared with pupils so that they know what they will be doing and learning. Most teachers have high expectations and manage pupils well so that they are interested and keen to learn. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others and to say what they like and how things could be improved. Teachers provide good support and pupils' behaviour is usually very good because they are interested. When undertaking observational drawings, pupils are encouraged to look carefully at line, form and shape using a range of media such as charcoal, pastels and pencils. Most pupils respond well and show respect for what others do because of the good relationships. Lessons usually proceed at a good pace initially but some sessions are too long and pupils' start to lose concentration and interest. There are some good links with other subjects. For example pupils undertake observational drawings of Victorian toys linked to the history topic. Pupils' work is evident in displays around the school which shows their work is valued and raises their confidence and self-esteem. Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development and provides good opportunities for reflection on their own work and that of others. They have a sound understanding of terms such as 'tone' and 'shade' and are aware of famous artists like Van Gogh and Picasso.
122. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and sound management of the subject. Although teachers are given good support in using materials and techniques, there is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning to identify weaknesses and raise standards further and this is an area for development. The broad and stimulating curriculum is well planned using national guidance and commercial materials to ensure all areas, including two- and three-dimensional work, are covered. The curriculum map tracks topics on a two-year cycle to take account of the mixed-aged classes and the subject alternates with design and technology on a half-term basis. During the summer a carnival theme is followed which gives pupils good opportunities to be involved within the local community and undertake three-dimensional work. The school has good links with the Visual Learning Foundation housed in the school which

provides high quality teaching and support to the school. Art and design resources are good and are readily accessible in classrooms and the art room. There is also an art therapy room used by a small number of pupils who have behavioural and emotional problems. In 2002 the school undertook and achieved an Arts Gold Mark Award. There are good links with the community through local artists and visits to museums and exhibitions. The school displayed artwork in Kew Gardens last year celebrating pupils' achievements.

123. There are no whole-school assessment procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress in knowledge and skill development and this is a further area for development. A weakness in provision is the lack of planned use of ICT and this is an area for development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

124. Although no whole-class teaching was seen, an analysis of pupils' work, curriculum planning, discussions with teachers and pupils and observation of a lesson for a small group of Year 1 pupils indicate that the provision in the subject is satisfactory. This level of provision helps seven- and eleven-year-olds to make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards. Average standards and satisfactory progress of eleven-year-olds shows a satisfactory level of improvement from the previous report. There is no evidence of any significant differences in the achievements or standards of boys and girls or of those from different ethnic groups. In the group work seen, pupils with English as an additional language benefited from the social interaction between pupils.

125. The curriculum is satisfactory and marks an improvement since the previous inspection. It is based on the national guidance and is organised on a two-yearly cycle to cater for mixed-age classes. Units of work are alternated with art and design half-termy and this allows teachers to make link with units in other subjects such as science. Years 1 and 2 learn to design and make satisfactory quality products such as finger puppets. From the finished work it can be seen that pupils select materials from a good range and use appropriate tools and techniques to cut and join the various parts. They make fruit and vegetable salad. Years 3 and 4 pupils design and make pop-up cards and pop-up books with moving parts. Higher attaining pupils make effective use of wordprocessing to write their story. Lower attaining pupils use mainly pictures. They evaluate how well their picture frames meet the design requirement of stability, ease of use and who it is made for. Years 5 and 6 pupils design and make sound quality slippers, shelters and moving toys. They use the expected range of tools to process materials including wood, textile, card and plastic. Pupils are directed to research and reflect on shelters used by people in different countries.

126. Overall leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, though there are some weaknesses. The subject leader has audited and provided resources to match the demands of the scheme of work. The curriculum is now better organised and teachers are given appropriate guidance including published resources. However, monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are unsatisfactory as are the procedures for assessing attainment and progress. The subject does not make the expected use of ICT.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

127. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve expected standards as a result of satisfactory provision. These outcomes show a satisfactory improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language contribute useful ideas to discussions about geographical issues such as those arising from the development of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at Kings Cross. Mixed-ability grouping and effective support of classroom assistants help pupils with special educational needs to make progress that is comparable with their peers. Boys and girls show similar levels of interest.

128. Seven-year-olds attain average standards. They enjoy learning about Barnaby Bear's journeys to other places and what these places are like. They draw sketch maps of familiar places such as their school. They describe geographical features of their locality such as shops, banks, post office, school and church. They describe different types of houses. Eleven-year-olds carry out fieldwork such as surveying people's opinions about the effect of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at Kings Cross. Most pupils quote at least one positive and one negative effect of this development. Higher attaining pupils have a deeper understanding of the implications of this development. Pupils' knowledge of geographical patterns and processes is less well developed and their map skills are comparatively weaker than their knowledge of places.
129. Learning is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching. In Years 3 to 6, visits such as to the Isle of Wight, Newquay, York and France, make a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of other places. They learn about the importance of water and how water is cleaned. They understand the geographical features of a river and are familiar with the associated vocabulary. In Years 3 and 4 they learn about the importance of recycling paper, plastic and glass. They compare life of the local area with that of rural India and become aware of different ways of life influenced by the local climate and economy. Their geographical knowledge is often greater than they can express because of weaknesses in their writing. Insufficient use of ICT limits pupils' independent research skills and access to geographical information available through encyclopaedias and the Internet.
130. Pupils find geography interesting and are excited by work such as devising and carrying out a survey of people's opinions on local issues such as the Channel Tunnel rail link. Boys, girls and pupils of diverse backgrounds work well together and make an effective contribution to each other's learning.
131. It was possible to observe only one lesson. Analysis of pupils' current and past work, analysis of curriculum planning and discussion with the subject leader shows that teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers employ a satisfactory range of methods to help pupils learn. However, they do not always match tasks to pupils' learning and language needs, especially in written work. Higher attaining pupils are not given tasks, which are sufficiently challenging for them. Teachers also do not use enough graphs and tables to record geographical information. In general, teaching is well structured and organised. The teachers manage time and pupils well to help them make sustained progress.
132. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed subject leader has audited resources and improved their quality through new purchases, for example, maps, globes and aerial photographs. The curriculum is now better structured for sustained progress. These developments show satisfactory progress from the situation reported in the previous inspection. Monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are unsatisfactory, as are the procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress, but plans are in hand to address these areas for development.

## **HISTORY**

133. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards of attainment are in line with expected levels. These standards have been maintained successfully since the previous inspection. The school has adopted national guidelines for history to support teachers in their planning and to ensure that pupils cover a balanced curriculum. As a result, pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve soundly.

134. Staff and pupils share an enthusiasm for history that is reflected in the variety of artefacts and information books that are displayed prominently in classrooms. In turn, these make a positive contribution to the level of historical knowledge, understanding and skills achieved by pupils. A wide range of visits to places of interest enriches the history curriculum, for example to York in connection with pupils' work in Years 3 and 4 related to the Vikings.
135. In Year 2 pupils begin to develop their knowledge of the past through their study of Remembrance Day. History and literacy are linked well as pupils develop their speaking and listening skills through discussing why the poppy was chosen as a symbol. Similarly, in Years 5 and 6, history and literacy are linked well when pupils study the Victorian era. They investigate the types of work undertaken by children in Victorian times and in paired role-play rehearse questions and answers in readiness for taking the 'hot seat'. The pupils showed great empathy for their less fortunate predecessors and thereby developed successfully their spiritual awareness.
136. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory and this leads to sound learning. Planning is effective in providing a reasonable balance between teachers' explanations and pupils' activities. Tasks are set that take account of the various group needs within the class based on teachers' ongoing evaluation of lessons. However, there are some obvious areas for improvement. For example, teachers do not use time lines frequently to help pupils develop their sense of chronology. Neither do they use ICT to promote pupils' learning. In practice there is little evidence of more able pupils engaging in extended activities and limited opportunities for pupils of any ability to undertake individual research or develop skills of inquiry.
137. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has good subject knowledge. She has a clear understanding of how to lead the future development of the subject. She has already introduced national guidance to provide a basic curriculum. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress over time are unsatisfactory and she is seeking ways to improve these. Resources to support teaching and learning are sound in quality and range. Good use is made of the local Barnsbury Library to supplement the school's own resources and these are used effectively. In addition to residential visits, pupils go on local outings, for example to the Unicorn Theatre to see an adapted version of Great Expectations in connection with work related to the Victorians.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

138. The standards achieved by pupils in ICT are similar to those expected for their ages. Pupils are making good progress throughout the school. This is mainly due to the good teaching they are receiving and their interest in the subject. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory and progress was too slight. However, there is more to do to ensure that ICT is used regularly across all subjects to consolidate pupils' skills.
139. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to access a graphic program, to use and control the paintbrush tool and select colours from the palette in their drawings of a sunflower. At the end of the lesson pupils are able to save their work and 'log-off' from the computer. In one lesson observed the teacher's good planning, use of resources in the form of a model sunflower, which the pupils copied, and good subject expertise had a positive influence on the pupils' learning. In their use of a 'Smartboard', an interactive whiteboard which shows the computer display, pupils demonstrated their skills in dragging and dropping items.
140. Pupils, by the end of Year 6, are able to use a desktop publishing program to combine text and pictures. In their study of multi-media presentation pupils are able to produce a series of 'slides' containing text and pictures. They are able to change the background colour of slides

and insert a border design, text and pictures. They are also able to use text effects which control the way in which text appears, for example text appearing from the right of the screen, word by word. This latter was the result of the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject which motivated pupils to experiment with visual effects.

141. Pupils enjoy using computers; they take turns when working in pairs and examples were observed of the more able pupils helping the less able. They co-operate very well with their teachers in computer lessons and, generally, are proud of their achievements. The recent provision of a computer suite with 21 computers has increased the pupils' practical taught time in the subject which is helping to improve further their attainment in the subject.
142. The teaching of ICT in lessons in the suite is never less than good throughout the school with one example of very good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge, even though some are new to the school and have not benefited yet from the training in ICT. Lessons are well planned and teachers give their pupils clear instructions and expectations. They demonstrate new skills well, and make good use of questioning to guide their pupils' learning. However, on occasion, too many skills are demonstrated and pupils have difficulty in remembering them. There is little evidence of the more able pupils being challenged at an appropriate level and teachers do not set different work for the lower ability pupils.
143. The co-ordinator provides good management and leadership of the subject. There is a developing culture of ICT in the school following the subject's focus in the school's improvement plan. The co-ordinator actively promotes the acquisition of new skills through in-school support for colleagues. However the full range of ICT opportunities is not yet available. The monitoring of events, such as changes in temperature using heat sensors and detecting changes in light using light sensors are presently under-developed. However, the school has such sensors in a spreadsheet program 'Number Magic' which is available on both computers in the classroom and in the ICT suite and plans are in place for future use. The school has this term adopted national guidance as a scheme of work to ensure a breadth of coverage of skills, and has reorganised units of work to cater for mixed-age classes. A new system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress which dovetails with the new scheme has been devised but is not yet fully operational. Although there is some assessment and recording being undertaken through the evaluation of teachers' weekly planning sheets there is no overview of pupils' learning to ensure continuity while the school changes from the old system to the new. At present, the school has no systematic procedures for assessing standards or for using information to guide curricular planning; this is unsatisfactory. However, plans are in place to address this weakness within the very near future.
144. The use of ICT to support subject teaching and learning in all year groups is unsatisfactory. There was little evidence during the inspection of such a use of ICT. This was also the finding of the examination of pupils' work. Teachers are not sufficiently aware of the availability of subject specific software that the school has and so do not plan its use into their subject medium-term schemes of work. The routine monitoring of such planning and of teaching of ICT within subjects is not yet established; this is unsatisfactory.

## **MUSIC**

145. The evidence for the quality of class music in Years 1 and 2 is too limited to make secure judgements about standards, teaching and learning. In the short lesson seen, curtailed by a late return from swimming, most pupils sang tunefully with clear diction and a good sense of rhythm following the good lead by the class teacher. In Years 3 to 6, standards are similar to those expected for pupils' ages. This is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection. However, other aspects of provision in music have improved since then. Pupils are achieving soundly in learning to use an increasing range of musical terms and vocabulary and developing an understanding of musical elements. They listen well to pieces of music

and respond sensitively to the mood it creates. Their achievement in singing is good. This is because of the whole-school initiative to participate in the Voices Foundation project, funded by the Education Action Zone, during this academic year. The philosophy behind this scheme is that the voice is used initially as the main instrument for exploring musical elements. Pupils are learning to pitch songs correctly as well as learning good techniques and habits for singing and performing.

146. Pupils' singing is of a good standard. It is tuneful with a good awareness of pace, phrasing and timing. Pupils are aware of dynamics and show a good sense of rhythm. Their singing in assembly contributes much to the spiritual atmosphere. For example, the well controlled singing of 'Where have all the flowers gone?' in the Remembrance Day assembly made a significant contribution to the sombre mood and atmosphere. Pupils sang with feeling and an awareness of the song's significance.
147. Teaching is satisfactory. It follows closely the methods recommended by the Voices Foundation, which for some teachers is a departure from their previous methods of teaching. There are strengths in the way that teachers use and reinforce musical terms and vocabulary frequently. Where the teachers' own voices are strong and they are confident, they give a good lead for the unaccompanied singing; this helps to maintain quality and accuracy of pitch. However, some class teachers are not strong at leading singing and so are not yet able to extend or challenge pupils' performance further. Despite this lack of confidence, all staff have a good level of commitment to the new methods and a willingness to persevere with the new style of teaching. Teachers are supported well by support staff who often contribute to lessons by leading a group during two-part singing. All pupils are encouraged to join in well and participation levels are high, particularly among the pupils in Years 5 and 6. There is a sense of enjoyment and achievement captured in their efforts to sing both in unison and in two parts. Teachers' good management of pupils, clear expectations of behaviour and praise for their efforts inspires most pupils to work hard. However, during those lessons held at the end of the day there was a growing restlessness that required teachers to work hard at managing the pupils. Activities are planned to promote good listening skills, both when performing and when listening to pieces of music, which are chosen well to prompt a response from pupils. Teachers prepare pupils well for listening to music by telling them what to listen for. This is good training. A weaker aspect is that teachers do not give pupils opportunities to evaluate their own performance or that of others. At present, as the scheme and its methods become established, lessons focus mainly on whole-class performances that are led by teachers, and are not yet offering opportunities for developing pupils' creativity in composing or improvising music. These elements will be developed as teachers gain confidence.
148. The subject is led well by two enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinators who are both musicians with considerable expertise to offer in support of colleagues. They are raising the profile of music in the school and have pioneered the school's participation in the Voices Foundation project. This offers training and development to raise teachers' expertise as well as regular observation and feedback on lessons by an advisory teacher. Although the advisory teacher makes informal assessments during lessons, as yet, there are no specific procedures for assessing pupils' musical attainment and progress; this is unsatisfactory and remains an area for development.
149. The school is making good efforts to broaden pupils' musical education by offering a good range of additional experiences outside of class lessons. Additional singing sessions each week plus the choir, recorder groups and brass tuition extend pupils' opportunities. The lunchtime choir rehearsals are very well attended by about 50 pupils from Years 3 to 6. Their excellent efforts, determination and concentration were justly rewarded by the warm appreciation of their peers when they performed in assembly. The quality of their singing is high; a close reflection of the efforts of the two members of staff who take rehearsals and, through practice, improve the quality of pupils' performance. Visiting musicians include jazz

singers, funded through the Education Action Zone, and African drummers who lead workshops that introduce pupils to a widening range of musical styles and make a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development. Singing is a significant element of assemblies and of school life in general which contributes much to pupils' personal development. The school's performance of Yanomamo in the summer term was much appreciated by the parents who attended. As well as offering good opportunities for pupils to develop teamwork and self-esteem through their performance, its theme of the rainforest raised pupils' awareness of environmental issues. At present, pupils make little use of ICT in music but plans are in place to address this deficit in the spring term with a project in which pupils will use computers to compose music. Music has a high profile within the school and makes an important contribution to school life in general.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

150. The physical education programme includes all the essential elements of the National Curriculum. However, during the week of the inspection it was possible to observe only games, gymnastics and dance. Other than dance it was not possible to observe any physical education in Year 6 because these class activities were planned to take place outside the time allocated for the inspection. Available evidence indicates that the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. There have been improvements in some areas.
151. By the end of Year 2 most pupils reach the expected levels. By the end of Year 6 most pupils also reach the expected levels in most aspects of the programmes of study. However, as a result of improvements in dance provision, pupils in Years 5 and 6 now attain well. Recorded evidence shows that by Year 6 most pupils exceed the statutory requirement for swimming in distance awards and this represents a further strength. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are integrated fully into lessons. As a result of teachers' careful strategies to engage all pupils actively in their learning most achieve at a similar rate to their peers. There is no difference in performance between boys and girls.
152. There are good opportunities for pupils to improve further their skills in physical education in extra-curricular activities. Some are seasonal but currently they include football, rounders, dance and gymnastics. In turn, pupils become more competent and proficient in these activities. This is reflected in their performance during normal lessons, especially dance, and also in local competitive events. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to participate in residential outings that enhance learning. For example, in their five-day stay on the Isle of Wight, Year 4 pupils engaged in trampolining, dragon boating and aquafun amongst other activities. Year 6 pupils develop orienteering, map and compass skills both on site and also when attending a residential field studies centre at Cardfields.
153. In games, pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their ability to control a ball with a tennis racquet through improved hand-eye co-ordination. They are interested in the activity, listen attentively and work well with a partner. In Year 5 pupils attain well in dance because of excellent teaching. They develop and refine their dance sequences successfully in response to well chosen mood music. They work well in pairs and enjoy performing for their peers. This learning is particularly good because it provides for a fully inclusive experience. All pupils are enabled to build incrementally on their prior experiences and achieve a high level of success in their performances. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through performance and through the links to art and music.
154. The quality of teaching in the two lessons observed in Years 1 and 2 was good and this resulted in good learning with pupils attaining the expected level. The quality of teaching in the four lessons observed in Years 3 to 6 was within the range of satisfactory to excellent. Overall it was good. This led to satisfactory attainment overall except in the excellent dance lesson where attainment was above the expected level. Excellent teaching is characterised by expert

knowledge, very good planning that builds on pupils' prior learning, high expectations, brisk pace and critical analysis that leads to further improvement in pupils' performance. In satisfactory teaching the noise level is excessive and the pace of learning slows because the teacher has to frequently regroup the pupils and remind them to pay attention. Matters relating to personal, social and health education are addressed well. For example, all pupils and teachers dress appropriately for physical education. Proper attention is paid to health and safety requirements but these do not inhibit the pupils' spirit of discovery and adventure.

155. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has good subject knowledge. She has completed an audit of physical education and has a clear understanding of how to lead the future development of the subject. She has already introduced a national scheme of work to provide a basic curriculum. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress over time are unsatisfactory and she is seeking ways to develop these. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory in range and quality. The two halls suffer from poor acoustics. The school playground is used extensively for physical education but it is very cramped and the surface is uneven. There is no grassed area but the school makes good use of the Astroturf surface at the nearby Islington Sports Centre as well as its indoor tennis facilities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

156. At the time of the last inspection, the school was not meeting statutory requirements in religious education and pupils' attainment and progress were poor. This is no longer the case and the school now complies with requirements. However, progress on raising standards has been insufficient since the last inspection and pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education at ages seven and eleven is still below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
157. Pupils enter Year 1 with literacy skills that are well below average and this hinders their ability to fully access the curriculum by age seven. Achievement of pupils, including those identified with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is unsatisfactory by ages seven and eleven. All pupils are fully included in all activities. There is no significant difference between boys and girls. During the past two years, the emphasis has been on raising standards in literacy, numeracy and science and religious education has had a low profile. The recently introduced termly guidance provides a sound structure for delivering the agreed syllabus requirements but has not yet had time to raise standards.
158. By the age of seven, pupils are developing an understanding of Christian festivals, such as Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter, through the recently introduced curriculum guidance. They learn about celebrations and festivals of other faiths such as Sukkot, Ramadan, Divali and Hannukah. Activities are designed to reinforce their understanding but are not always sufficiently challenging. Although pupils have some understanding of how and why Christians celebrate Christmas there is uncertainty over the significance of giving gifts. Their knowledge and understanding of stories and characters from the Bible is below expectations and they have little understanding of places of worship.
159. By the age of eleven, pupils' knowledge is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They have, for example, little knowledge and understanding of places of worship, holy books or religious figures of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism or Islam and the importance of these for believers. Although they have some awareness of Christian ceremonies such as baptism, marriage and funerals they are unaware of the significance of these and differences in other religions. Few can describe the inside of a church and the significance of the furniture found inside, such as the altar and font. There is limited evidence of extended writing in pupils' workbooks.



160. The quality of teaching seen during inspection was satisfactory overall with good teaching seen in a Years 5 and 6 class and a poor lesson in Years 1 and 2. The poor lesson was due to poor pupil management. Lessons are carefully planned using the new guidance. Most teachers introduce lessons by explaining the purpose of the session so that pupils are aware of what they are learning. However, there is a lack of expectation and challenge in some activities so that the more able pupils are not challenged enough. Most lessons begin at a brisk pace but sessions are often too long which means pupils find it difficult to maintain interest. Teachers' knowledge and understanding and confidence in teaching religious education are variable and this has an effect on the quality of learning. Pupils are given good opportunities to undertake focused conversations in lessons which develops pupils' knowledge and understanding and promotes personal and social development. Most pupils are attentive especially when the pace is brisk. Some opportunities are provided to act out activities, such as the story of the Good Samaritan as seen in a Years 5 and 6 class, which develops further understanding of learning from religion. However, there is a lack of challenging and imaginative use of literacy in different ways, for example writing as a reporter, or translating a story into a modern-day example so that pupils learn from religion. In a few classes there are some sensitive and informative displays, although there are few in corridors to raise the profile of the subject.
161. The co-ordinator provides sound support to colleagues and provides satisfactory leadership and management. The revised locally agreed syllabus was published in July of this year and the co-ordinator has produced sound curriculum guidance for the mixed-aged classes for the current year. Teachers of similar-aged pupils plan together to ensure pupils receive similar lessons but from looking at pupils' books it is clear that lesson plans are not being interpreted or implemented rigorously enough in all classes. The subject has not been a priority within the school and there has been no effective monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that the subject is being taught effectively in all classes. There is some informal monitoring of planning but no focused monitoring of standards against the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Links with the local churches and faith groups are underdeveloped and the school does not make enough use of the faith and cultural groups within the school community. The co-ordinator has rightly identified this as an area for development. There is a satisfactory range of resources, including videos to support learning of other religions, but not all staff are aware of what is available. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.