

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bethnal Green, London

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100953

Headteacher: Miss Kathryn Rhodes

Reporting inspector: Mr Michael Raven
3961

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 May 2003

Inspection number: 246094

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 5 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Peel Grove
Bethnal Green
London

Postcode: E2 9LR

Telephone number: 020 8980 1142

Fax number: 020 8983 6112

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Fr Alan Green

Date of previous inspection: May 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3961	M Raven	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Education inclusion Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9736	J Brasier	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18370	K Johnson	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
20003	S Metcalfe	Team inspector	Science Geography History Foundation Stage English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's Primary School is a Church of England school serving an ethnically mixed population of boys and girls aged from three to eleven years. There are 220 pupils on roll. Seven children attend the Nursery part-time and twenty are full-time. Just under two in ten pupils are of Bangladeshi origin. Around four in ten come from a White British background. The remaining school population is made up of small numbers of pupils from a range of other minority ethnic groups, including Black African, Indian and Chinese. Sixty-eight pupils are learning English as an additional language, which is very high proportion compared with primary schools nationally. However, few are at an early stage of acquiring the language. The most common community language spoken is Bengali. Yoruba and Gujarati are also spoken, and a range of other languages is represented. Thirty-eight pupils have special educational needs, which is a lower than average proportion for schools of this type. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is average. Pupils' special educational needs cover a typical range of learning, behavioural, speech, sensory and physical difficulties. Almost half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well over double the national average. Most children start Nursery with levels of personal, social and emotional development which are similar to those usually found nationally at this age. Their language skills, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are also broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is improving but it is not yet as effective as it might be. Standards are too low, most significantly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there are some important weaknesses and there is too little good quality teaching. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but there are some significant weaknesses offsetting some strengths. The school does not provide good enough value for money, because costs are high and the outcomes are not as good as they should be.

What the school does well

- The school promotes pupils' personal development very well, so that pupils generally behave well and respond enthusiastically to their lessons and other activities.
- Relationships are very good and there is a high degree of racial and ethnic tolerance and harmony.
- The governing body understands its role very well and now plays an effective role in guiding school development and improvement.
- The recently appointed headteacher has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what needs to be done to improve the quality of education offered and raise standards.
- Both the governing body and the headteacher have a clear and convincing commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT, physical education and music.
- The quality of teaching, so that there is a much higher proportion of good teaching and teachers expect more of pupils, especially the most able.
- The leadership and management of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Permanent managers are urgently needed to co-ordinate science and ICT.
- The leadership and management role of the deputy headteacher.
- Resources for the teaching and learning of ICT and the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in the other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected two years ago, in May 2001. At that time it was found to have serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the governing body, headteacher and key staff. There has been good improvement since then, most notably in the quality of leadership and management. The school has a number of new governors, including a new chair of governors, and the governing body has recently been successful in appointing a new headteacher. Sound progress has been made overall on the other key issues for action identified by the previous inspection, including the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language and checking on what pupils know, understand and can do. Much of the improvement is recent and it is not yet reflected in standards.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2001	2002
English	D	D	E	C
Mathematics	D	E	C	A
Science	C	E	C	A

Key

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

In all three subjects, although a high proportion of pupils reached the nationally expected level in last year's national tests, few exceeded it, and none did so in English. Boys have been doing much less well than girls on average over the past three years. Standards in all three subjects were similar to the average for other schools in the borough, although attainment on entry is higher than the borough average. **This means that pupils at St John's do not achieve as well as might be expected, given their starting point.**

In the Year 2 tests and assessments last year, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were all well below the national average, although in reading they were in line with the standards achieved in similar schools. Compared with the borough average, standards in writing and mathematics were low, although they were average in reading. The low standards in writing and mathematics again reflect under-achievement. As in the Year 6 tests, few pupils exceeded expected levels, and none did so in writing. There has been no convincing trend of improvement in pupils' test performance over the past four years, with standards rising one year only to fall again the next in Year 6 and with more or less continuous low standards in Year 2.

The analysis of the 2002 Year 6 test results by ethnicity suggests lower achievement in English and mathematics by pupils of Bangladeshi background than other groups, but very small numbers are involved in these analyses and no firm conclusions may be drawn. The inspection found no overall differences in attainment associated with ethnicity, first language or gender. The analysis of the performance of pupils for whom English is an additional language shows no great difference from the average for the school.

The inspection shows that in Year 6, standards in English are similar to last year's. In mathematics and science they are currently below average. **In all three subjects there is too little evidence of high achievement and too many pupils are achieving below expectations for their age.**

In Year 2, standards in reading and science are similar to the national average, but in writing and mathematics they are below average. The differences in standards this year from last continue to reflect the erratic trend from one year to the next, with standards sometimes rising, sometimes falling, as staff

come and go. The school now sets realistic and challenging targets for pupils' achievement in Year 6 tests in English and mathematics.

Standards in ICT are below average in Years 2 and 6 and throughout the school. They are also below average in music and physical education. In the other subjects, standards are broadly similar to those usually found nationally in Years 2 and 6. The children currently in the Nursery and Reception classes are mostly on course to reach expected levels of personal development and acquire sound skills in all the areas of learning for children of this age by the time they move up to Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are happy to come to school and take part enthusiastically in all that is on offer, making a good effort.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In most classes pupils listen carefully and politely to their teachers and behave sensibly. They move about the school in an orderly fashion and behave responsibly in the playgrounds and as they go out of school, for example for swimming lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The different ethnic and faith groups work and play harmoniously together, respecting one another's feelings and beliefs.
Attendance	Below the national average but improving steadily in response to the school's vigorous efforts to encourage better attendance and punctuality.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching varies from class to class. There are real strengths, particularly in Year 6 and the Nursery, where teaching is stimulating and imaginative, promoting good attitudes to learning and good achievement. However, there are some important weaknesses, most notably in Year 5, where teachers have considerable difficulty in controlling the class. Here, pupils do not learn much and they are developing unsatisfactory attitudes to learning and to other people. There is too little good quality teaching in the school as a whole, and too much which is just satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could and standards are not as high as they might be. The teaching of English and mathematics, including reading, writing and the use of numbers, is satisfactory overall. The needs of pupils from different ethnic and language backgrounds are now being met reasonably well. The evidence is that this is a recent development, which has come about with the appointment of a new manager for English as an additional language and minority ethnic group provision. The needs of those who have special educational needs are met satisfactorily on a day-to-day basis, although the management of this provision needs improvement. Teachers still expect too little of the most able, so that they do not fulfil their potential.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, having improved significantly since the previous inspection. Significant weaknesses in the English and mathematics curriculum have been overcome. Too little use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. There are still few activities offered outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. They are helped to have full access to the curriculum through individual and small group support in lessons and through suitably modified work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory, having improved well recently. Well co-ordinated support in lessons helps these pupils to have access to the full curriculum so that they are now making reasonable progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Adults set a clear standard of moral and social behaviour and provide good role models. More could be made of the cultural richness and diversity of the local area to promote pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are now good procedures for checking on pupils' attainment and progress. The procedures are beginning to be used effectively to help teachers to identify pupils' needs and plan how best to meet them. Child protection and welfare procedures are secure.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory, but there is an historical sense of distance which still has to be overcome.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall and very much improved since the previous inspection. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. She has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to bring about improvement and has already made some significant changes since taking up the post. She has started to develop an effective senior management team. However, there are important weaknesses in the roles of key staff. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are unsatisfactory. The leadership role of the deputy head is at a very early stage of development. Some key subjects and one foundation subject lack a permanent manager.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body has improved very well since the previous inspection. It is now effective in its role in shaping the educational direction of the school and advising on how to spend the budget in order to support school development and improvement priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Much improved since the previous inspection. There is now a good programme for the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching. There has been some helpful analysis of pupils' performance in tests and assessments. However, in some areas there is still too little systematic monitoring and evaluation. This is the case, for example, in special educational needs provision, which is not effectively monitored, and in ICT.
The strategic use of	Satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the principles

resources	of best value, which are soundly applied. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The school uses its money generally wisely, for example by providing good quality support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. However, the time and money allocated to the management of special educational needs provision could be better used.
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The school has no choice but to depend on a high proportion of temporary teachers, which is unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in learning resources, most notably for ICT. The accommodation is adequate, but more flexible use could be made of the space available for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school is well led and managed. • Behaviour is good. • They would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The range of activities offered outside lessons. • The school's working partnership with parents.

The inspection team generally agrees with parents' views, both positive and negative.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There are a number of reasons why standards are low and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. At the moment, pupils do not achieve as well as pupils at other schools in the borough, who start from a lower average starting point and yet reach similar standards by the age of eleven. The reasons for this low attainment mostly relate to the past, and the weak leadership and management found at the previous inspection. The governing body and headteacher are moving decisively and effectively at present to overcome the factors which caused the low achievement. However, the effects on standards are, unsurprisingly, not yet evident. Another key factor holding down standards and achievement has been the difficulty which the school has suffered, and continues to suffer, in recruiting and retaining good quality permanent teachers. Past inadequacies in the use of national guidance on teaching literacy and numeracy have also held down standards. The inadequacy of teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress and the consequent failure to identify and meet the learning needs of the full range of pupils have also been important.
2. The previous inspection found little evidence of a focus by the headteacher and governing body on raising standards. There was little monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching. That which was undertaken was not used to bring about improvement. There were inadequacies in the programme for the professional development of teachers and there was no policy for performance management.
3. The school shares with many other city schools the difficulty in the recruitment and retention of good quality teachers. It means that the school has to rely to a considerable extent on temporary staff, often technically unqualified in this country. Such teachers are generally unfamiliar with the British education system and most significantly, often lack any training in the use of national guidance on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The temporary nature of their appointments is such that they may be engaged on a day-to-day basis. Some leave at very short notice, or none at all, as happened just as the headteacher took up her appointment in January of this year. Records show, for example, that the present Year 5 class has experienced only three years when the teacher stayed throughout the full year, out of its seven years in school since starting in the Nursery. This class is currently taught by a temporary teacher on a daily contract, who has been supported by a permanent member of staff for the past few weeks.
4. At the time of the last inspection there were significant weaknesses in the curriculum. These related most importantly to literacy and numeracy. National guidance had been adopted, but the practice in the teaching of reading, writing and the use of numbers was inconsistent, varying from class to class. There were weaknesses in the curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT). Although there have been good improvements in the curriculum, and most significantly in the provision for literacy and numeracy, weaknesses remain. In ICT learning resources are inadequate, teachers have not received up to date training, and there is no substantive subject manager. This means that ICT is not used enough to enhance pupils' learning in the other subjects.
5. At the time of the last inspection the school was failing to meet the needs of key groups of pupils, most significantly those from minority ethnic groups and those learning

English as an additional language. The achievement of pupils whose mother tongue is not English has improved significantly since the previous inspection, although much of this improvement has come about only recently, with changes in the leadership and management of this work. It is now good in the Nursery. Across the rest of the school it is satisfactory overall. Achievement varies from class to class, with the quality of teaching and the extent to which class teachers draw upon and use to full effect the expertise and support of the specialist teacher. Some very good work with pupils for whom English is an additional language was observed, for example, in Year 6. Teachers now have more information about pupils' language needs. They plan activities to meet these needs more closely. Older pupils, when supported by the specialist teacher in lessons, make good progress in whatever subject is on the class timetable. Because of the high numbers of pupils and their spread across the school, ethnic minority pupils are represented at all ability levels and standards in all subjects.

6. Because the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress was unsatisfactory, teachers did not have accurate information about pupils' learning needs. They were not, therefore, in a position to plan work to meet these differing needs. The impact of this failing is reflected clearly in the under-achievement of the most able. Just as was the case in last year's national tests and assessments, it is still the case that few pupils achieve beyond the expected levels for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. For example, in last year's tests for eleven year olds, no pupils exceeded the nationally expected level in English, although one in three pupils did so nationally and two in ten did so in the local area, despite a lower average starting point at the age of four.
7. Although pupils in Year 6 are positive in their attitudes to reading and are now making steady progress, their skills lag behind the average for their age. Their attainment clearly reflects the instabilities in teaching and inadequacies in the school's past strategies for teaching reading which they have experienced for much of their time in school. About two thirds of the pupils, both boys and girls, have reading skills similar to those more usually found in Year 4. In other words, they are about two years behind. There is very little evidence of high achievement in reading. Most pupils read with some hesitation, stumbling over some words, and without much confidence. Their skills in tackling unfamiliar words, for example by sounding them out, are less well developed than might be expected at this age. They have trouble with words such as *indigestion*, for example, which would not defeat most eleven year olds. This limits the extent to which they can enjoy reading independently, for pleasure and to access information. The expressiveness of their reading suffers as a result of their lack of confidence and fluency, as does their ability to understand what they read.
8. Pupils' skills in writing in Year 6 are similarly under developed, with around two thirds working two years or so behind expectations and few reaching the higher levels typically reached by about a third of pupils by the end of Year 6. Little use is made of adventurous vocabulary in writing, to bring things to life. Spelling is weak, with much misspelling of simple words, such as *path*, *minutes* and *stepped*. Descriptive writing lacks detail and is poorly organised. The use of simple punctuation is inconsistent and insecurely understood. Handwriting is often immature and irregular, and is more typical of younger pupils.
9. The picture of under-achievement is very similar in mathematics, with a high proportion of Year 6 pupils functioning about two years behind their age level and few reaching the higher levels. For example, as they worked on problem-solving in a mathematics lesson observed, more than half the class tackled exercises designed for pupils in Year 4. Although they could explain their thinking about problem-solving reasonably well,

they had only limited strategies for solving problems in their own way. Of the remaining pupils, half worked at a level about a year behind their age, and only around six pupils completed Year 6 level work successfully.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Relationships are very good, especially racial harmony, and attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good.
11. Pupils enjoy school. They are enthusiastic in most lessons, except where teachers have difficulty controlling the class, and get on well with their teachers and other adults. They are welcoming to visitors and take an interest in them. Once in class they mainly get down to work well and show a genuine interest in their work, especially in answering questions. These good attitudes are due to the very good relationships between pupils and teachers and the enthusiasm shown by most teachers for their subjects.
12. Behaviour is good. It is good around the school, at lunchtime, in the playground, and in most lessons. What stops it from being very good is a number of pupils, mainly in Year 5, who have yet to learn to control their behaviour and adopt the Golden Rules that other pupils accept and support. Only one pupil has been excluded in recent times, although this was necessary on a number of different occasions. At lunchtime, pupils talk to each other socially. They look after the premises and help to keep the school in good condition. Oppressive behaviour such as bullying, racism and sexism is rare and the pupils we spoke to could not recall any incidents. This is very good and significant in light of the school's ethnically diverse population.
13. Personal development is good. There are several good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, such as membership of the school council, acting as milk monitors, helping younger children read and play, tallying house points, looking after the physical education equipment and contributing to the production of a school newspaper. There are, however too few opportunities provided for pupils to carry out independent research, as there is no library and Internet access is limited. The school attempts to overcome this problem by sometimes setting research tasks for homework.
14. Relationships are very good. Teachers know their pupils well and enjoy working with them. Friendships cross all racial and ethnic boundaries and boys and girls work socialise well together. Pupils are supportive of each other and are very concerned about friends facing difficulties. For instance, pupils talked about how they helped a friend who was having a difficult time outside school.
15. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It is worse than at the time of the previous inspection two years ago. Unauthorised absence is well above the average for primary schools. The deterioration is due to a lack of attention to this issue on the part of senior management in the past, coupled with temporary appointments and interim staffing arrangements. There is now a highly focused team in place tackling the problem. Very careful records are kept and a weekly competition between the classes encourages pupils to strive to win the award for the best attendance and punctuality. The education social worker responsible for attendance works closely with the school and confirms that the issues of non-attendance and lateness are now being taken seriously and that the good systems in place are bringing about the required improvements. The school day starts on time and there is good timekeeping throughout the day. Daily registration is efficient.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The teaching is not as strong as that usually seen nationally when primary schools are inspected. It is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. The evidence of the lessons seen and pupils' work analysed shows that, although teaching is broadly satisfactory, taking the school as a whole, there is unacceptable variation in its quality, which ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. There is much less good quality teaching than is usual in primary schools, and a relatively high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Fewer than four lessons in ten were good and around one in ten was unsatisfactory. There was very little high quality teaching. Nationally, around seven in every ten lessons are of good quality and around three in ten are very good or excellent.
17. The teaching is at its best at some key points in the school, which is important. In Year 6 and in the Nursery the teaching is good. The Nursery teacher had been in post less than one full week at the time of the inspection. The specialist teaching for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, and those from minority ethnic groups, has improved well since the previous inspection. It is now of good quality, skilled and effective. There are important weaknesses in Year 5. Elsewhere, a combination of very experienced and established teachers, newly qualified teachers and temporary staff are doing a reasonable job. There has been a tightening up of the procedures for monitoring, supporting and guiding less experienced teachers since the previous inspection, and this is increasingly effective.
18. The best teaching has certain distinguishing features, which marks it out from that which is less successful. It is carefully planned, based on a clear assessment and understanding of pupils' varying learning needs. Particular attention is paid to meeting the needs of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language. This was seen, for example, in the Nursery, where lesson plans clearly identified these children and spelled out activities and vocabulary specifically suited to them. In a good Year 6 mathematics lesson the planning clearly defined the roles of both the class teacher and the specialist teacher in meeting the needs of the different groups of pupils. This was translated into effective action, as the two teachers co-operated very well together, emphasising the use of language and encouraging pupils to strive to explain their mathematical reasoning. The planning for this lesson also clearly identified four different ability groups and work was carefully planned to meet their particular learning needs. This is a good example of how teachers are now making some effective use of assessment information to plan to meet pupils' needs – a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Although boys have performed much less strongly than girls in national tests over the past few years, the teaching seen during the inspection met the learning needs of boys and girls equally well.
19. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and how much they can achieve. This is an important improvement, particularly in light of the finding that there is significant under achievement, most notably in English. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson as pupils considered arguments for and against the use of mobile phones in school, the teacher made very good use of challenging questions in order to make the pupils think hard and try to find the right words to express their ideas. Lessons proceed at a brisk and stimulating pace. They engender good levels of interest and enthusiasm, promoting positive attitudes to learning.
20. Good understanding of how to teach the basic skills underpins the most effective teaching. The planning for lessons in the Nursery reflects a clear understanding of the *Foundation Stage* curriculum, for children of this age. In particular, strong emphasis is placed on activities which contribute to the children's essential personal, social and emotional development and communication and language skills. In Year 6, good

understanding and use of national guidance on the teaching of reading, writing and the use of numbers is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Although many are far behind for their age, the lessons seen and the work analysed shows that they are now making good progress and catching up.

21. There is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching in Reception and Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. The most significant weakness is the under-expectation and lack of challenge for the most able, which results in some untapped potential and holds down standards overall. This is reflected clearly in the English work in Years 2, 3 and 5, where the amount of independent writing expected of the most able is too slight. In Year 2, although appropriate targets for improvement are set at the start of the year, progress towards them is not pursued rigorously enough. The marking of pupils' work is too generous and gives pupils too little direction on what is needed to bring about improvement. Too little is done to match work closely to pupils' learning needs, particularly to provide enough challenge for the most able. However, there are signs that this is starting to improve as the school develops better systems and skills for gathering and analysing information about pupils' attainment and checking on the progress that they are making. In Years 3 – 6 homework is used only sporadically to support pupils' learning in school. Parents are concerned about this, and rightly so.
22. Pupils do not learn well enough in Year 5. This class has had a very unsatisfactory time in school, experiencing far too many changes of teacher over the past seven years. Currently, the teaching is not fulfilling the very considerable task of meeting their diverse learning, personal, social and emotional needs. Most pupils are not fully engaged in lessons for much of the time. Those who do try to work – for example about a third of the class in an ICT lesson observed – are prevented from doing so by the noise and because the teachers are too busy trying to control the rest to do any effective teaching. Neither teacher employs any effective strategies for controlling the class. Teachers use a combination of appeals, threats and incentives – none of which has much effect.

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

23. The quality of the curriculum has improved well since the last inspection and it is now satisfactory overall. National guidelines are now used to support teachers' planning for lessons. This ensures adequate coverage of most subjects, including English and mathematics, and the smooth progression of pupils' learning as they move up through the school. An important improvement is that national guidance on the teaching of literacy and numeracy has been adopted in full since the previous inspection and become firmly established. Weaknesses remain in the provision for ICT due largely to inadequate resources and lack of a permanent subject manager. There are also weaknesses in the provision for the most able pupils to take the curriculum to higher levels. Too few activities are offered outside lessons.
24. National Curriculum requirements are generally met. All the required subjects are taught including religious education and personal, social and health education. There are some opportunities for pupils to use and apply ICT as they learn in the other subjects, as required by the National Curriculum, but not as many as there might be. The school is following a sound teaching programme for personal, social and health education and time is allocated when pupils can engage in class discussion about social and moral issues. There is a suitable recognised programme in use for the teaching of sex and relationships education. Drugs awareness linked to healthier lifestyles is approached through the science curriculum, but the school recognises that

a more specific programme is required to help pupils become more aware of possible dangers.

25. Strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy are satisfactory. Teachers use the national frameworks for these subjects to plan lessons thoughtfully. There is an appropriate emphasis on basic literacy skills. Letter sounds are taught thoroughly in the early years so pupils' reading is given a satisfactory start. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are consolidated in literacy lessons but more time is needed for pupils to apply these skills in extended writing. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their reading and writing skills as they learn in other subjects. Basic numeracy skills such as counting and the recognition and use of numbers get off to a sound start in the Nursery and Reception classes and are built on steadily as pupils move up through the school. However, there is little evidence of pupils applying their skills in other subjects.
26. The curriculum provided for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes, at the *Foundation Stage* of learning, is good. It is soundly based on national guidance and provides a wide range of interesting and worthwhile experiences in all the six areas of learning for children of this age.
27. Access to the full range of learning opportunities for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those learning English as an additional language, is now broadly satisfactory. This has improved recently.
28. Pupils who have special educational needs, including those with Statements of special needs, receive support which generally enables them to take a full and equal part in lessons and other activities. The curriculum is planned and taught in such a way that it meets equally well the learning needs of boys and girls.
29. Pupils in Year 6 and Year 4 benefit from annual residential visits. Year 4 pupils visit Gorsefield Park in Essex while those in Year 6 enjoy an outdoor centre on the Isle of Wight. Although some visits are made to places of interest, such as museums, overall not enough use is made of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' learning. There are remarkably few activities provided outside lessons, only a recorder group and football.
30. There are satisfactory links with the community and partner institutions. There are well-established procedures to help pupils transfer into secondary schools. Mutual visits and events organised by the secondary schools ensure pupils are well prepared to begin the next stage of their education. The school also links effectively with local primary schools to share ideas, for example concerning staff training and development. Through good links with a City firm, literacy and numeracy partners have been established. Adults from the firm regularly spend lunchtimes in school supporting pupils in the basic skills, such as reading and the use of numbers. Students undergoing initial teacher training are welcomed into the school. There are strong links with the church and the parish priests support the school, for example by contributing regularly to acts of collective worship.
31. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the inspection and is now good overall.
32. There is good provision for spiritual development. Assemblies and 'circle times', when pupils have the opportunity to discuss together things which are important to them, provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on values and emotions. An example was seen in an assembly for pupils in Years 3 to 6 where the teacher used a story well to illustrate the importance of constructive relationships. Pupils learned that positive

relationships are nurtured through care and kindness. Pupils in Year 3 were able to reflect on the issues of honesty and bullying when they used a relevant story extract during an English lesson. Good spiritual development is also underpinned by the positive ethos of the school. Adults act as positive role models. As a consequence pupils learn to respect one another's beliefs, customs and individual differences and show consideration and tolerance. Pupils from all the different ethnic groups are welcomed and cared for and there is a strong sense of racial harmony as pupils play together.

33. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school provides a clear moral code for behaviour and this is generally followed well by pupils, who contribute their own ideas to each class's Golden Rules. Pupils in Year 6, after making up their rules, wrote thoughtfully about their meaning and implications in order to better understand their own responsibilities. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the system for rewards by striving for house points to boost the weekly house total. Sanctions are used fairly so pupils develop their sense of justice and generally accept responsibility for their own actions. By negotiating with the Friendship Team pupils are encouraged to resolve their playground conflicts amicably.
34. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. There are many opportunities in lessons for pupils to work collaboratively. For example the use of 'talking partners' encourages pupils to listen to others' views and negotiate solutions. Residential visits also provide pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 with opportunities to work in harmony with others. The school successfully promotes an understanding of personal responsibility, by encouraging and rewarding attendance and punctuality and perseverance in both work and effort. There is a school council which provides opportunities for pupils to listen to others' views and represent them in council meetings. Those on the 'Friendship Team' were required to submit a written application and be interviewed before being selected to serve on the team. Pupils develop good social skills. They are polite and courteous for example in the dining room and understand that different social situations, such as assemblies, require different behaviours and responses from the less formal.
35. The satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development has been maintained since the last inspection, and is in the process of being strengthened. The school fully recognises the cultural richness and diversity which the many minority ethnic groups bring to the school. Efforts are being made to use this resource more purposefully. For example, the school is encouraging parents and grandparents to read to pupils in their home language during story sessions in school. There is some recognition of cultural variety in art and in the celebration of religious festivals such as Diwali. However, there is scope to promote cultural awareness more effectively through art, drama, music and festivals and to reflect these opportunities more strongly in curriculum planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Educational and personal support for pupils has much improved since the last inspection. There are now good systems for checking on pupils' attainment and progress. Sound procedures are now in place for ensuring child protection. A careful record is kept of attendance and any behaviour issues and there are good procedures for promoting good behaviour.
37. The school is a safe environment with all the expected safety measures in place and regular safety inspections. There are sufficient first-aiders, cleaning chemicals are

locked up, electrical equipment is regularly inspected and fire drills are held as required by the regulations. Child protection procedures are now satisfactory overall, with good practices offset by only cursory training. The nominated person (the headteacher) is experienced and well trained in child protection with good contacts and knowledge of local procedures. In the short time that she has been in post only a short period in a staff meeting has been devoted to the procedures for child protection, but there are plans for more comprehensive training before the end of the year. Pupils who might be at risk are especially carefully observed. Topics and issues covered in the personal and social education programme help pupils to look after themselves and they also play a significant part in the school's good procedures to counter harassment, along with assemblies. There are sound procedures for ensuring that pupils do not have access to unsuitable material on the Internet. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. There is a suitably equipped dedicated medical room.

38. The procedures for the promotion of attendance are very good. There is very good collaboration between the office manager and the education social worker. They work effectively together on a good new programme to improve attendance. Although they have had success in reducing lateness, they were thwarted in their efforts on attendance by a chicken pox epidemic. Very good attendance is rewarded. Homes are telephoned if a pupil is away and no message has been received. Messages urging good attendance are sent home in the school's newsletters and delivered verbally when opportunities arise. The walls of the hall feature charts recording the attendance and punctuality performance of each class. These are reviewed with the whole school at the end of each week, when pupils enjoy seeing how their class has done in the ratings.
39. The procedures for promoting good behaviour are good. Staff are good role models who generously use praise and minimal criticism. Sanctions are appropriate, proportionate to the misdemeanour and well known and understood by pupils. The very good relationships in the school clearly contribute to the establishment and maintenance of good behaviour. Excellence in Cities funding supports a learning mentor who is concentrating on anger management for pupils at risk of exclusion. This is making a generally sound contribution to behaviour in the school, helping the small minority who are not able to conform to the school's behaviour expectations.
40. Support for pupils' personal development is good. Support mostly comes from teachers' close observation of progress and their keen interest in pupils' success. They talk sympathetically about their pupils, especially the ones causing them concern. All are supported equally well in lessons, in accordance with the school's policy on racial equality, and all are free to approach any member of staff when they need help with a personal problem. There are few written records of personal development and this is a weakness in a school with volatile staffing.
41. There have been good improvements in the systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress since the previous inspection. The school uses test results and other assessment information with increasing effectiveness to monitor and support standards in English, mathematics and to a lesser extent, science. These systems continue to be improved and the school is refining data collection procedures to ensure that a full assessment picture is gained. The school is working to refine systems so that the procedures are informative but not too time consuming. Each teacher now has assessment records which are regularly checked by the assessment co-ordinator for accuracy, and usefulness. From an assessment of skills when children enter the school through to the national tests in Year 6, pupils now undertake a satisfactory range of assessment activities. To these teachers add their own

assessments, such as spelling tests and tables tests, along with the end of unit assessments suggested by national guidance for subjects such as history and geography. Records of these assessments are now being helpfully passed on as pupils go through the school. There is some helpful information specifically about pupils whose mother tongue is not English. The assessments made concerning pupils who have special educational needs are not used as well as they might be to monitor their progress.

42. Teachers have begun to use the information which they are gathering to help in planning lessons pitched at the right level of difficulty for all the different groups of pupils in their classes. This process is at an early stage of development and will require careful monitoring to ensure that it develops into a fully effective system which enables teachers to plan to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including the most able and those for whom English is an additional language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Collaboration with parents is a recognised area for development and the school has a satisfactory base from which to develop. Parents are generally appreciative of what the school provides. They believe their children like school and behave well there. They find the school very approachable and judge that it is well led and managed. Parents are less happy with the range of activities offered outside lessons and the amount of homework. The inspection team generally agrees with parents' views.
44. The contribution of parents and carers to their children's learning at school and at home and consequently the impact of parents on the work of the school are broadly satisfactory. Most parents support reading and homework in some way. Only a few help in school, for example by hearing pupils read or accompanying classes on visits. One parent helps with football. There is no parent-teacher association. The situation in the Nursery and Reception classes is better than in the rest of the school. Here, parents are pleased with the quality of provision for their children, the open door approach for problems and the friendliness of the staff. The arrangements for settling children into school are flexible and supportive. The teachers meet with parents before their children start school and focus on promoting the partnership between home and school. Parents are welcome to the many activities provided by the school. Each day Nursery and Reception parents have the opportunity to talk to the teachers and supporting adults. Nursery parents help their children settle down in the class by encouraging them to select a start activity and hang up coats and bags. Parents are encouraged to join their children for the beginning of the first choice activity before gradually withdrawing. Nursery staff encourage parents to support the work in school, especially on a Thursday afternoon during story telling sessions and have had a positive response to their request for more assistance.
45. The school provides satisfactory information to parents. There are three evenings per year when parents are invited to discuss their children's progress. There are good quality, regular and informative newsletters. Children's school reports are generally too descriptive, some comments being more perceptive and helpful than others. The summaries represent the children well, but, except for Year 2, there are no attainment levels, very few targets and no suggestions about how parents might help their children at home. The governors' annual report contains errors in its financial reporting and the key stage test results are not compared with national performance. The report is informative and written in a reader-friendly way but the content could make more of the strengths and achievements of the school. The prospectus is well illustrated but in

some respects out of date. The language it adopts is in places inappropriate to the encouragement of a closer and more fruitful home-school partnership.

46. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are helpfully invited to the regular reviews of their individual education plans. The school has good links with the parents of pupils whose mother tongue is not English. They are kept fully informed of the progress of their children and have easy access to the specialist staff who will arrange news and other letters to be provided in home languages as necessary.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. There are significant strengths in both leadership and management which relate in the main to the roles of the new headteacher and the governing body. In both cases, the effects of these strengths are beginning to be seen in improvements in the quality of education provided and in pupils' achievements. However, since many of them have emerged only recently, especially since the appointment of the new headteacher just over a term before the inspection, the effects on standards are not yet evident. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. It effectively combines a clarity of vision with commitment and energy. It is informed by a good understanding of how to use a range of effective leadership styles, including authority and direction, consultation and coaching, in order to motivate both staff and pupils and bring out the best in them. It is reflected in her very clear analysis of what needs to be done in order to improve the quality of education offered and so raise standards and in her commitment to change and development. This is evident for example in the good quality school development plan which she has produced. This sets out clearly a detailed programme of clearly prioritised targets for school improvement, focusing closely on the most important issues. These include, for example, ensuring that subjects are effectively managed by permanent members of staff and that assessment information is both gathered and used in the drive to raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
48. The governing body too has a realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear and convincing commitment to bringing about the necessary improvements. The care taken, for example, in the selection of the headteacher, in constructing a carefully thought out, clearly defined person specification, illustrates how seriously the governing body takes its role. It shows too how the governing body uses to good effect the skills in human resource management which certain governors bring to the role. The governing body has been very successful in managing the period of change and uncertainty following the resignation of the previous headteacher and in effecting major change and development in its own composition and practice since the last inspection. These changes have included the handing over by the former chair of governors to the present holder of that post and the injection of some effective, energetic and skilled new members.
49. The headteacher is committed to building an effective team. She has made a convincing start with the senior management team. This appropriately small team of senior teachers is committed to school development and improvement. It is becoming increasingly skilled and effective. This is as a result of the headteacher's good quality coaching and encouragement, coupled with the definition of clear targets and expectations for the development and performance of their duties. A major emphasis has importantly been placed on developing the part they are to play in monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of teaching, in order to raise standards. The role of the deputy headteacher has not in the past involved taking a meaningful part in leadership, being more concerned with giving routine administrative support, and there is much scope for development here.

50. The headteacher has put in place an effective, systematic programme for the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and also for analysing teachers' planning, records and pupils' work. This is a very important improvement since the previous inspection. The governing body has also developed considerably its role in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school. It has, for example, developed new skills in interrogating and understanding comparative data relating to pupils' performance in national tests. Governors are keen to develop further their understanding of the right questions to ask in order to assess progress, for example in raising standards.
51. The headteacher has a secure understanding of the principles of best value, which she applies soundly to the management of the school. Comparisons of efficiency are made with similar schools. The local authority provides a helpful guide for doing this. Many visits have been made to other schools to compare how they deal with important challenges, such as meeting all the learning needs of such a diverse pupil population. The high staffing costs are being challenged in a variety of ways. Consultation is an area requiring development, although the management team has been very careful to ensure a consensus among most staff before instituting changes. The necessary comparisons of costs are made when securing goods and services. For instance, the office manager was pleased to have achieved a significant price reduction for stationery recently. Day to day financial administration and control are very efficient.
52. The school's involvement in the Excellence in Cities initiative is being soundly managed. The initiative seeks to support the education of two main groups in this school – those with behavioural difficulties, who are at risk of exclusion from school and those identified as gifted or talented. The school has identified a number of pupils in both categories. There is an on- going programme of learning mentor support for the former group, which is satisfactory. Although there has been some targeted enrichment activities for the gifted and talented pupils identified in Years 4, 5 and 6, including drama and some sport as well as academic activities, there was none going on at the time of the inspection. There are suitable plans to build further on this work, which include a review of the policy and the development of a more varied programme of activities. The school is aware that this initiative needs further development in order to have its full impact.
53. There are now satisfactory procedures in place for the regular appraisal and performance management of teachers, as required by the regulations. Although there are some examples of very appropriate targets for improving performance, which focus closely on key issues, there are also some targets which miss the point. This is true, for example, of the targets identified for the special educational needs co-ordinator, where the use of ICT and further training feature, but vital improvements in monitoring and record keeping do not.
54. There remain real weaknesses in leadership and management, which have yet to be effectively addressed. A suitable new manager has been appointed very recently to co-ordinate the provision for pupils from ethnic minorities, including those for whom English is an additional language. This appointment has helpfully been made from the school's temporary staff. However, there is no permanent manager for science, ICT or design and technology.
55. The most significant weakness in leadership and management concerns the co-ordination of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs. There is no systematic monitoring of the teaching and learning of pupils who have special educational needs. No effective supervision takes place of the work of teaching

assistants who support these pupils on a day-to-day basis. Class teachers and subject co-ordinators are insufficiently supported, guided and supervised in their work in this area. Although there is regular dedicated management time for the co-ordination of special educational needs, this time is not well used. The records of pupils' assessed needs and the progress they are making are in a poor state and form an unhelpful base on which to build future provision for these pupils. That the support received by pupils who have special educational needs happens to be reasonably acceptable at the present time is more a matter of chance than management.

56. The school has struggled to recruit and retain enough good teachers and still relies too much on temporary staff, many of whom are technically unqualified, having trained overseas. The governing body is very well aware that a major challenge it faces is to try to stabilise the staffing situation. Teaching assistants are seeking qualifications and all have had some training, but they are not as yet appraised. Appraisal would be helpful in identifying the best practice among these members of the team and enable improvements to be made where necessary. Newly qualified teachers receive a very good induction into teaching and good quality support and mentoring in their first year.

57. The quality of education provided is hindered in some respects by unsatisfactory accommodation and resources. There are insufficient computers and inadequate software. Internet access is patchy and depends on which room is being used. Better use could be made of the space available for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes, including the space for outdoor activities. The Nursery and Reception classes work in rooms not originally designed to support the teaching of the *Foundation Stage* curriculum. Although Nursery children have a large, open plan space, there is no area for quiet withdrawal where children can listen to quiet music, share a book with a friend or chat together, sharing ideas with staff. Neither do children have the opportunity to prepare food and cook without leaving the room and going across the school to the staff room. The school has made satisfactory progress in updating the tired, outdated and limited range of equipment, especially for the outdoor area attached to the Nursery but there is still a need to extend the range to meet the needs of children to investigate the world around them. Within the space, children do have a carpeted base for work, suitably equipped with tables, chairs, role play, books and writing resources. Children move round the rooms to use the computers, work in the sand and water trays, paint, use the construction equipment or join friends in the role-play area. Displays of their work are bright and cheerful but they do not fully disguise the need to liven up the appearance of the room. As found at the previous inspection Reception children only have a limited access to a safe and secure outdoor area. Although the staff come out a section of the playground, this space is not big enough for children to run freely and no opportunity to climb. The Reception class does 'borrow' the Nursery outdoor area when possible but spontaneous interaction is not possible as children have to go round the school or through the Nursery to get to the space. Reception children have more formal hall periods to further develop their physical skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to address the issues for improvement identified, the governing body, headteacher and staff should now:
- (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT, physical education and music by:
 - Ensuring that lessons are planned with careful regard to assessment information concerning pupils' prior attainment and progress, so that work is closely matched to the learning needs of all, especially the most able;
 - Improving resources for the teaching and learning of ICT, developing staff skills in its use and ensuring that it is applied regularly and systematically to pupils' learning in all subjects, especially English, mathematics and science;
 - Through a planned programme of training, developing staff skills and confidence in the teaching of physical education and music.
(paragraphs 1,6,21,23,24,42,81,92,98,115,117,119,124,125)
 - (2) Improve the quality of teaching so that there is a much higher proportion of good teaching, and less which is unsatisfactory, by:
 - Continuing to develop the good new programme for the rigorous and systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching, concentrating on those subjects and aspects most in need of improvement. This process should clearly identify what works well and what needs to be improved, identify clear targets for improvement and include checks on progress towards targets set.
(paragraphs 16,49,50)
 - (3) Improve the leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
 - Defining more clearly and monitoring more closely the co-ordinator's role, particularly in:
 - monitoring and evaluating the quality of support for pupils;
 - monitoring their progress;
 - liaising with and advising class teachers and support staff;
 - maintaining efficient records.
(paragraphs 53, 55)
 - (4) Improve the leadership and management of science and ICT by:
 - seeking urgently to appoint permanent, senior and suitably skilled members of staff to manage these subjects.
(paragraphs 54, 99, 119)
 - (5) Develop the leadership and management roles of the deputy headteacher by:
 - further developing the programme of coaching in leadership and management already initiated;
 - setting and monitoring progress towards clear performance targets, which should be worked out and agreed between the governing body,

headteacher and senior management team in consultation with the deputy headteacher.

(paragraph 49)

(6) Improve the resources for the teaching and learning of ICT and the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in the other subjects, by:

- pressing ahead with the plans already in place for fully equipping the new ICT suite with appropriate and up to date hardware;
 - ensuring good Internet access is readily available to all teachers and pupils;
 - auditing the software available to support teaching and learning in each subject, starting with English, mathematics and science, and updating, replacing and augmenting it in light of each subject's particular needs.
- (paragraphs 57, 115, 116, 117, 119)*

MINOR ISSUES

- Appoint a permanent subject manager for design and technology. (paragraphs 54, 108)
- Review the use of homework to support pupils' learning in Years 3 – 6. (paragraph 21)
- Improve the provision for pupils to take part in activities outside lessons, including sport. (paragraphs 23, 29, 43)
- Review the use of the accommodation for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. (paragraph 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	11	13	3	0	0
Percentage	0	7	38	45	10	0	0

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

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)	24	196
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	98

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	23

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	50

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

School data	1.6
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	9	16	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	6	8
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	18	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (92)	76 (81)	88 (88)
	National	84 (94)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	6
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	22	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (85)	84 (88)	84 (85)
	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	11	19	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	15	17	18
	Total	24	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (71)	87 (46)	93 (71)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	5	5
	Girls	10	15	15
	Total	13	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (N/A)	67 (N/A)	67 (N/A)
	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	90	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	6	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	30	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	14	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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). (There are also 2 unqualified teachers)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	36
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	277

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
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)	-

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	821,049
Total expenditure	779,617
Expenditure per pupil	3,803
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,480
Balance carried forward to next year	41,432

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

217

Number of questionnaires returned

45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	42	0	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	42	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	42	23	4	4
The teaching is good.	53	42	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	47	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	29	2	0	7
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	40	44	9	7	0
The school is well led and managed.	31	62	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	0	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	29	13	14	13

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

59. Most children start school in the Nursery class at the age of three with levels of development which are similar to those usually found nationally at this age. Their attainment on entry is generally better than the average for the borough. Their personal, social and emotional development and their skills in communication, language and literacy are broadly average for their age. The same is true of their mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. They achieve soundly and most are on course to reach expected levels of development and skill in all the areas of learning by the time they move on to Year 1.
60. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some very good teaching in the Nursery, where the teacher had only been in post for a few days at the time of the inspection. There is some good teamwork between the teachers and supporting adults, to the benefit of the children. Each adult brings their specific but different skills to challenge, enhance and support the learning of all the children. All have a sound understanding of what the children should be learning. They plan a range of suitable activities and experiences matched to the children's particular needs. Work is planned that addresses the needs identified from checks made on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes. The teachers have good class management skills, grouping children with others of similar ability to fully develop their basic skills and knowledge. This helps the children settle down well and grow in confidence. The clear tracking of individual children to identify their needs and the development of their knowledge and skills is used effectively in planning sessions.
61. In both the Nursery and Reception class adults ensure that there is a good balance between adult directed learning and child chosen activities. Lessons have a very good pace and challenge but do not go on for too long so children do not become restless and inattentive.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Children have good positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy coming to school and form good relationships with the staff and each other. Routines are well established so children know what is expected of them and as a result they feel secure and behave well. When in class all show their growing maturity by working hard and playing happily together, showing a good degree of independence and growing confidence. Children concentrate well in group and class periods. All but a very few listen carefully to each other and are learning to take turns in speaking. They show by putting up their hands that they have something to say or can answer a question. The children are learning to concentrate, persevere and stay on task when working independently. Although occasionally they chose solitary play activities, especially when using construction equipment or on the computer, for the majority of the time children co-operate and play together, for example, in the role play vegetable shop or when climbing on the frame or riding a bike in the outside area.
63. Teachers strongly focus on children's personal and social development in order to develop learning in other areas, especially in their physical and creative work. Most children say "please" and "thank you" when receiving such as tools or toys or help from adults or each other because all adults place emphasis on politeness. All staff try to

listen carefully and value what children have to say, giving them a good pattern for language use by repeating to others what has been said. This is particularly important as some children come from homes where English is not the mother tongue. All adults are sensitive to the needs of the children and work hard to increase confidence and self-esteem through encouraging them to undertake a range of jobs – taking the registers to the office and having responsibility for tidying up after activities. Praise is used well. Even when the children say something that does not quite fit in with a particular question, they are encouraged to remember it for later. Adults hold high expectations that children will independently care for themselves, for instance washing hands after dirty activities such as modelling with clay, after visiting the toilet and changing their clothes independently for physical education work and putting on painting aprons. Children rise to these expectations with adult support limited to helping with a shoe lace or turning sleeves the right way round. Children are encouraged to have a go first and then ask an adult for help if they need it, enabling them to develop independence.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Children enter the Nursery with communication skills which vary widely from one child to the next. Speaking skills are weaker than their listening skills. They soon learn to speak in simple phrases and with growing confidence. Older children in Reception willingly speak during class discussions and listen and take turns in conversations. They learn a range of action and Nursery rhymes and enjoy performing them. They have regular opportunities to share news and talk about their experiences. They enjoy listening to stories and sit and listen well for some length of time. Children develop their early reading skills soundly. They recognise their own names and are learning the letter names and shapes. By the time they leave the Reception, all but a very few write their name without the need for a name card. Children know a range of well known stories and understand that the print in books has meaning. Older children read simple texts and instructions. They know a growing number of frequently used words and make sense of unknown words using the initial sounds, the letter sounds and picture clues. Children explain what is happening in stories read to them and use their own pictures to predict what might happen next. Children know what is meant by words such as *writer* and *illustrator* and the difference between the two. Early writing skills are being soundly developed. Many Nursery children write their own names on the back of their work. Reception children attempt to write their letters the correct way round and make them even in size. Younger Reception children are starting to write a range of simple words and older construct simple sentences. Many of the Reception children know that sentences start with a capital letter and end with a stop and tell the teacher or Nursery nurse off when they ‘forget’ to put them in place. The most capable children put in a capital letter to start their own work and finish their work with a full stop.
65. The basic skills of reading and writing are taught soundly in short, well-focused sessions. For example, when sharing a book, teachers point to the words as they read and emphasise that words carry meaning by how they place emphasis on the text. Children copy this good practice when reading together, using inflection as the teacher would to bring the characters to life, placing fingers under the words, asking each other questions about the story and making comments on what could be seen in the picture. Letter sounds are well taught and reinforced in matching objects and the playing of sound and letter games. Children are introduced to a range of books to stimulate interest. They take books home to share with their parents. Children use their early writing skills to share news. Good opportunities are always available for writing, especially during role play in the vegetable shop in Reception. Displays of writing in the classrooms reinforce the message that reading and writing are important and valued.

Mathematical development

66. Children have a wide range of mathematical ability and skills when they enter the school but standards are generally in line with the average in number and mathematical language. Most Reception children can count objects up to over 30 or more correctly whilst others have little understanding of numbers higher than 10. Through well-planned practical activities, including play, children develop an understanding of number, pattern, shape and measurement, with the matching mathematical vocabulary such as square, circle and triangle. Older children learn to write numbers correctly and have made a start on number stories using standard notation including the + sign for adding. Younger children learn about two and three dimensional shapes through a range of activities, using shapes in their construction work and volume and capacity by estimating how many cups of water or sand will fill a container in their sand and water play. Older children buy and sell fruit and vegetables from the shop, count how long it takes children to take the registers to the office and make numbers bigger by adding one more.
67. A satisfactory range of structured and unstructured activities is provided. These are well chosen for interest and enjoyment and are matched closely to the children's level of understanding. Teachers make use of every opportunity to encourage children to count, to recognise numbers and to do simple addition and subtraction as they play. For example Nursery children learn how many can do an activity by counting the chairs round a table. Older children in Reception play a range of number games using dominos and dice and use number friezes and charts in writing number stories. Good use is made of a range of computer programmes to reinforce learning in all areas of mathematics in both the Nursery and Reception and children use these independently.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. In both the Nursery and Reception class children's natural curiosity is supported by teaching that gives all many opportunities to explore the natural and made environment. For example, in their work on the vegetables and the story *Hand's Surprise* older children can identify a range of fruits and discuss their texture, colour and size. They use colour filters outside to look at the world around them and note changes over time in the leaves and petals of plants. Children explore the sounds of percussion instruments and use construction materials competently to build recognisable structures and vehicles. They use computers regularly to reinforce work on all areas of learning, using the mouse and keyboard with confidence. Nursery children investigate bubbles, looking with interest at their colours, shapes and sizes. They look at maps and plans and use floor maps to lay road tracks and set out buildings found in a town or city. In their role play 'house' they discuss different foods, practising wok cooking using a range of plastic 'foods'.

Physical development

69. Children control a range of tools, markers and other equipment with developing skill and confidence and with an awareness of the space around them. In the classrooms they show sound control and co-ordination. Finer physical skills are developed steadily as the teaching ensures that pupils hold tools such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes correctly. Activities in the classrooms are well chosen to develop small muscle control. For example, in mathematics children play a range of number games, working with equipment such as counters and cubes. They cut round pictures and colour in, keeping within the shapes. Assessment is used well to identify children who need extra

support in developing control with hand-held tools and equipment. Reception children take equipment such as bean bags and hoops into the playground and develop their throwing and catching skills. Nursery children have a secure area in which to investigate along with their sand and water trays, their vegetable shop and the opportunity to climb, ride bikes and other wheeled equipment, throw and kick balls, skip and play a range of outdoor racing and chasing games. Nursery children lend their area to Reception children to extend the range of outdoor activities they can undertake.

Creative development

70. Suitable opportunities are provided for the children to record their ideas using different materials and markers as well to experiment to develop their finer physical skills. For example, Reception children make close observational drawings of the fruits in the story *Handa's Surprise*. Most of the examples of artwork seen on display in the Reception classroom, such as paintings of the fruits, are as the result of structured activities led by the staff who encourage children to look closely at the colours and textures. Nursery children also have the opportunity to experiment with colour and texture, making hand prints and paint transfers. Children know a range of songs and rhymes and sing together with real enjoyment. Children, regardless of whether they are in the Nursery or Reception, learn to play together imaginatively in the role-play areas – looking after each other in the 'vegetable shop', selling a range of real potatoes and parsnips, putting the purchases into baskets and boxes and the money into the till.
71. The planning for both the Nursery and Reception classes show that a good range of activities is provided to enable the children to express their feelings as they explore and create. They can choose from a wide range of materials to create colourful and attractive works of art. The opportunity to enjoy poetry and singing occurs because of the obvious enthusiasm of staff who lead with actions. The staff's involvement contributes to children's good progress in developing tuneful singing and a sense of rhythm. Thoughtfully prepared role-play areas are linked well to the class topic to enable children to build on their own experiences through imaginative play.

ENGLISH

72. Standards in English are below average overall. In last year's national tests they were well below average in writing in Year 2 and in English in Year 6. Standards have fluctuated markedly over the past few years, coinciding with the many changes in the quality of teaching as teachers come and go. This uneven trend continues. The considerable staffing turnover which has affected and continues to affect the current Year 5 class is a clear example of how the school's difficulty in recruiting and retaining enough good teachers leads to weaknesses in achievement and standards. Pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Although their attainment on starting school is better than the borough average, standards by the time they leave are no better than those found in other local schools. The most able, in particular, do not reach their full potential.
73. The previous inspection found that the high proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language were not well served, so that they did not achieve as well as they should. This weakness has been addressed now, but only very recently. The support for these pupils is now of generally sound quality, and well led, but any effects on standards are as yet too early and tentative to discern. Girls did much less well than boys in the most recent national tests, although their performance on average has been stronger than boys' over the past three years, in English as in mathematics and science. Analysis suggest that pupils from a Bangladeshi ethnic background

performed less well in national tests than those from other ethnic groups, but the numbers of pupils involved are very small and no firm conclusions may be drawn. The inspection finds no great differences in the attainment of pupils from different ethnic groups.

74. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading are about average but standards in writing are below average. In Year 6 too few pupils reach the expected levels in reading and standards in writing are well below average for that age. Throughout the school, speaking and listening skills are below average.
75. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped. Most pupils in the infant classes begin to talk confidently about things which interest them. During lessons however, answers lack detail and pupils often struggle for the precise words they need. The picture is similar in the junior classes. Older pupils speak politely and confidently about their outside interests, or aspects of school life, for example, but are less able to express ideas more formally using correct subject terminology, or clearly describe events in a story. Most pupils listen attentively, but there is still a significant number who call out when they are not supposed to and do not listen thoughtfully to the views of others. In a few lessons, pupils for whom English is an additional language are helpfully given more time to think about answers in order to encourage a response, but on balance there is too little time for pupils to talk in order to build up their knowledge of words and express ideas. Opportunities for role play, drama and discussion activities to encourage speaking skills do not feature strongly enough in teachers' planning, across all subjects.
76. Most pupils in Year 2 read accurately with developing fluency and understanding. Most can discuss the content of a story they have read and talk about the main characters. The most able pupils select their own books from a range of simple novels and read with sustained interest. Pupils learning English as an additional language are now making steady progress. They are supported well, and along with others read regularly at home and in school. Most demonstrate sound strategies for working out unfamiliar words such as using letter sounds, syllables or pictures to help them gain the meaning.
77. Many pupils in Year 6 are still hesitant readers and do not always understand the vocabulary and the underlying meaning of their texts. The most able read more extensively supplementing their reading by borrowing from the public library. They begin to recognise different genres and develop a more critical sense by talking about preferences for books and authors such as Jacqueline Wilson, JK Rowling and Tolkien. Pupils' knowledge of recognised classics is sparse. They do know how to find information in non-fiction books and that it can also be retrieved through CD Rom, teletext and the Internet.
78. Writing standards have remained constantly below average since the last inspection. In Year 2, pupils have too few opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences. Ideas are not sufficiently sustained in extended writing, although the most capable are developing a more lively style of narrative. They show an awareness of sequencing and punctuate most sentences correctly. One pupil wrote very excitedly about bungee jumping while on holiday, but such creativity is not explored and followed up in other writing. Standards of handwriting and presentation of work are unsatisfactory and too many simple, common words, such as *jar*, are spelled incorrectly. Average and less able pupils and those for whom English is an additional language make too little progress because writing targets are not challenging enough. There is a satisfactory emphasis on developing writing strategies such as a good opening sentence, planning and structuring a story and using synonyms to enhance

sentences. However, too few opportunities are provided to encourage pupils to apply these strategies in their written work. When such opportunities are planned, writing is purposeful and more interesting. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote reflectively about the Golden Rules for their class. Pupils in Year 2 wrote their own books about Florence Nightingale, while Year 3 pupils wrote explanatory leaflets about growing plants.

79. By the end of Year 6 there is an increasing range and purpose to pupils' writing. The most able writers organise and sustain their ideas satisfactorily but their choice of vocabulary is narrow and there are few examples of extended descriptive sentences. For most pupils, writing lacks significant detail and adventurous language. Spelling and punctuation are weak and there is scope for improving both handwriting and general presentation of work.
80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, taking into account the lessons observed and the wide range of pupils' work analysed. This is not as strong as it was judged to be during the previous inspection. Recent changes in staffing have created more stability and permanence in some classes and some lessons seen were taught well. Nevertheless, the proportion of good teaching is not as high as seen in most schools.
81. Most teachers manage pupils well. They use praise and encouragement effectively and ensure that sanctions and rewards are fair and understood. This promotes good relationships in the classroom and pupils respond well. In Year 4, for example, the teacher and pupils had an agreed code. When the teacher said a key word, pupils responded immediately, becoming focused and ready to listen. Teachers make good use of resources. Overhead projectors and white boards, for example, as well as the use of 'talking partners' make learning more interactive and respond to pupils' different learning styles. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning, however, is very limited and therefore unsatisfactory.
82. Teachers now consistently and thoughtfully use national guidance on the teaching of literacy to help in planning their lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There are now better systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. However, the assessment information gathered has yet to feed into teachers' lesson planning sufficiently well in order to see that the learning needs of all pupils are well met. This shortcoming continues to affect most particularly the most able, for whom there is too little challenge. Although they are well extended and encouraged to fulfil their potential now in some classes, such as Year 6, the analysis of pupils' work reveals that there are still too many instances where they are set the same work as the rest of the class, and so under-achieve.
83. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly when they support those who have special educational needs. This is true both when they are working alongside pupils in the classroom and when they support smaller groups to boost pupils' basic skill. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils with varying specific learning needs were supported well because of the good interaction between teacher and teaching assistants. In that lesson, pupils achieved well. The challenging pace and high expectations resulted in pupils being well able to identify features of formal writing. Sometimes however, the pace of learning slows. This is seen more often during word or sentence work when the teacher has not identified precisely what pupils are expected to know, or where strategies for teaching are not always the most productive. In one lesson, for example, the teacher confused pupils when teaching words which contain the *oo* sound by introducing variations. Consequently when tested, pupils wrote *cood* instead of *could* and *stould* instead of *stood*.

84. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and remarks recognise pupils' achievements and give encouragement. Marking does not challenge pupils enough however by setting immediate targets. This is particularly noticeable with regard to the presentation of work, so pupils see little improvement in what they do over time. Too few examples of good written work are provided which allow pupils to see the standard expected.
85. There is satisfactory leadership and management in English. The consistent application of national guidance on the teaching of literacy has been achieved with the subject manager's strong encouragement and support. There have been important improvements in the consistency of planning and in the monitoring of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, there is still a greater measure of consistency to be achieved in the use of assessment to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are met. The helpful monitoring, evaluation and development of the quality of teaching is making a good contribution to improving the provision for English and raising standards.

MATHEMATICS

86. Standards in mathematics are below average in Year 2, in Year 6 and throughout the school. At the age of eleven, they are similar to those achieved at other schools in the borough. This shows that pupils are under-achieving, since their starting point is higher than the borough average. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level at the end of Year 6 was high last year, it is low again this year, as it was at the time of the last inspection and in the previous two years. Only around one pupil in four in Year 6 is consistently working at the expected level for their age, with about half working about two years behind. In Year 2 around a third of pupils is a year or more behind expectations. There are a number of reasons why this is so. The school was not following national guidance on the teaching of mathematics at the time of the previous inspection. The weaknesses in the procedures for checking on pupils' attainment and progress which were noted at the previous inspection and the consequent lack of demand and challenge for pupils were also significant. The school was failing to meet the learning needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Although these weaknesses have all received attention since the last inspection, so that there have been a number of significant improvements, the changes have been recent. They have not led to higher standards yet.
87. Boys have done less well than girls on average in the Year 6 national tests over the past five years, although there was not much difference in 2002. The inspection finds no current evidence of gender differences in performance.
88. By the end of Year 2 most pupils know the number bonds to ten. They write two digit numbers and match numerals to words and the correct number of objects, although with some uncertainty. They recognise and reproduce a simple repeating pattern using two colours. They have some knowledge of some of the properties of common three dimensional shapes, although there is some confusion, with some saying that a triangle has four corners. Pupils successfully carry out very simple addition and subtraction by counting on and back. They find one more than or less than ten, for example. Most of this attainment is similar to that expected by the end of the *Foundation Stage*, at the point at which pupils move on from the Reception class to Year 1. It is therefore two years behind expectations for the end of Year 2.
89. In Year 6 the problem-solving skills of over half the class are similar to those usually found in Year 4. Pupils solve simple problems mentally, for example adding together

two two-digit numbers. They explain how they arrived at their answers and why their strategies worked, or did not work. Only a handful of pupils – around a quarter of the class – successfully solve and explain the more complex problems appropriate to their age, such as the multiplication of two two-digit numbers, the division of three-digit numbers and working out percentages mentally.

90. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. It varies from class to class, and stability and continuity are still elusive, because there are many temporary members of staff. The subject co-ordinator sets a good example through the quality of his own teaching. He has very helpfully provided model lessons for colleagues, aimed at spreading good practice. The best teaching is stimulating and moves along at a cracking pace. In such lessons, pupils do not get bored, they enjoy the challenge of fast moving, interesting lessons. This helps to promote positive attitudes to mathematics, and indeed to learning generally and it promotes good progress. Under such conditions, pupils in Year 6 are making good progress and catching up, although they have a great deal of ground to cover and limited time in which to do it. The teaching in Year 2 is similarly well controlled, pacy and enjoyable. Elsewhere, it is generally sound. There is now some good support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, so that they are beginning to achieve more. Lessons are generally well planned, drawing soundly on information about pupils' ability to devise exercises which meet their particular learning needs. Whole class teaching is generally well controlled and teachers explain and demonstrate things clearly, so that pupils easily understand. Group activities give pupils suitable opportunities to apply and practise what they have been taught.
91. There is sound support for pupils who have special educational needs, including those who find learning more difficult. Teaching assistants often work helpfully with these pupils. They enable them to tackle a similar lesson content to the rest of the class, often using a suitably modified task, perhaps involving the use of more practical apparatus which helps to make things clear.
92. A weakness of much of the teaching is that too little time is spent at the end of lessons in whole class discussion where pupils are supported in reviewing what they have done and learned, and what needs further attention. Although teachers do plan for such *plenary* sessions, they are too often rushed and offer inadequate opportunities for summarising the lesson, giving feedback on performance and dealing with any misunderstanding and errors. There are some opportunities for pupils to use ICT as they learn and also to apply their numeracy skills in other lessons. For example, they collect, record and analyse data relating to transport and other community services in geography lessons. However, there is room for the further development of these aspects.
93. The leadership and management of mathematics have improved very well since the previous inspection. This is in large measure responsible for the improvements in provision which have taken place since then. The subject co-ordinator has worked very hard and effectively to bring about improvements in the curriculum and overcome the weaknesses in teaching, for example the under expectation and lack of challenge. There is now a good systematic and rigorous programme for regularly checking on the quality of teaching and learning. This helpfully includes lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work and the analysis of teachers' lesson planning. There has been much careful analysis of pupils' attainment and progress and good measures have been put in place to raise standards. These include a very good programme of popular booster and catch-up clubs for carefully targeted pupils. Given the required stability in staffing, the very good leadership and management are likely to lead to higher

standards. At present, pupils are catching up fast at key points, most notably in Year 6, but they have a long way to go.

SCIENCE

94. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of the National Curriculum is lower than would be expected. Since the previous inspection the skills of scientific investigation have become the focus of work across the school and these skills, along with knowledge and understanding in areas such as life processes and living things and physical processes are generally sound. Work about materials and their properties has improved since the previous inspection, though this has yet to have an effect on standards, which are broadly similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.
95. The school assessed standards in Year 2 last year as average and inspection evidence confirms that this is also the case at present. There is evidence of good challenge in the work for the most able at this point. Progress is satisfactory overall in areas such as life processes and living things and the recorded areas of physical processes. However, the work on materials and their properties is still weaker. The good teaching of the previous inspection has been maintained.
96. The school conducted a review of its work in science after the previous inspection and identified the need to provide pupils with further opportunities to develop investigation skills. The units from the scheme of work have been given more focus and structure to ensure that skills taught are practiced more frequently than previously. The subject manager has changed and the acting co-ordinator has produced an action plan to guide science further. Good investigative lessons were seen in Years 2 and 6 in particular and there are examples in pupils' books of pupils undertaking investigative work of a good quality.
97. Throughout the school pupils are now developing sound knowledge and understanding. Year 6 pupils, for example, show sound understanding of the good and bad effects of microbes and the use of the work of scientists such as Jenner and Pasteur in developing medicines and vaccines. Year 5 pupils, during their work on forces, understand that the movement of the earth round the sun gives up day and night and the seasons of the year. Year 3 explore the effects of magnets on each other and on different materials and consider the use of magnetism in everyday life, while Year 2 pupils enjoy testing the effects of forces such as gravity, push and pull on a range of materials, making sure that their experiments are fair.
98. Teaching is now satisfactory overall and pupils are making generally sound progress. However, the effects of staff changes and variability in teaching, coupled with weaknesses in leadership and management in the past, have not yet been overcome. Consequently, standards remain below average, notably in Year 6, even though teaching is now sound. Lesson planning shows clearly what pupils are to learn. Well designed practical investigations capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English are now suitably supported by adults or by being included in carefully structured groups. Most pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make at least satisfactory and many make good progress, helped by teachers' clear explanations, a good range of resources and careful questioning. The better lessons in both the infants and juniors focus upon pupils sharing existing knowledge, making a prediction and then being given the time, guidance and resources to investigate the prediction. This led Year 6 pupils in particular from a challenging but thoughtful recall of knowledge of microbes to a practical investigation of observing the

changes in different foods and a lively discussion of how to ensure their health and safety while making their observations. Too little use is made of ICT to help pupils learn.

99. There is no permanent manager for this subject, although it is in the hands of a capable and committed senior teacher on a temporary basis. This situation needs to be urgently resolved in order to assure the quality of teaching and so raise standards. The acting subject manager has helpfully started to review the worked planned in order to ensure the better development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Other helpful developments include the construction of a user friendly system for assessing individual pupils' progress. At present teachers do an end of unit of work assessment but a promising and more rigorous system is planned and due to be tried out soon. Over the last few years science has not had a high priority on the school development plan, and there have been no systematic observations of the quality of teaching and learning. This is a significant issue for a new subject manager to address.

ART AND DESIGN

100. Standards in art and design are about average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This shows some improvement in the work of junior pupils since the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress, largely due to the restructuring of the scheme of work which now closely follows national subject guidance. Skills are taught more systematically and teaching is monitored by the co-ordinator to help maintain current standards.
101. Pupils gain a satisfactory range of experiences as they progress through the school and there are some creditable examples of pupils' work in paint, collage and three dimensional work. Pupils in Year 2, for example have used the theme of *Nature* to develop their skills. This involves observational drawing and painting of plants and flowers, then representing their pictures in other ways such as mixed media collage and textured clay tiles. The work of William Morris helped pupils with ideas about design and colour. Design investigations are taken a step further by pupils in Year 3 who explore some Indian patterns linked to Diwali celebrations before printing on to paper and fabric.
102. There is some purposeful collage work in Year 5 where pupils have designed and created their own story corner around a Jungle Book theme. The displays of characters are colourful and show an inventive use of a varied range of materials. Pupils in Year 6 recognise and comment on the styles of some well known artists such as Van Gough and Edward Munch, and demonstrate skilful drawing in their early designs for 'People in Action.'
103. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound, and they use the national guidance thoughtfully to plan topics. There is a good emphasis on design and to that end sketch books are used by all pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils have enough good quality resources so that all are engaged in work. Some effective teaching of skills was seen in Year 1 when the teacher gave some individual help to pupils on how to use tools to texture their clay. This resulted in some well finished models of animals to help their display. Pupils in Year 3 used a digital camera successfully when searching for a suitable place in the school grounds to place their sculpture. The photographs helped pupils to think about how space can be enhanced by choosing the most suitable materials.

104. The subject is managed satisfactorily. There is a clear action plan for further development. This includes increasing the use of ICT in art, and the establishment of links with visiting artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6. No lessons were seen in this subject. It is, therefore, not possible to judge the quality of teaching. However, from the samples of pupils' work examined it is evident that they gain a satisfactory range of experiences in line with national guidance and expectations for the subject.
106. Pupils learn the skills and techniques of designing and making expected for their age. All pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. In Year 1, for example, pupils linked their technology to literacy when making 'moving pictures.' When illustrating a scene in the story of the *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, they incorporated a simple lever mechanism to make part of the picture move. Pupils in Year 2 designed and made prototypes of their glove puppets before working on the finished product, made from felt. They used stitching to join the main pieces and sequins, and fabric for the finishing detail. During the inspection, pupils used photographs to generate ideas for models of playground toys.
107. Early skills are developed in the junior classes. For example, pupils in Year 4 make their own books, which incorporate a range of moving discs and 'pop up' pages. Work on structures begun in Year 3 where pupils make rigid photo frames is developed later on in Year 6 when pupils experiment with structures to discover how they can be used to build 'shelters.' Year 6 pupils put their scientific knowledge to practical use by making models driven by electric motors.
108. The subject is currently overseen by the head teacher, there being no permanent subject manager. It is taught consistently in half-termly blocks, and now has a higher profile than previously reported. The improved curriculum has helped to raise standards. Shortcomings identified in the previous report have been dealt with satisfactorily.

GEOGRAPHY

109. It was only possible to see a limited number of geography lessons during the inspection but by adding to those few seen evidence from the analysis of the work in pupil's books, it is clear that standards are average and pupils make satisfactory progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection where standards were judged to be unsatisfactory overall. There has been a move away from a range of low level tasks to the systematic and focused development of investigation and researching skills, especially using a range of maps and globes with pupils learning such as the continents, oceans, rivers, deserts and the climate and other natural phenomena of the world. The policy has been updated, a scheme of work adopted and assessments integrated into the scheme to tell teachers what the pupils know and how they have progressed in their learning. There has been a good investment in resources and a curriculum framework put into place including opportunities for field work into the local community and beyond. The new co-ordinator has not lead formal staff training but has had the opportunity during staff meetings to explain the new units of work and the resources to support the work in the school.
110. The quality of teaching and learning has improved well since the previous inspection. Teachers prepare lessons that are factually accurate and encourage the development

of pupils thinking skills. They use resources well, asking challenging questions and hold high expectations that pupils will enjoy and be challenged by what they are asked to do. Year 6 for instance were asked to consider the impact of coastal erosion on the lives of people living nearby, considering the financial implications as well as how communities change as land is lost and the population moves away. Year 2 pupils thought of life on a small Scottish island off the west coast compared to their lives in Tower Hamlets. Transport systems, shopping and other community services were subject to pupil's consideration. Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard, enjoying their work and presenting their written work with care.

111. Geography alternates with history on the curriculum grid with each year group focusing on three units from the scheme of work. Each unit is matched to an appropriate collection of resources. The co-ordinator has not been in post for long but has made many significant changes. These include the updating of the policy, the implementation of a quality scheme of work which incorporates helpful assessments of pupils' progress, the updating and cataloguing of resources and the monitoring of the quality of work through a scrutiny of samples of pupils work. To date she has not had many opportunities to see the work in lessons but this is on her action plan for the future.

HISTORY

112. Standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Few lessons were observed. Judgements on standards are therefore based additionally on the analysis of pupils' work in all classes. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. There is now a better focus on the development of pupils' skills. Pupils are learning to read and compose time lines and are becoming aware of chronology and periods of history such as life at the time of the ancient Greeks, key events and dates in British history such as the great fire of London and changes since 1945. The policy has been updated, a scheme of work adopted and assessments integrated into the scheme to tell teachers what the pupils know and how they have progressed in their learning. There has been a good investment in resources and a curriculum framework put into place including opportunities for field work including visits to museums such as the Museum of Childhood and the Ragged School Museum and into the local community and beyond. Visitors to the school have included a Beefeater and a Keeper of the Jewels from the Tower of London, giving pupils the opportunity to try out copies of the royal regalia and talk of the history of a key building in their local community. The new co-ordinator has not lead formal staff training but has had the opportunity during staff meetings to explain the new units of work and the resources to support the work in the school.
113. The quality of teaching and learning has improved well since the previous inspection. Teachers prepare lessons that have good factually accurate content and give encouragement to the development of pupils' thinking skills. They use resources well, ask challenging questions and hold high expectations that pupils will enjoy and be challenged by what they are asked to do. Year 5 pupils for instance, were investigating how and why transport has changed since 1948, selecting and combining information from more than one source. Pupils in Year 2 know about some of the key events and people in British history, events such as the Great Fire of London and people such as Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys. Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard, enjoying their work and presenting their written work with care.
114. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is an appropriate action plan which rightly identifies the need to develop the monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Little direct teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection and there was very little evidence of the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects, although this is a requirement of the National Curriculum. Although there is some use of ICT in other subjects, including English, mathematics and science, it is limited by the inadequacies of the available hardware and the gaps in the provision of suitable software.
116. A lesson seen in Year 6 was well planned, well taught and pupils made good progress. However, it was clear that pupils' skills are less well developed than is usual at this stage. The few pupils actually using computers in this lesson were at an early stage of learning to input text relating to a chosen topic in order to prepare a presentation for a selected audience. They had not yet reached the stage of combining text with graphics and sound. Most pupils in Year 6 lack the expected skills such as the ability to use graphic images to complement text, or combining sound with pictures to create multi-media presentations. Although these skills are now, at the end of the year, starting to develop, progress is hampered by the lack of enough hardware and software. Pupils in Year 5 were working on adding, amending and interrogating information that has been stored in a database, but their skills were poorly developed for their age. They also made little progress, because of weaknesses in the teaching. They do not understand, for example, the need for care in framing their questions when accessing and interrogating information. There is little evidence of the application of ICT in science or geography to sense physical information, such as temperature, light or movement, as expected by Year 6.
117. Pupils' progress is hampered by a number of factors. Not all staff have received up-to-date training and as a consequence their competence in teaching ICT is variable and their confidence is patchy, but often low. There is no substantive subject co-ordinator. Resources are inadequate, with only one computer in each classroom and an as yet incomplete new ICT suite. The use of the Internet is not possible in all classrooms and it is not connected at present in the suite.
118. In some classes, for example in the lesson seen in Year 5, not enough learning goes on because of problems in controlling the class. Although a small number of pupils in this lesson wanted to learn how to interrogate a database, they were prevented from doing so because the teachers were preoccupied trying to manage behaviour and maintain order.
119. The school has recognised the weaknesses in ICT and a good action plan has been drawn up. It is rightly a priority to appoint a substantive subject leader. Plans to complete the new suite and equip it with suitable machines and software are well advanced. There is a recognition of the need to call on specialist advice, including that from the local education authority, in promoting further development and raising standards. It is intended that this will include the provision of demonstration lessons. The need to develop and rigorously monitor consistent whole school practice not only in teaching ICT but also in assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress is recognised in the subject development plan.

MUSIC

120. By the end of Year 2 standards are about average. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. Pupils have limited experiences in evaluating music and they are not well acquainted with musical terminology.

121. Music lessons are taught throughout the school by a visiting specialist who teaches three classes during each alternate half-term. This means that pupils are not taught continuously throughout the year and the balance of time allocated is limited. There are also two lunchtime recorder sessions for those pupils who are interested. All pupils, including those who learn English as an additional language, make steady progress.
122. On the evidence of tape recordings of pupils' performance and short observations of the teacher working with small groups, pupils receive good quality teaching. Pupils benefit from the teacher's knowledge and expertise which she uses well to set high standards for performance. Pupils learning recorders read musical notation accurately and perform confidently whether solo or in a group. They showed good attitudes to lessons and are conscientious about practising and tuning up for the lunch time sessions.
123. The taped performances demonstrate some robust yet tuneful singing by Year 1 pupils, while pupils in Year 3 perform *Row, row, row the boat* to show their understanding of pulse and ostinato. Year 5 performed raps to a very rhythmic accompaniment on percussion. The performance of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* played in four parts by the recorder group was impressive.
124. The subject is co-ordinated by the deputy head teacher who has responsibility for several other subjects as well as music. She ensures that events such as Christmas and festival performances take place. Teachers' subject knowledge, however, is weak, and there is a recognised need to develop their musical teaching skills. Although teachers support the specialist teacher in lessons, they do not yet lead lessons themselves.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Standards in physical education are below average by the end of Year 6, although they are average in Year 2. The subject has had a low profile for some years. It has not always been taught in all classes on a regular basis and the subject manager found staff interest and commitment to be variable when he took over the subject recently. The coverage of the curriculum has been patchy and inconsistent from class to class. The results of this unsatisfactory situation are evident in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' skills, for example in athletics and games, are less well developed than is usual and expected nationally at this age. Although the subject is now well managed by a committed and knowledgeable subject co-ordinator, there remains much work to be done to raise standards to a more acceptable level. Although the quality of teaching is sound overall, it is variable. It is good in Year 6, where the subject co-ordinator sets a good example, but unsatisfactory in Year 5, where the teachers have difficulty in controlling the class. Standards are not likely to rise sufficiently until all the teaching is at least satisfactory. More good quality teaching will be needed if pupils are to catch up.
126. In a very good athletics lesson seen in Year 6, pupils made very good progress. The teaching was well planned, clear, brisk and stimulating. Good support was given to groups and individuals by the teaching assistant, whose role was made clear. Pupils were very well controlled and responded positively to the teacher's enthusiastic, well informed manner. However, their fitness levels were poor and they tired remarkably quickly after very short burst of exercise. Their athletics skills were rudimentary and not as good as those often seen in Year 4. They had little skill, for example, in starting a sprint from a correct position. They moved with poorly developed control and fluency for their age. Their overarm ball throwing technique was poorly developed. Throwing and catching skills and team playing are poorly developed in Year 5 and hardly

comparable to those more usually seen in Year 3. In other words, pupils in the juniors are functioning at levels around two years behind those expected for their age.

127. By the end of Year 2, however, standards are more closely in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. These pupils have not suffered the background of unsatisfactory provision experienced in the juniors. For most of their time in school, the curriculum has been better planned and organised and lessons have taken place more consistently. In a sound gymnastics lesson in Year 1 pupils showed reasonable skill for their age in body control and co-ordination, as they performed a series of balancing movements. They were able to transfer their weight from balancing on a small body point to a larger area, building their movements smoothly into a sequence. In a Year 2 games lesson pupils demonstrated reasonable skill in throwing and catching a small ball, at first with two hands, then with one. In none of the lessons seen were there any great differences between the performance of boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic groups. Nor was there much evidence of any high achievement at any point, in any skill.