

INSPECTION REPORT

MEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Romford, Essex

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102322

Headteacher: Mr. P. Snelling

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Mary Summers
25455

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 May 2003

Inspection number: 246193

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Amersham Road Harold Hill Romford
Postcode:	RM3 9LD
Telephone number:	01708 343616
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. John Dodd
Date of previous inspection:	23 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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25455	Mary Summers	Registered inspector	Education Inclusion Art Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9835	Glenda Spencer	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
7853	Pat King	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	
25787	Edmond Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	
24465	Lesley Reed	Team inspector	Foundation stage Physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
20339	Vicky Plotkin	Team inspector	History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23434	Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Geography	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mead Primary is a large school catering for 369 full-time pupils, 181 boys and 188 girls, between the ages of three and 11. In addition, 45 pupils attend the nursery part-time. Children come from a large housing estate surrounding the school. There is a high level of crime in the area and the school suffers regularly from vandalism. Children's achievement, when they start school, is below average for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. Most come from white British families although there are a few from other ethnic backgrounds, including refugee families. A small number speak English as an additional language but very few are in the early stages of learning English. More than a quarter of the children are entitled to free school meals which is more than in most schools. A high number start or leave the school mid-way through the year. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than in most schools although there are more with statements of special educational need. This is because there is a Language Unit attached to the school. This caters for children with specific speech and language difficulties from inside and outside the borough. All come from outside the school's immediate catchment area and would not normally attend this school. The local education authority assigns children to the Unit and is responsible for most aspects of its management. Children spend some time in the main school and the remainder in their Unit classes. Since the previous inspection there have been considerable staffing changes in the Unit.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Mead Primary provides a sound education for pupils in the main school. Good leadership by the headteacher results in a strong commitment from class teachers to help pupils make good progress. Standards are beginning to rise. The main school provides good value for money. The Language Unit however, is not effective. Weak management results in unsatisfactory teaching and pupils are not making as much progress as they should. The Unit provides unsatisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children get a very good start to their education in the nursery and Reception classes; this provides them with firm foundations on which to build their future learning.
- High quality teaching ensures that pupils make good progress whilst at Mead Primary.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum and a good range of clubs and activities outside lesson time; this makes their learning more interesting and fun.
- Pupils are well cared for and supported; adults in the school know them well and enjoy warm relationships with them; as a result, the pupils feel relaxed and confident about their learning.
- Pupils' personal development is catered for successfully and pupils respond by showing mature attitudes to their work, very good behaviour and high levels of respect for one another.

What could be improved

- Standards in English in Year 6 are well below those expected for their age.
- Provision in the Language Unit is unsatisfactory and pupils' needs are not being met effectively.
- Absence rates are well above average; too many pupils are taken on holiday in term time and miss valuable parts of their education.
- The governing body is not meeting its responsibilities effectively.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in March 1998. Standards have improved in mathematics, science, music, geography and religious education and are now broadly in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Standards in English have improved in Year 2. More able children are now challenged by the work and are exceeding nationally expected levels in the annual tests. Standards are improving because of generally better teaching; teachers are assessing pupils' progress and planning for their needs more effectively. The governing body is still not meeting its responsibilities successfully; governors are too dependent on the headteacher for information rather than finding it out for themselves. The quality of provision in the Language Unit has fallen significantly. It was judged as good at the last inspection but is now unsatisfactory. The Unit is managed ineffectively and weaknesses in provision were identified by the school and confirmed by an LEA inspection before this inspection took place.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	E	E	E	well above average A
mathematics	E*	E	E	E	above average B
science	E	E	D	C	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Standards in national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well below national averages in English and mathematics and were below average in science. Few pupils exceeded levels expected for their age. These figures must be treated with considerable caution however, because children from the Language Unit, all of whom have a statement of special educational need, are included in the results. Although standards have been low in recent years, they have been getting better. Targets set last year in English and mathematics were too high and were not achieved. Those set this year are more realistic and are likely to be reached in mathematics but not in English. Pupils this year are on track to reach average standards in mathematics, including numeracy, and science. More pupils are reaching high levels in these subjects. However, pupils are working at well below average levels in English. Despite good teaching this year, they have not benefited from new programmes introduced into younger classes. Girls in Year 6 do not reach high enough standards in English and science.

Standards in national tests for Year 2 pupils last year were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' assessments showed science standards to be average. Pupils in Year 2 this year are at expected levels for their age in English, mathematics and science. Improvement is due to pupils beginning school earlier in the nursery, the introduction of a good phonics programme and good teaching which meets the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 this year are reaching expected levels for their ages in virtually all other subjects. Standards are above average in history in Year 2 and in physical education in Year 6.

Pupils in nursery and Reception classes make very good progress and most are likely to reach expected levels for their age by the time they start in Year 1. They exceed expected levels in some aspects, for example their personal, social, emotional and physical development.

Most pupils at Mead Primary achieve well. More able pupils are extended and more are reaching high levels in the tests. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the main school because of the careful support they receive from their teachers and other adults. There is still room for higher achievement by girls in English and science. Pupils in the Language Unit do not make fast enough progress however, because the lessons in the Unit are not well planned and do not take account of their individual needs. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress because teachers provide many opportunities for them to develop and use their spoken English.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils settle quickly to their work and most are keen to learn. However, girls in older classes do not take enough part in class discussions and this hinders their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave responsibly in lessons, assemblies and in the playground. They seldom need to be reminded of their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils readily take responsibility and show respect for one another's views and ideas.
Attendance	Well below average. Too many pupils are taken on holiday during term-time and miss important parts of their education.

Pupils' positive attitudes, mature behaviour and warm relationships with adults in the school and with one another help them to make good progress. The poor attendance of some pupils results in gaps in their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in the main part of the school. The main strengths are:

- very good teaching in the youngest classes gives children a strong foundation for subsequent learning;
- English, including literacy and mathematics, including numeracy are well taught and ensure that pupils develop their skills as they move through the school; the new phonics programme introduced in younger classes provides a firm base on which pupils can build;
- the very warm relationships that teachers build with pupils; these enable them to conduct lessons in a pleasant atmosphere; time is seldom wasted dealing with behaviour issues;
- good planning means that lessons are well structured and focused on specific learning points; teachers plan work for pupils which extends the brightest and supports those who learn more slowly;
- effective use of nursery nurses, classroom and learning support assistants in the main school; they have a considerable impact on the learning of many pupils.

Although teaching is good overall, it could be even better. The main areas for development are:

- teaching in the Language Unit is unsatisfactory; it is not well-planned nor geared well enough towards pupils' individual needs;
- teachers' marking which does not always give enough information to pupils to help them improve and take an active part in their learning;
- teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not always involve girls well enough in lessons; they let them sit back and take a passive role and this hinders their development.

Pupils in the main school, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, work hard and are keen to do their best. They concentrate well and are interested in their lessons. Pupils in the Language Unit often show limited interest in the work because it does not meet their needs; this is not the case when they join classes in the main school, where teachers expect more of them; pupils respond well to this and give of their best.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good across the main school. Pupils receive an interesting and well-organised variety of experiences. Extra-curricular activities are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good in the main school but unsatisfactory for pupils in the Language Unit. Provision in the Unit is not well-organised; it does not take account of the specific needs of the pupils and results in their making slow progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Although the development of their language skills is not planned for specifically, these pupils make good progress because of the generally high quality of teaching in lessons and the emphasis on developing spoken language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Moral and social development are very good. Pupils have some opportunities for spiritual reflection in assemblies though few in lessons. There are clear rules and scope for pupils to work and play together in teams. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to appreciate the rich cultural diversity of modern Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school shows a high level of care for pupils. There are very good systems to ensure children are kept safe. Their progress is tracked satisfactorily although not all pupils are involved in setting their own targets or in assessing what they have learned.

The school works appropriately with parents. Parents are given sufficient information about school events and about their children's progress. Workshops have been held to help parents become more aware of what their children are learning at school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides a strong and determined lead to the work of the school. Roles and responsibilities of some staff, including the deputy, are unclear and limit their effectiveness in improving standards and teaching. Management of the Language Unit is unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Systems are not yet in place to enable the governors to monitor the work of the school and to plan effectively for the future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Key weaknesses have been identified and addressed successfully. Systems to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are in place but are not rigorous enough to pinpoint areas where they could be even better.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial procedures are tight and funds are assigned carefully to support school improvement. Careful budgeting has enabled substantial improvements to be made to the premises this year as well as providing an additional teacher to help raise achievement in Year 6.

The school is very well staffed. It enjoys extensive accommodation which is kept clean, well-maintained and safe for the children. There are enough books and equipment to support teaching and learning. The school uses the principles of best value effectively, for example, when it consults pupils about school development and when it gains a number of estimates for major projects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good and their children are making good progress. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. • The school encourages children to become mature and responsible. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities on offer to children outside the school day.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views expressed by parents. The team does not support parents' concerns about the range of extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils. These are very good indeed and reflect a wide range of interests including sport, music and the arts.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children start in the nursery at levels which are generally lower than those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. A well-planned curriculum and very good teaching helps children to make rapid progress in both the nursery and Reception classes. Currently, by the time they transfer to Year 1, they reach expected levels for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and creative development. They exceed levels expected in their personal, social and emotional development, some aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. Their achievement is good. Standards have improved since the nursery was opened three years ago.
2. In the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2002, standards were below average in reading, writing and mathematics although, when compared with similar schools, they were average. Assessments by teachers showed that standards in science were also average. A reasonable number of pupils exceeded expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics but no pupils reached the higher levels in science. Overall, standards were affected by the poor achievement of boys, which has been a trend in results over the past few years.
3. Current inspection findings indicate that pupils in Year 2 this year are on track to reach standards which are in line with those expected nationally in reading, writing, mathematics, science and all other subjects. Standards in history are higher than those expected for their age. The improvement in standards is due to a number of factors including better teaching, in particular the provision for pupils of different abilities. This is helping the more able pupils reach high standards in the tests. In addition, the new nursery is enabling pupils to begin their education earlier than in previous years and is helping boys to develop a positive attitude to education. The introduction of a concentrated phonic programme in younger classes provides pupils with a firm base on which to develop their literacy skills. This programme is particularly beneficial to the boys whose achievement is starting to rise.
4. Standards in the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well below national averages in English and mathematics and were below average in science. When compared with schools with a similar intake of pupils, standards were still well below average in English and mathematics although they were average in science. Results, however, include those of pupils who attend the Language Unit allied to the school. These pupils have statements of special educational needs and their results often lower the overall standards achieved. Standards have been consistently lower than they should have been over the last few years but they have been getting better; the rate of improvement has been in line with the national trend.
5. Few pupils last year exceeded levels expected for their age in any subject and girls did not do as well as boys; these factors affected the overall standards achieved. The targets which the school set for pupils to reach last year were much too high and were not achieved. This year's targets are challenging yet realistic and look likely to be achieved in mathematics, although not in English because of the weaknesses in pupils' basic skills.
6. Inspection evidence shows that this year, pupils in Year 6 are working at expected levels for their age in mathematics, including numeracy, and science but are still at levels which are well below those expected in English, including literacy. The improvement in mathematics and science is due mainly to the good quality of teaching the pupils have received in Year 6. The school used some of its reserved funds to employ an extra teacher and to make three classes instead of the usual two and this has enabled pupils to receive a good deal of one-to-one support. The positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils have also contributed to better standards.

7. Standards in Year 6 are still well below average in all aspects of English, however. These pupils have not benefited from the good phonic programme introduced into younger classes a few years ago and have therefore had a less secure base on which to build their literacy skills. Girls do not take an active enough part in English lessons and their vocabulary and use of language lacks imagination. Pupils do not have enough time to spend on pieces of extended writing where they can practise the skills they have learned in their literacy lessons. These factors contribute to the low standards which pupils are likely to reach this year.

8. In all other subjects, pupils reach expected standards for their age by the end of Year 6. They do particularly well in physical education, where standards are above average. This reflects the good provision the school makes for the subject and the high priority it has within the curriculum. Standards in many subjects have improved since the last inspection; mathematics, music, geography and religious education were all below average at the last inspection but are now average in both Years 2 and 6. English standards are better in Year 2 but are still well below average in Year 6 because the developments in provision introduced in recent years have not worked their way up the school yet.

9. Pupils with special educational needs in the main school make good progress as they move through the school. Work in class is usually provided at a suitable level, based on prior attainment, which results in pupils making good progress. Individual education plans, written by the special needs co-ordinator after consultation with the pupils' class teachers, cover the areas of need but sometimes set targets that are too general or vague to be accurately measured. This causes some difficulties when setting the next target, as it is unclear as to the progress made towards the previous one.

10. Pupils from the Language Unit benefit greatly from the time they spend in classes in the main school. They make good progress as a result of the careful support given by teachers and assistants. However, when in their Language Unit classes, progress is slow. Lessons are not planned systematically enough to ensure that pupils cover different subjects well enough; neither do the lessons in basic subjects meet their individual needs. Inconsistent specialist support from speech therapists has contributed to this unsatisfactory progress.

11. The school has identified 18 pupils who have English as an additional language although very few are at an early stage of language learning. These pupils make good progress, not because of additional support but because of the good quality of teaching they receive in class. Teachers provide many opportunities for all their pupils to develop their spoken language skills and these benefit those pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

12. A number of factors must be taken into account when judging pupils' achievement overall:

- children start at Mead School achieving lower levels than those expected for their age;
- the current Year 6 pupils have had no nursery education;
- there is a high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need;
- there is a high number of pupils who have transferred into the school from other schools this year with low levels of achievement.

13. Taking these factors into account, pupils' achievement is good. Pupils in the main school, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and the more able pupils, achieve well during their time at school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour, personal development and the relationships within the school are real strengths, and have a positive impact on the standards achieved. All these aspects have improved since the last inspection. Pupils have good attitudes to school. They settle down quickly in registrations, assemblies and in class and most are ready and keen to learn. In

older classes, girls are not always keen to take part in class discussions where they have to speak out in front of their classmates.

15. Pupils take pride in their achievements and their work. They are attentive to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. In a meeting of the school council, for example, they discussed how the school environment could be improved. They show mature attitudes and respect for one another's viewpoints.

16. Standards of behaviour are very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, and most of the pupils have high expectations of the standards of behavior that are acceptable. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, and their behaviour in the classrooms, at breaktime and at lunchtime is very good. There were no signs of any bullying or isolation of individual pupils. There have been no exclusions in the last year which shows the high standards of behaviour in school.

17. Relationships are warm and positive. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They work together productively in classrooms and play well together in the playgrounds. They share books and equipment, take turns and listen to each other. Pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, other staff, each other and the environment.

18. The pupils' personal development is very good. They learn a very good range of social skills that help them to develop into well-rounded individuals. In classrooms they take responsibility for their work, and in lessons work appropriately with minimal supervision. They respond well to the formal responsibilities they are given around the school, for example, looking after younger children during breaktime and at lunchtime. Pupils support local and national charities, for example in the recent 'swimathon', attended by both pupils and staff, and are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves.

19. Pupils with special educational needs who have identified emotional and behavioural difficulties are well managed in class and during breaktime. They are well supported by teachers and support assistants. The school ensures that they are fully included in the life of the school and that their behaviour is not detrimental to their own learning nor to that of their classmates. They take an active part in, for example, class assemblies, where they present aspects of their work to parents and other classes.

20. Pupils who have English as an additional language develop their confidence well in the supportive and caring atmosphere of the school. This enables them to take part appropriately in class activities and achieve as well as other pupils in their class.

21. Attendance is well below the national average and unauthorised absence is slightly above average, although over the past three years the rate of attendance has improved. The poor attendance is caused mainly by children being taken on holiday during term time. Unauthorised absences are partly caused by failure of a few parents to provide an explanation when their child returns from absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. Children at Mead Primary learn well because the quality of the teaching is generally good throughout the school. This finding is similar to that of the last inspection, although there is now more very good teaching which is resulting in improved standards in many subjects.

23. Teachers work extremely hard and give a great deal of time outside the normal school day to plan lessons which interest and motivate their pupils. They also make sure that classrooms and corridors are bright and stimulating, displaying children's work prominently so that they know it is valued. Teachers also give of their time freely to run clubs and activities outside school time and this builds warm relationships and a sense of community. Children are often taken to watch their teachers play competitive sport, for example; this shows them what can be achieved with hard

work and commitment and contributes well to the high standards that pupils in Year 6 reach in physical education.

24. Of the 81 lessons observed during the inspection, nearly a quarter were very good. Very good lessons were seen in nearly all year groups but many were in Reception and Year 6 classes where pupils were making particularly rapid progress. Overall, nearly two thirds of the lessons seen in the school were good or very good and this consistency of good teaching is helping pupils reach higher standards than they have been over the past few years. Very few, only five per cent of lessons observed, were less than satisfactory and these were due mainly to teachers' lack of confidence in a few subjects, and a general lack of expertise, and weak planning in the Language Unit.

25. Children in the nursery and Reception classes are very well taught. Teachers in these classes understand the needs of young children very well and plan a wide range of interesting and stimulating experiences which enable children to make good progress in all areas of their learning. Baking flapjacks helps them to learn about measuring ingredients, taking turns and seeing how heat affects materials. Examining plants and flowers encourages them to think what conditions they need to grow successfully. Playing musical instruments and painting teddy bear pictures develops their creativity, imagination and confidence. All activities are geared towards developing spoken language; teachers make sure that the children learn new words carefully and encourage them to use them in their work. In one Reception class, for example, the children were looking at a globe to see which countries various fruits come from. Not only did the children learn the names of several unusual fruits but they also learned basic geographical vocabulary such as "desert" and "grassland". The calm and supportive atmosphere in all these classes helps children to feel comfortable and confident to approach new learning.

26. The good pace of learning in younger classes is continued as pupils move up the school. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are successful and this is continued in Years 2 to 6. The main strengths are:

- literacy and numeracy are generally well taught. Teachers use the national strategies well to structure their lessons and pupils are introduced to new learning in a systematic way. The phonics programme which was introduced a few years ago is contributing well to the higher standards pupils are reaching as they move through the school;
- teachers' good questioning skills; most teachers ask questions which make their pupils think and to help them find out what the pupils have learned. 'Why did you choose plastic as the best material to mend my umbrella?' asked a Year 1 teacher in a science lesson. Pupils gave their explanations and the teacher was able to gauge which of them had understood the key learning point fully;
- the very good relationships which teachers enjoy with their pupils. Lessons are conducted in a pleasant atmosphere and time is seldom wasted in dealing with behaviour issues;
- lesson planning is clear and focuses on what is to be learned by the pupils. Many teachers share these objectives with the pupils at the beginning of lessons so that pupils know what is expected of them. Some teachers also refer to them at the end of lessons, asking probing questions to find out which of their pupils have learned effectively. Teachers also plan well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils in the class; different activities are often set for those with special educational needs and those who learn at a slower rate. These activities are matched well to their levels of understanding and ensure that they make good progress in lessons. Similarly, the more able pupils are challenged by more complex work. This was an issue raised at the last inspection and teachers have worked hard to ensure that these pupils also make good progress;

- nursery nurses, classroom and learning support assistants are all used well to help pupils learn effectively. They sit with pupils during class discussions, encouraging them to take part and making sure they understand. They support them carefully in their independent work; they know when to help or to encourage pupils to work things out for themselves;
- teachers use a wide variety of methods and equipment to interest the pupils and help them focus on the learning points. Teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently and pupils are keen to come to the board and explain their answers with the use of this new technology. Class discussions, group and individual work are balanced well with good direct teaching and the range of methods used ensures that most lessons move at a brisk pace.

27. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning is generally good there are a few areas where it could be even better. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and many make useful comments to help them in their subsequent assessments. A few teachers make useful comments to help the pupils know what they have to do to improve and so involve them more in their own learning. This practice, however, is inconsistent across the school.

28. In some of the older classes, girls take a very passive role and do not contribute as much as boys to class discussions. They work well in small groups and as individuals but lack confidence in a larger group. Teachers are not always aware of this and do not involve them enough through direct questioning.

29. Teachers do not devote as much time to English teaching as they might. This restricts the opportunities which pupils have to write at length and practise the skills they have learned in lessons.

30. Other weaknesses noted in lessons were specific to individual teachers and reflect the lack of rigorous monitoring by senior staff and subject co-ordinators to help teachers identify points for improvement. A lack of confidence in music for example and weaknesses in a few teachers' knowledge of religious education make some lessons slow and undemanding for the pupils. In a few cases, lesson introductions are too long and pupils become restless as they listen to their teachers for long periods without being directly involved.

31. Generally however, pupils work hard and are keen to do their best. They are interested in their lessons and readily acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding. All pupils, including those with special educational needs in the main school and those who are more able make good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress, not because of specific provision for them but because of the careful attention teachers give to developing pupils' language in lessons.

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

32. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for all its pupils that includes religious education and personal, social and health education. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. All pupils benefit from the curriculum, whatever their abilities. Pupils from the Speech and Language Unit spend time in classes in the main school and this makes a significant contribution to the development of their personal and social skills. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good. It takes place in lessons across the curriculum as well as during circle time. Drugs education forms part of a programme taught by the local police and sex education and relationships are taught in Year 6.

33. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are securely in place. The last inspection noted that there was not enough time devoted to using and applying mathematical and scientific skills to specific situations. This has been addressed through the use of the nationally recommended plans for mathematics and by devoting more time to science generally. However, while there is generally an appropriate amount of time overall allocated to English, insufficient time

is given to extended writing. This impacts on the attainment of pupils in their end of Year 6 English tests when fewer than expected reach the agreed national level for their age.

34. Provision for music, geography and religious education has improved since the last inspection. New or updated schemes of work ensure a more consistent progression in music and in religious education. The last inspection noted that pupils of similar ages who were taught in different classes did not always receive the same opportunities. Now, the experiences for pupils in parallel classes are similar. In Years 5 and 6, for example, subjects such as information and communication technology and religious education are taught by the same teacher with classes swapping around for lessons. This takes account of the individual strengths of teachers and also ensures that pupils cover the same ground. Planning now takes into account the needs of the more able pupils. The school also identifies those who are gifted or talented and they attend Saturday classes run by the local education authority.

35. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a well-organised and stimulating range of experiences which meet all the nationally recommended areas of learning. Cooking, role play, outdoor play, music making and well-organised literacy and numeracy activities all help them to make rapid progress from an initially low starting point.

36. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs in the main part of the school is good and, where possible, is linked to the targets in their individual education plans. Such pupils are given full access to the curriculum and receive good quality support from teachers and support assistants. Class teachers and their assistants closely monitor and track pupils' progress to ensure that they are learning effectively. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for additional learning support. Care is taken to ensure that they do not miss any important class work and that the benefits they receive from this extra help outweigh any disadvantages.

37. Curricular provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is appropriately matched to their needs. Teachers are aware of the need to ensure all pupils' vocabulary and comprehension are developed successfully and this ensures that pupils who are on the early stages of language acquisition make good progress. However, there is insufficient guidance available within the school for further specialist strategies to help pupils whose needs are more complex or to support teachers if the numbers on the school's register should increase. There is also insufficient guidance on how pupils' first languages might be used to support their learning.

38. The extra-curricular provision is a strength of the school. Numerous well-attended clubs covering music, arts, sports and other activities give pupils additional opportunities to extend their knowledge, improve their skills and broaden their experiences. Activities take place before and after school and at lunchtimes and range from a full athletics, fitness and games programme to a First Aid club, a sewing club, a mathematics homework club and daily orchestra practice. Work in class is enriched by visits linked to the subject being studied. Year 1 visit the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood to look at toys from long ago and compare them with toys today for their history project. Year 5 visit the local church to identify the specific features that tell them what it was built for as they consider the purposes of buildings in their religious education lesson. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to go on a residential trip to the Isle of Wight where they take part in geographical field studies and visit Osborne House as part of their study of the Victorians.

39. The school enjoys good relationships with the community. Regular visitors to the school include road safety officers, the local fire officer, theatre groups and storytellers. Representatives from charities for which the pupils raise funds such as the British Heart Foundation, the NSPCC, Help the Aged and the local children's hospice, come in to talk to them. Pupils deliver harvest parcels to senior citizens and serve them refreshments at the end of the Christmas production, to which they are invited each year.

40. The school is a member of a network of local primary schools and the local secondary school. The programme of curriculum and sporting events run by the partnership forges strong links between members. Competitive events and art exhibitions organised by the partnership

familiarise pupils with, and prepare them well for, the transfer to secondary school. A local initiative funds a family worker who supports parents of children in the nursery and Reception classes. The school also welcomes students and is a partnership school for teacher training. This puts them in a good position when they are looking for new staff.

41. The school makes good provision overall for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for their moral and social development is very good.

42. The programme for religious education contributes to the overall aims of the school in promoting spiritual awareness. By the age of 11 pupils know some of the main practices and celebrations of other religions, for example, Judaism, and can describe aspects of the life of major religious leaders. They have some understanding of religious symbolism, being able to make connections between symbolic objects and given meanings, as in the work done in Year 3 on Sikhism where pupils explore the five 'Ks' central to that faith.

43. Time for personal reflection is a feature of some but not all assemblies. Some assemblies lack a real sense of warmth which makes it difficult to engender a positive individual response from pupils. The potential for spiritual development in different subjects has not been fully explored or planned for and opportunities are often missed to add this dimension to class lessons.

44. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good. The school promotes an underlying moral code as a basis for good behaviour, and pupils are expected to conduct themselves accordingly and be tolerant of others. Pupils are taught the differences between right and wrong, and that ultimately they have to be responsible for their own actions. There are clear simple class rules around the school, developed with the pupils, which effectively promote and support the safety and welfare of pupils. Pupils strive to gain points to be rewarded in the end of week assemblies, and there is an effective 'Buddy' system, when older pupils support younger pupils at playtimes. Opportunities are planned in the curriculum for pupils to explore moral issues, for example, after hearing the story of the Prodigal Son, Year 2 pupils explored feelings related to jealousy and friendship.

45. Pupils on the school council learn about democracy and how working together can produce good results. They have already succeeded in improving some aspects of school life. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for tasks at lunchtime and in assemblies. Pupils are given many opportunities to work co-operatively in pairs or small groups in class lessons. They are often involved in raising funds for charities as in the recent 'swimathon'.

46. Teachers provide very good role models and work hard to promote caring attitudes that enable pupils to show respect for others and their school environment. Teachers provide an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, often sharing with pupils their own out of school interests. Clubs in school are well attended and make a positive contribution to the pupils' understanding of fair play and team spirit.

47. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. In religious education pupils learn about comparative religions such as Judaism and Sikhism. They appreciate the work of well-known artists through the 'art gallery' developed by each year group, which contains prints by famous artists such as Monet and Van Gogh. Theatre groups make visits to the school and explore with the pupils themes around treating people as equals and about living in racial harmony. Pupils learn about festivals connected with other religions and cultures such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year. They participate in workshops exploring the art and music of other countries and cultures, for example, the recent workshop on African art. They develop some knowledge of their own heritage through visits, for example, to the British Museum, but there are only limited opportunities for pupils to explore and develop in depth their knowledge of the rich cultural diversity of modern Britain, including that of the pupils in the school itself.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. Mead School provides a high level of care for its pupils. Staff know the pupils well, enjoy very good relationships with them and ensure they are in a safe and secure environment. The good personal approach of the headteacher plays an important part in this because he makes himself constantly available to pupils and parents to sort out any concerns or problems. Parents appreciate this tremendously.

49. There are very good arrangements in place to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare. The site manager and the local education authority carry out regular risk assessments of the premises and any issues are quickly dealt with. Health and safety procedures are effective. The school makes very good arrangements for child protection.

50. There are good procedures in place for monitoring and improving attendance. Any unexplained absences are quickly followed up but are not always successful in establishing a reason for pupils' absence. Lateness is followed up efficiently. There are close links with the education welfare services and registers meet statutory requirements. The school endeavours to dissuade parents from taking family holidays during term time but has not been as successful as it would wish.

51. There are very effective procedures in place to monitor and promote discipline and good behaviour. A system of rewards and sanctions is in place and praise is used consistently by all staff. All adults in the school act as good role models to the pupils and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with immediately. The school council, the many extra-curricular activities and homework policy allow pupils to develop positive attitudes to school life. Incidents of any anti-social behaviour are rare and when they occur they are dealt with quickly, effectively and consistently by staff.

52. The caring relationships that all adults develop with pupils create a learning environment that enables pupils to feel secure, valued and supported so they can learn effectively. The school works well with the education welfare officer, school nurse, and other outside agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Teaching assistants help pupils in a professional yet sensitive manner. There is a high quality of supervision of pupils during play times and before and after school.

53. The school catering services provide a good range of food at lunchtime which promotes healthy living and enables pupils to make responsible choices. The kitchen and dining areas are clean and well organised.

54. The formal procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. The very good range of after-school activities, tests and the good knowledge of pupils' individual needs held by members of the school are used to ensure high standards of care and a wide range of opportunities for personal development. Opportunities for independence are good in some classes, although pupils are not given enough responsibility for their own learning. Their enthusiasm and commitment are not always harnessed to help them make the best possible progress.

55. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and are used appropriately to monitor pupils' individual progress. Marking, although done regularly, seldom gives pupils enough information about what they need to do to improve. This restricts their opportunities to make a real effort to address the weaknesses in their work.

56. Teachers track pupils' progress regularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics. They use the information gained from testing and observations of pupils' work to place pupils appropriately into ability groups within classes or sets within year groups. In science and in some other subjects, teachers assess pupils' attainment at the end of units of work and use their assessments when writing end of year reports for parents. This shows satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when assessments were rarely related to National Curriculum levels.

57. Early in each school year, teachers set individual targets for pupils to reach by the end of the academic year. They use these in planning to meet pupils' needs. However, these targets are not monitored well enough by senior staff to check if pupils are on track to meet them and if, not, what action will be taken to help them. Some subject co-ordinators use the analysis of the national test results to identify and address areas of the curriculum in need of development, such as investigational work in science and this has had a positive effect on pupils' attainment. However, this information is not used routinely by co-ordinators in other subjects. The results are not yet monitored systematically to assess the progress of different groups, for example boys and girls. The newly introduced assessment recording system will provide very useful information for senior managers to track the progress of different groups, classes and cohorts and identify those who are not making enough progress.

58. Staff in the nursery and Reception classes have clear routines for making regular assessments of children's learning. These are used successfully to provide well planned activities and effective support for individual children.

59. Pupils in the main school with special educational needs are identified early in their school life and are accurately assessed. Their progress is tracked carefully and their individual education plans are reviewed regularly. The inclusion of targets in some pupils' individual education plans to improve attendance is a helpful initiative. Such pupils, with the involvement of their parents or carers, are regularly monitored to help improve their levels of attendance so that they have more opportunities for learning. There are five statemented pupils in the main part of the school and these receive their full entitlement as outlined in their statements of educational need. In some instances this support is not at the times of day when the need is greatest and this occasionally results in pupils having a great deal of additional support in some lessons and very little in others. The school fully meets the statutory requirements of the special educational needs new Code of Practice.

60. Overall the care and support for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. The care and support provided for the personal and social development of those pupils is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and have a good overview of these areas of pupil development. However while school systems enable their overall development to be tracked, the development of their fluency and confidence in English is not monitored carefully enough.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection expressed overwhelming support for the school's work and for the work done by teachers. The great majority of parents say that their children enjoy coming to school. A minority, however, do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities for children outside the school day. The inspection team does not agree with these concerns; indeed the school provides a very wide range of activities for children outside normal lesson time.

62. The school involves parents in their children's education through a wide range of activities. These include workshops to explain the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and to tell them about the national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Parents have good opportunities to view their children's work at school and talk about their progress. The school actively encourages parents to use the school to enhance their own learning and at present one parent is working within the school towards a nationally recognised qualification. Social events are well attended and parents are encouraged to help in class; a small number come to support classes in the school and accompany children on school trips and to swimming lessons.

63. Parents receive satisfactory information about the school and how their children are doing. The annual reports give a good range of information. The school prospectus and the annual report from the governing body meet statutory requirements. A regular flow of letters informs parents about what is being taught and keeps parents appropriately informed. The parents receive good

information about what their children will be learning each term. A notice board in the school foyer gives information about the lunch menu, visits and visitors to the school.

64. Adults in the nursery and Reception classes forge good links with parents. These positive relationships provide a strong base on which to further develop parents' support. Parents regularly bring their children into the nursery in the mornings and many stay for an informal chat with teachers or support staff. Staff are always ready to listen to parents' concerns and suggest ways in which they can help their children.

65. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed about their child's progress towards the targets set for them. Parents are always invited to meetings to review the provision for their child and given copies of the individual education plans.

66. Communication with the parents of pupils who have English as an additional language is generally satisfactory. Communication follows the whole-school pattern and is sometimes too dependent on the ability of pupils to communicate information to their parents themselves.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The school is led well by the headteacher who has very clear views about what he wants for pupils and how this will be achieved. Central to the school's aims is the commitment towards ensuring that all pupils, whatever their background, gender or ability are included in the life of the school and are able to make effective progress in all aspects of their development. This is achieved well, mainly because this commitment is shared by all members of staff. The last inspection noted that more able children were not extended enough in lessons but this is no longer the case; lesson observations show that teachers now plan for these pupils effectively and that they make good progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language continue to be well cared for and supported in the main school and they too, make good progress.

68. Staff with management responsibilities make a sound contribution to the development of the school although their roles are not always well defined. The job description of the deputy headteacher, for example, does not state clearly her responsibilities or how she is involved in leading various aspects of school development. The administrative nature of some of her duties means that she does not have enough time to spend on leading aspects of school improvement or on specific teaching duties. There are, however, plans to address these issues in the near future.

69. The Foundation Stage is well led. The day to day organisation and management of both the nursery and the Reception classes is a strength of the school. The new nursery provision has been developed very well and now provides a very good start for children in the early stages of their education.

70. The special needs co-ordinator for the main school works closely with teachers and meets with them each term to review the individual education plans and discuss any concerns about the pupils' progress. All records are kept up-to-date and individual education plans regularly reviewed. Liaison with outside agencies ensures that the school and its pupils receive the support they require. The co-ordinator and the school staff are fully conversant with the new Code of Practice.

71. The management of the school's provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. The school's co-ordinator for special educational needs is responsible for the co-ordination of the provision. She has a good understanding of pupils' personal and social needs and has good informal communication with staff and pupils. However, current systems for monitoring pupils' development are not sufficiently sharply focused on their development in English. Resources used in class are generally well matched to pupils' needs but there are missed opportunities to use and celebrate the richness of other cultures and to use the pupils' first language to help them learn English.

72. Subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and hard-working. They are involved in monitoring teachers' plans and, to some degree, standards in the subject. However, despite putting in a great amount of time outside the school day, writing schemes of work and providing advice for colleagues, some co-ordinators remain unsure of exactly what is expected of them. This is because they too have job descriptions which do not identify their roles and responsibilities clearly enough. They provide energetic leadership but the management of subjects is less well defined. Systems are not in place to enable them to have a clear view of standards and teaching in their subjects across the whole school and it is difficult for them, therefore, to identify what needs to be improved and plan for it effectively.

73. At the last inspection, the governing body was not carrying out its responsibilities effectively because governors did not understand the full implications of their role. Although some improvements have been made in this respect and some structures introduced to help governors understand their roles, the governing body is still not carrying out an effective role. There are few systems in place to ensure that governors collect enough information about the school so that they can contribute effectively to identifying areas for school development.

74. The last inspection said that teaching needed to be monitored more carefully to identify and address any weaknesses. A system of regular observation has been introduced but the format is not helpful in identifying how the pupils' learning is influenced by the teaching. Consequently, some of the individual weaknesses identified in this inspection, for example in music, have been missed. During the inspection, it was clear that teachers were keen to learn how aspects of their teaching could have been improved. However, the lesson observation format used by the school does not always provide teachers with clear areas for development. Some subject co-ordinators have been involved in monitoring lessons but others have had limited opportunity which inhibits the impact they can have on improving teaching and learning.

75. The school receives useful information from the borough about how well pupils have done in national tests and assessments. There is also good information available from the school's own annual tests to show general strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. However, this information is not always shared with relevant co-ordinators to enable them to plan effectively to address these weaknesses. The school has recently introduced a new system which will track pupils' progress through the school and will help them to identify individuals and groups of pupils who are not progressing fast enough.

76. The school values every member of staff immensely and senior managers put a great deal of effort into providing the resources teachers and support staff need to carry out their jobs successfully. All members of staff are encouraged to contribute to school life, over and above their normal teaching duties and this they do with great enthusiasm and commitment. The school takes great care when appointing new staff, often interviewing those who have already done teaching practice or work experience at the school as students. Newly qualified teachers are supported extremely well and receive many opportunities to attend useful courses run by the borough. Teachers usually stay for several years, leaving only to take up promotions in schools elsewhere. This is a good indication of the pleasure and fulfilment that teachers feel whilst at Mead. The school provides ongoing development through annual professional interviews which identify training and development needs. However, the targets set are often fixed by teachers themselves; this is effective in valuing their own professional expertise and commitment but not always effective in identifying how their teaching could be even more effective.

77. School improvements are costed and subject co-ordinators are given budgets to support their plans. A rigorous check is kept on spending by school staff, including the headteacher. Specific grants are used appropriately, for example, to support pupils with special educational needs in the main school. The school uses the principles of best value effectively for example when it consults pupils about school development through the school council and when it seeks a number of estimates for major projects.

78. Governors, however, do not monitor the financial situation regularly or rigorously enough to ensure they have an independent view of how school funds are being spent. Minutes from finance committee meetings are extremely brief and show that governors 'receive' information from the headteacher rather than finding it out for themselves. Governors have no way of judging how spending decisions have improved standards or provision for the pupils. Through careful budgeting by the headteacher over the last few years, the school has been able to save enough to refurbish all the toilets this year. This will result in the figure carried forward into next year's accounts being within acceptable limits.

79. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. In addition to the areas noted above, there have been good improvements to the school premises. A nursery has opened and is providing children in the area with a good start to their education. Classrooms are bright and cheerful and are redecorated and refurbished as part of a rolling programme. Improvements have been made to the school offices and reception area to help the school function more efficiently. Governors have not improved their effectiveness however, and the Language Unit provision has deteriorated considerably.

80. There is a good number of staff, teaching and non-teaching, to support the pupils. They are generally deployed well and have a great impact on the progress that pupils make. For example, the three teachers assigned to Year 6 classes have ensured that these pupils have made rapid progress over the year because of the smaller numbers in classes. Support staff help pupils with special educational needs take a full part in lessons and often take small groups to work on specific areas they find difficult. However, in a very small number of cases, support staff are not well deployed and this results in some pupils receiving all their support in the morning and none in the afternoon.

81. The school is adequately resourced with books and equipment. Interactive whiteboards in many classes are adding a new dimension to teaching and mean that pupils are interested and keen to participate in lessons. The school has a good range of equipment to support physical education both in and outside of formal lessons and these contribute to the high standards achieved in the subject. The extensive playing fields, hard play areas and indoor halls mean that pupils are able to participate in a wide variety of physical education activities. Some good recent purchases of books to support literacy lessons are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress but the range of books available in the library is limited and means that pupils' choice is restricted. The school is aware of this and a major audit has taken place recently to identify gaps in provision.

THE LANGUAGE UNIT

82. The Language Unit provides for 20 primary aged pupils who have severe and specific speech and/or language disorders. At present there are 16 full time pupils in the unit of which 15 have a statement of special educational need. Some of the pupils recently admitted also have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties and this provides an additional challenge for the school.

83. There have been considerable changes of staff since the school's last inspection. Currently, the Unit is fully staffed with two full time teachers who are responsible for the two classes and one part time teacher to oversee the integration programme into classes in the main part of the school. One class is for pupils in Years 1-3 and the other has pupils in Years 4-6. A teacher on a temporary contract is currently teaching the older class, until a newly appointed permanent teacher takes over in September. There are also two support assistants, one for each class, plus two temporary assistants to support particular pupils. The Speech and Language Therapist who is assigned to the Unit for three days a week has been on long term leave until very recently and very little cover was provided in her absence to support the pupils. Pupils attend the Unit specifically to receive specialist support in this area and the weak provision over recent months reflects the poor management and organisation generally.

84. Pupils in the Language Unit have a wide variety of needs, including specific speech and language difficulties. Currently, they are making slow progress whilst in their Unit classes. This is because lessons in the Unit are planned for the whole class and do not take into account the varying abilities, needs and ages of the pupils. They are often based on low-level activities and do little to help pupils improve their knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum. There is a lack of urgency in lessons and time is often used inefficiently. Lessons specifically designed to improve language skills are generally effective although they are sometimes too long and repetitive for pupils who then become bored and restless. The exercise programme to improve physical skills such as co-ordination is also reasonably successful.

85. The organisation of the curriculum in the Language Unit is unsatisfactory. It does not ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum and religious education during the time they spend at the school. Curriculum and lesson plans do not link well enough to pupils' individual learning plans and pupils' progress is not assessed regularly enough. Support assistants are used inefficiently; they are uncertain about what they are expected to do with the pupils or what pupils are expected to achieve from the activities. Adults have low expectations of behaviour and of the standards of work they expect from the pupils.

86. When pupils from the Unit are working in classes in the main school they blossom and produce work of a much higher quality. For example, when the Year 5 pupils are integrated in mathematics, music, art or information technology lessons, they make good progress as they are well taught, given work closely matched to their prior attainment and receive good quality support from teachers and learning support assistants. Expectations of their work and behaviour are noticeably higher. The pupils respond well to the challenge and are interested in their work, concentrate well and are proud of their achievements. The contribution made to the education of the pupils from the Unit by the teachers and support assistants in the main part of the school is considerable and this is the primary factor in the successful integration of the pupils into mainstream education.

87. The Unit is not managed well. Management responsibilities are confused and the terms of the management agreement have not been agreed by the governing body. The local education authority devolves the funding to the school but retains the major responsibility for the organisation of the curriculum, the individual learning plans for pupils and setting targets for them to achieve. The head of the Unit has little time each week to complete all the necessary paperwork, liaise with outside agencies, parents, staff and monitor and support the work of the unit team. The work of the unit overall is rarely monitored to identify areas for development or improvement. In the weeks leading up to the current inspection, the school requested a local education authority review. The subsequent report highlighted the weaknesses identified in this report.

88. The provision in the Language Unit has deteriorated significantly since the last inspection. Then it was judged to be providing a good education for the pupils who attended but this is no longer the case.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should now:

(1) Improve standards in English in Year 6 by:

- continuing to give pupils a range of opportunities to develop their speaking skills and ensure that teachers emphasise new vocabulary in all lessons;
- ensuring that teachers involve girls more in lessons to give them more confidence and extend their range of vocabulary;
- improving the range of books for more able readers;
- encouraging pupils to read more at home;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length;

- improving teachers' marking so that pupils know what they must do to improve their work;
- using the results of tests and assessments to identify the next steps in pupils' learning so that teachers can plan for these effectively;
- using the new library more effectively and make sure that library and research skills are taught systematically.

(Paragraphs 4-8, 14, 27, 34, 35, 39, 63, 114, 116, 117, 120-124, 128-130.)

(2) Improve provision in the Language Unit by:

- reviewing admissions criteria;
- ensuring all parties are clear about their management roles and that the quality of provision is regularly and rigorously monitored;
- developing a well-organised curriculum which meets the needs of pupils;
- improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- improving assessment procedures and linking these more effectively with pupils' individual education plans;
- using support staff more efficiently.

(Paragraphs 10, 88-94)

(3) Continue to work with parents to improve attendance.

(Paragraphs 21 and 56)

(4) Ensure that the governing body meets its responsibilities effectively by developing systems by which governors can gain enough information to monitor the school's work and help it plan for future development.

(Paragraphs 79 and 84)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all members of staff are clearly defined, particularly those who have senior posts, and that they have clear definitions regarding their monitoring role. (Paragraphs 78, 138, 147, 154, 161, 166, 174, 187, 198)
- Ensure that pupils are involved more closely in their own learning by including them in the target setting and review process. (Paragraphs 33, 60, 61, 128, 173)
- Improving the links between co-ordinators' monitoring roles and school development planning so that weaknesses in standards and provision are addressed effectively. (Paragraphs 78, 138, 147, 154, 161, 166, 174, 187, 198)
- Improve the provision for multicultural education so that pupils appreciate the wide range of cultures in modern British society. (Paragraph 53)
- Implement procedures to assess the development of language skills amongst pupils for whom English is an additional language. (Paragraph 66)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

82

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

33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	18	34	25	4	0	0
Percentage	0	22	42	31	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	369
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		101

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10	66

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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	25	26	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	21	22
	Girls	25	25	24
	Total	44	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (91)	90 (94)	90 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	22	23
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	43	47	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (94)	92 (98)	94 (96)
	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	30	30	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	18	25
	Girls	16	15	24
	Total	30	33	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (63)	55 (53)	82 (90)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	21
	Girls	19	16	24
	Total	35	32	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (55)	53 (57)	75 (77)
	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	288	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	7	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	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)	21.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	24.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

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	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	2002/2003
	£
Total income	1,295,889
Total expenditure	1,356,881
Expenditure per pupil	3,599
Balance brought forward from previous year	167,824
Balance carried forward to next year	106,832

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	414
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	18	5	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	49	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	34	5	3	8
The teaching is good.	68	29	0	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	39	4	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	25	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	46	46	8	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	41	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	30	0	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	27	15	3	14

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

95. The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage, in both the nursery and the Reception classes. Provision has improved greatly since the last inspection. The nursery is new and allows children to start school much earlier than previously. When children start in the nursery their knowledge, skills and understanding are generally at levels below those expected for their age. This is particularly the case with regard to communication, language and literacy.

96. Children make rapid progress in both the nursery and Reception classes because of the high quality of teaching, the effective contribution of support staff and the wide range of stimulating activities geared towards all areas of learning. By the end of the Reception year, the attainment of most children is generally in line with expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and creative development. Attainment is above expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, some elements of knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Staff provide a calm and supportive environment and are very well aware of the needs of young children. They track children's progress well, make assessments of individual children and use these carefully to help plan future opportunities for the children.

Personal, social and emotional development

97. Adults are skilful at working with young children, recognising their individual personalities and managing them very well. Through well-planned activities and effective support, the children learn to listen to each other, share and play well together, and choose from the range of activities provided. Staff give a high priority to providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment that supports the children's personal, social and emotional development very well. This enables the children to make substantial progress and, by the end of the Reception year, many exceed the standards expected for their age in this area of learning. They settle quickly into routines and achieve very well. Very good teaching in both classes establishes clear routines and expectations of behaviour. As a result children behave very well and quickly become absorbed in their activities.

98. From starting in the nursery, children are encouraged to show initiative and to be increasingly independent. They respond well, work together as friends, share equipment with each other and tidy equipment away. In the nursery class children carry simple messages from one member of staff to another, for example, when it is time for a particular group of children to have a snack. In Reception they play with their peers happily without adult supervision, for example in the sand and role-play areas. They improve their play through discussion and experiment, respond to praise and recognise right from wrong. Children in both classes are confident in their surroundings. Although some children need regular adult support, for example because of their particular special educational need, they are developing a greater sense of independence.

Communication, language and literacy

99. These areas are taught very well in both the nursery and Reception classes. As a result, children achieve well from their low starting point on entry. By the end of the Reception year the majority of children attain standards that match those expected for their age in this area of learning, and a small number of children are on course to exceed them. In the nursery, learning experiences are planned very carefully to promote and extend children's speech. In a cooking session for example, children were asked questions which stimulated them to talk about what they were doing. Visiting staff from the local education authority, who support children with particular speech and language difficulties, help this provision. There is no additional support for children for whom English is an additional language but they make good progress simply because of the good attention paid by adults to developing speaking skills generally. By the time the children are in the Reception classes they confidently answer questions related to the book 'Handa's Surprise'. They

show a good knowledge of specific words such as 'alliteration', 'ellipse' and 'exclamation mark', which they use correctly in their comments such as, 'There is an exclamation mark at the end of that sentence.'

100. The children in both nursery and Reception enjoy listening to stories and remember details well. In the nursery children are beginning to recognise sounds at the beginning of words. The nursery book area is organised to encourage children to choose books and 'read' either independently or with a friend. This gives them confidence in handling books and encourages them to think of themselves as readers. In the Reception classes many children recognise a few commonly used words, and in the reading of 'Handa's Surprise' one child knew that when you see an exclamation mark 'You have to say it in surprise.' Children in the Reception classes use their knowledge of sounds to build up words which are not familiar to them, and more able children are able to read simple passages well with fluency and accuracy.

101. In the nursery, children are given good opportunities to develop their early writing skills in many of the activities provided. They practise writing their names on the whiteboard, and some can write them from memory. In the Reception classes many children know that a sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. Some are able to produce simple readable sentences, although for others words are not yet spaced properly.

Mathematical development

102. Children make steady progress in all areas of mathematics and by the end of their time in the Reception classes, have a sound knowledge of mathematical language, correctly using, for example, words such as add, plus, equals and total. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

103. In the nursery, working in their 'Bear Circles', children count how many are present and can recognise how many are missing. Some children are able to add these absentees on and confidently say how many children there would be altogether. They recognise simple shapes such as square, circle and triangle, and at snack time talk about the shapes of the fruit and biscuits. They recognise and continue a pattern of beads on a string, and most children can count to 10, some children being able to count beyond, as well as being able to recognise numbers to 10. At snack time they count the pieces of banana and the cups.

104. In the Reception classes children use a hopscotch game to develop number recognition. They count forwards and backwards to 30 in ones and forwards and backwards to 100 in 10s. A few children know that four sets of 10 are forty and two sets of 10 are 20. They match numbers to a given number of fruits and are beginning to record numbers using written numerals. They relate addition to the combination of groups of objects, and know that if they have four and then get two more, they will have six altogether. The majority of children achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

105. Children throughout the Foundation Stage make good progress overall and develop a growing knowledge and understanding of the world because of the wide variety of interesting activities related to their topics. Teaching is very good. By the time they leave the Reception classes children are likely to achieve the standards expected in this area of learning, with particular strengths in learning related to information and control aspects of technology and aspects of science and geography.

106. In the Reception classes children confidently use cameras to record each other working. They know the names for different parts of a computer and use the mouse to select programs, to move the cursor or drag items into position. Teachers plan interesting and appropriate activities that allow children to explore and widen their experiences. Staff provide good support to help children explain their understanding and responses. In the nursery, for example, in planting out their

seeds, the children learn that plants have roots, and that they will need water and sunshine to help them grow. They discuss the colours of the flowers which will be produced by the seeds they are planting.

107. The children discuss with great enthusiasm the photographs of themselves and their friends as small babies. In the Reception classes children recognise that a globe is a sphere and that it represents the world in which we live. They confidently identify features on a map of the world, such as sea, snow, grassland and desert. They talk about the properties of the desert in terms of it being 'hot, dry and full of sand'. They name fruits such as avocado, mango, peach and apricot, and produce good drawings of them. They are enthralled to see the inside of a passion fruit and describe it as being 'like the inside of a tomato'. They use dough to make models of some of the fruits, moulding it carefully and admiring one another's efforts.

Physical development

108. The quality of teaching in this aspect is very good and children make particularly good progress. Most of them achieve levels above those expected by the end of the Reception year. In the nursery children take part in outdoor play every day, weather permitting, and staff interact well with the children, sharing games and teaching the skills of throwing and catching. Children run, skip, hop and climb. They follow instructions well and are developing their dexterity appropriately, for example, in learning to balance as they move along a low beam. They respect their space and that of others. In the hall the Reception children develop a good sense of the space around them. Adults encourage them to move in a variety of ways, showing them how to stretch and hold positions. Children learn about the benefits of exercise. They move spontaneously to music using different parts of their body to stretch and curl and alter their speed as the music slows or quickens in pace. They show initiative in determining their movements. The children thoroughly enjoy their lessons and listen very well to instructions.

Creative development

109. Children make good progress in developing their skills across a wide range of activities and are well placed to achieve levels expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. This is because the teaching is good. In the nursery children draw and paint and make pictures using different techniques, for example, in making the class picture of the Teddy Bears' Picnic. They experiment with a variety of instruments making patterns of sounds. Carefully planned activities ensure an effective balance between independent learning, where children are able to make choices, and direction, where adults teach basic skills. Resources are easily accessible and provide a good choice. Children experiment with mixing colours. In the Reception classes children are encouraged to develop observational skills as they draw fruits. They choose materials and tools well for specific tasks, for example in the making of the dough fruits. They are receptive to new ideas and express preferences for colour and shape in making their fruits. They show imagination in incorporating animals into their play in the sand tray, creating an appropriate environment.

ENGLISH

110. Overall, standards in English are well below the national average in Year 6 and average in Year 2. In the school's previous inspection standards were below average in both years. Standards are starting to rise, however. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a new phonics programme which has had a good effect on the work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 but older pupils in the school, in Years 5 and 6, have not benefited from this more secure foundation.

111. Pupils enter the school with significantly lower attainment in their language and literacy skills than in other areas of their abilities. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well to reach average standards, although speaking skills are still weak. Staff changes have resulted in some variability in the

management of the subject over the previous two years and therefore some slowing of improvement. The management now is secure and is leading to more rapid improvement.

112. Pupils with special educational needs and those few pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well because teachers and support staff know their pupils well and provide good support for them in class. Girls are not progressing as well as boys. This is different from the national picture and reflects the more passive approach taken by girls to their work. This is particularly evident in writing, where higher attaining boys often have a more lively range of ideas and vocabulary.

113. Pupils throughout the school listen well. They pay good attention to their teachers and as a result are well involved in lessons. This is because the school has consistent expectations of pupils and a supportive ethos in which pupils value their own opinions and the opinions of others. Standards in speaking are weaker. The school has recently identified the development of pupils' speaking skills as a priority and recognises the effect of the limited range of pupils' vocabulary when they enter the school. Although teachers are now working to incorporate opportunities for more oral work into their lessons, standards in speaking and listening by the end of Year 2 are still below average. When pupils speak up in class, their answers are very brief; they speak very quietly and a number do not say their words clearly or speak in full sentences.

114. Standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 are average. Most pupils understand how to use their knowledge of sounds to help them in their reading and apply their knowledge with confidence but some lower attaining pupils find it difficult to sound out new words. In their work in class, pupils explore the work of writers such as Tony Ross. However, while higher attaining pupils are able to talk about the kind of books they like only a few are able to identify the books by name and by author. Only the higher attaining pupils can predict what might happen next. The school has recently introduced a new reading scheme but is not yet matching reading levels to pupils' abilities well enough. The school is aware of this and has taken initial steps to remedy the situation. Pupils are generally confident in handling and using story and information books. They understand the library is organised into fiction and non fiction but are not clear how non fiction is organised.

115. Pupils cover a wide range of different writing styles in Year 2. There is a strong focus on writing instructions and pupils organise their work and use appropriate language to sequence and clarify their explanations. They retell simple stories, write simple descriptions, informal letters and book reviews. The more able pupils write at a good length and use a clear structure in their stories; some are beginning to use a wider range of vocabulary to create interest. Pupils of average ability can write simple sentences but there is some repetition of language and they make mistakes in basic punctuation and spelling. The writing of lower attaining pupils shows that they are aware of sentence formation and generally communicate meaning. Pupils are encouraged to form their letters clearly and carefully taught to join their letters from an early stage. As a result most pupils form their letters correctly but some pupils are not sure when to use upper and lower case letters. Some higher attaining pupils are using a neat, joined style of writing. Standards of presentation are generally good because teachers are consistent in their expectations.

116. By the end of Year 6 standards in all aspects of English are well below average. This judgement is similar to the assessments made by teachers as part of the national tests. However, higher standards are evident in Years 3 and 4 and show an improving picture in English as pupils feel the benefit of recent strategies and developments in the school's provision.

117. Pupils have generally good listening skills in all years. Teachers encourage and support pupils' positive attitudes in classrooms. While some higher attaining pupils are able to express their ideas and opinions confidently and sometimes in good detail, most pupils lack confidence in speaking in front of the rest of the class. Pupils are more comfortable in speaking in pairs and small groups. However, their vocabulary is very narrow and their use of more formal and complex patterns of speech is generally limited, as is discussion of topics outside a familiar range. The school is developing a wider range of opportunities to develop vocabulary and speaking skills generally and has recently introduced specific time in personal and social education lessons for

pupils to experience more structured patterns of discussion. These opportunities have not yet had time to impact on standards in Years 5 and 6 and this is why standards are lower at Year 6.

118. Standards in reading, while remaining well below average, are stronger than in writing. Pupils have regular opportunities for reading and these ensure they read a good number of books. Only a few pupils however, are reaching above average standards. There is not a wide enough range of books to stimulate and challenge the interest of these more able pupils and this hinders them from attaining even higher levels. Most pupils are able to read their books but they do not always understand them. This is linked again to their narrow range of vocabulary. Many pupils are not enthusiastic readers. They read willingly in school but not at home. Quite a few pupils are still learning basic reading skills and they do not know their letter sounds well enough to help them read unfamiliar words independently.

119. Pupils in Year 6 cover many different writing styles but do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length. This restricts the opportunities they have to practise skills they have learned in literacy lessons. Very few pupils can use an appropriate range of vocabulary and expression to make their work interesting. This was also identified in the school's previous inspection. Some pupils, mainly boys, have a lively use of language and some interesting expressions, indicating a more energetic engagement with ideas. However, many pupils have weaknesses in both spelling and punctuation. Standards of presentation and handwriting are good. Most pupils use a neat, joined style of writing which is often fluent and sustained.

120. Standards in literacy are similarly low. The development of literacy across the school, while satisfactory, has been identified as an area for further development. The school recognises the need to further enhance and promote the development of pupils' vocabulary across all subjects in the curriculum.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good throughout the school and is contributing to improving pupils' progress, particularly in Years 1 to 4. Throughout the school, the very positive atmosphere in all classes and the very good relationships between adults and pupils, ensure good listening, co-operation of pupils and very good behaviour. The National Literacy Strategy is used effectively as a basis for planning. As part of the focus on pupils' speaking and listening skills teachers identify clear opportunities in their planning for developing these skills.

122. In the school's previous inspection the planning of work to match the needs of higher and lower attaining pupils was identified as a weakness in some classes. This has now improved as the school organises the teaching of English into ability groups. In some ability groups, challenging extension work is set for the more able pupils within the group. This was seen to good effect in a Year 2 lesson. The more able group of pupils in the upper group were given an extra passage to read, to identify factual and fictional statements which linked well with their work in geography on Spanish islands. These pupils learned how to search the text for information as well as developing their geographical knowledge.

123. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and use their very good knowledge of the pupils in the class to give good support and encouragement. All pupils benefit from these effective partnerships but the provision is particularly effective in the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those few pupils who have English as an additional language.

124. Where there are weaknesses in teaching they are related to issues such as missed opportunities for pupils to explore ideas and emotions in their shared texts and thereby develop the depth of their understanding and the language to express their responses. Marking is a weaker area as few teachers provide useful pointers on how pupils can improve their work.

125. Good use is also made of the Early Literacy Support Programme and the school has recently introduced the Learning Freeway programme to work in partnership with parents to support pupils' reading skills. Early indications are that this has been effective and the school plans to continue with it. There are useful systems for regularly assessing pupils' progress but information

from these assessments is not closely matched to pupils' individual targets and the next stages in their learning. This limits pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

126. The co-ordination of English is satisfactory. While there is appropriate analysis of national tests this is not yet sufficiently understood by staff or used to influence planning and pupils' learning in groups. There have been some good recent purchases for the teaching of literacy including some good quality sets of books for the school reading schemes. However, the school is aware of the need to continue developing the range of reading for more able older pupils and the general number and range of books in classrooms and the libraries. The libraries have been recently refurbished and are bright attractive spaces but their use is not yet fully developed. Pupils make regular visits but library and research skills are not yet taught progressively through the school.

MATHEMATICS

127. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards in line with the national average in numeracy and other areas of mathematics. In the 2002 national tests the standards attained were just below the national average and in line with those found in similar schools. As a result of the good teaching seen, the very positive attitudes of the pupils to their work and the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in mathematics and are achieving well. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below those found nationally.

128. The 2002 national tests showed pupils in Year 6 to be reaching standards well below the national average with only a few reaching the higher than expected level. However, the standards in the current Year 6 classes are in line with the national average with a third of pupils working at the higher than expected level. The school is on track to reach its target of 73 per cent of pupils attaining the expected level. This also represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average. Again, the good teaching and the eagerness of the pupils to learn mean that pupils of all abilities make good progress.

129. Pupils with special educational needs are given work that is closely matched to their specific needs. They receive good quality support from their teachers and support assistants enabling them to make the same good progress as their classmates. As a result of this good support pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress. More able pupils are sometimes withdrawn from lessons to work with a skilled classroom assistant in small groups to tackle more challenging work. They rise to the challenge and make good progress in these sessions. For example, a group of Year 3 pupils were seen investigating how to make magic squares. All worked very well and were totally absorbed in finding the correct solution. They were delighted when they successfully completed the problem and were very proud of their achievements.

130. At the end of Year 2 pupils understand the number system can quickly recall addition and subtraction facts to twenty. More able pupils are confident in working with numbers to a hundred or more. Pupils recognise fractions such a half and a quarter and use this knowledge in practical situations. The majority can tell the time to the quarter hour although a few pupils find this skill difficult and are still only able to tell the time to the nearest hour.

131. By the end of Year 6 pupils have progressed to having a good understanding of place value, including numbers with two or more decimal places and more able pupils are confidently working with numbers to over a million. Pupils accurately add, subtract, multiply and divide two- and three-digit numbers with the majority able to work to two decimal places. A lot of pupils' work involves solving problems so that they are able to apply their mathematical skills to real life situations. For example, pupils successfully worked out the cost of a holiday from the information found in a brochure. They find the perimeter of simple and composite shapes and then the area using the correct formula. More able pupils know how to calculate volume in cubic centimetres. Graphs, including line graphs, are accurately drawn and pupils are able to interpret them, giving

clear reasons for the conclusions they draw. Much of their data handling is linked to information and communication technology work and this successfully supports learning in both subjects.

132. The quality of teaching is good overall with some teaching being very good and no teaching being unsatisfactory. Such good quality teaching is having a very positive effect on the pupils' learning and ensures that good progress is maintained year on year. Planning is well organised throughout the school and is based firmly on the National Numeracy Strategy. The grouping of pupils by ability in each year group is effective and helps teachers to plan work with due regard to the prior attainment of their pupils and with the content carefully designed to meet their specific needs. This was clearly seen in a very good Year 6 lesson with higher ability pupils solving a variety of problems. All pupils were given problems carefully tailored to their prior knowledge and designed to move them on at a fast rate. They were fascinated by the problems and worked very hard to find the correct answers. By the end of the lesson all pupils had made very good progress in their analytical skills and were ready and eager to learn more.

133. Teachers have very good class management skills and create a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate and learn effectively. Pupils respond well to this and behaviour in lessons is very good with pupils eager to learn and enthusiastic about the work provided for them. An example of this was seen in a very good Year 5 lesson on addition. The teacher had the whole class highly motivated to learn and they all behaved impeccably and learned at a very good rate. Good relationships are a strong feature with pupils being attentive to their teachers and able to work well together. Teachers use their support assistants very well and involve them in lesson planning so that they are fully aware of their roles. This results in pupils being very well supported in their learning both in lessons and sometimes in small groups outside the classroom. Suitable homework is set regularly to support and extend the work in lessons and is completed successfully by the vast majority of pupils.

134. The subject is well led. Assessment data from national and other tests is collected regularly but is not always used effectively to support planning by highlighting aspects of the subject requiring improvement. It is used well to identify the needs of individual pupils and to give them appropriate support. The setting of targets for individual pupils to help them focus on areas for improvement is inconsistent throughout the school. When the targets are specific, measurable and shared with the pupils they are proving effective in raising standards rapidly. The Maths Week proved to be a huge success in raising the profile of the subject and was well received and enjoyed by both parents and pupils.

SCIENCE

135. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards in line with the national average in science and this is the same as the findings of the last inspection and the results of teachers' assessments in 2002. More pupils this year are exceeding expected levels for their age than last year and this is due to teachers providing more appropriate challenge for the higher attaining pupils, particularly as they come through Year 1. Attainment is now more consistent across all aspects of the subject because of the emphasis that the teachers place on investigative work.

136. Pupils in Year 6 reached standards in the 2002 national tests that were below the national average when compared to all schools. Inspection evidence from shows standards in Year 6 this year to be in line with what is expected nationally, and this matches the findings of the last inspection. It shows considerable improvement, however, since last year. Boys continue to reach higher standards than girls. This is because girls do not participate enough in class discussions and reinforce their learning effectively. The provision of an additional teacher in Year 6 to create three groups for science and the very good teaching seen in this year group are the main factors in raising standards at the end of Year 6.

137. In Years 1 and 2 teachers question pupils very skilfully to promote enquiring minds and in many lessons they involve pupils practically in investigations. For example, pupils in a class in Year

1 develop a good understanding of fair testing for their age when exploring waterproof and non-waterproof materials to mend an umbrella. Pupils in Year 2 investigate how far a car travels over different surfaces, such as carpet and sandpaper and are beginning to develop an understanding of friction. They are able to record their findings in a variety of ways, by drawing, making diagrams or simple written descriptions. They use their numeracy skills well, for example when measuring the distance a car travels or completing a graph of groups of animals with similar characteristics.

138. In Years 3 - 6 teachers continue to place good emphasis on investigation. In Year 6 pupils are able to use knowledge acquired in Year 5 to plan an investigation into where woodlice prefer to live. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to vary one factor whilst keeping the others the same. Pupils use scientific vocabulary such as 'friction', 'lubrication', 'up thrust' and 'gravity' in their written responses, thus fixing these new words more securely in their minds. Their knowledge and understanding is generally satisfactory; for example they know how to classify materials as solids, liquids and gases and can describe the processes of evaporation and condensation.

139. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A very strong feature of all lessons is the very good relationships that teachers have with pupils so that they are confident to answer questions, predict and explain. Teachers provide an environment in which pupils are keen to learn and co-operate well in whole class and group work. Teaching assistants often work with pupils with special educational needs to promote their thinking and ensure good progress. Teachers often provide a good range of resources and pupils are thus able to make choices and decisions in their work. They use information technology well in lesson introductions through the use of interactive whiteboards. These interest and enthuse the pupils and help them to concentrate effectively.

140. Teachers plan and organise lessons thoroughly so that pupils are clear what they have to do and work at a good pace. Teachers often vary their questions to suit pupils of different abilities and this means that all can participate in the discussion. This type of questioning was evident in a very good lesson seen in Year 1 that resulted in pupils extending their understanding of the qualities of different materials.

141. Teachers present pupils with different ways of recording their work so that those who have weak literacy skills are supported and this helps them to make appropriate gains in their scientific knowledge and understanding. However, pupils are not always able to express their ideas fully within group discussions or in written tasks because of their limited vocabulary. In many lessons teachers do not put sufficient emphasis on the key words to be learned and this hinders their opportunities to learn new vocabulary. In Year 6 the grouping arrangements mean that teachers are able to provide different tasks for the three ability groups and these ensure that these pupils make good progress. However, in other year groups there is not always enough extension for the highest attaining pupils because some teachers are not clear about how pupils may work at different levels within the same task. As a result, pupils' progress varies across Years 3-6.

142. The school uses the national guidance documents in science and these are helping teachers to plan more consistently across the year groups. However, many teachers still do not have a clear enough understanding of how to pitch work in investigations for the different levels of ability to enable pupils to progress even more rapidly.

143. The subject is well led and appropriate areas for development have been identified. However, there is not a sharp enough focus on standards and how these are affected by teaching. For example, they are not yet monitoring systematically the progress of significant groups, such as boys and girls, to ensure that they are making enough progress.

144. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and a few give useful information to pupils to help them improve their work. However, this approach is not consistent at present and leads to some pupils not knowing how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.

ART AND DESIGN

145. Pupils' attainment overall in art and design at the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national expectations as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have satisfactory skills when using a range of media, such as paint, pastels, textiles, pencils and clay. They are able to explore colour, pattern and texture when drawing from observation, making and designing clay masks and pots and creating tie and dye designs. By Years 5 and 6 many pupils have a good awareness of composition and proportion when sketching human figures and still life. Pupils learn from observation of artists' work about use of colour and imagination and apply the knowledge and understanding gained from this within their own work. For example, pupils in Year 2 draw pictures in the style of Mondrian using information technology with good use of vivid colours.

146. Pupils' progress from Years 1-6 is satisfactory overall. In good lessons, adults work with individual pupils to extend their thinking so that those with special educational needs make good progress. In Year 1 pupils learned quickly how to create an imaginative design of a seaside using the technique of weaving. This was because the teacher discussed with them the colours in the sand and sea within an example of a woven picture and how to select different textures in the wool.

147. Good progress was evident in drawing in Years 5 and 6 because of the teachers' secure subject knowledge. In Year 5 the teacher taught pupils how to use shading successfully to create an attractive still life composition. Pupils compared each other's work and said that objects looked three-dimensional because of the shading. In Year 6, pupils' drawing skills were extended further when sketching human figures. The teacher showed how different artists created movement and prompted the pupils to make paper models; the pupils then transferred their learning to their sketches. In some units of work, such as the study of seating, pupils do not make enough progress in exploring design, and evaluating materials and techniques because the teachers have not clearly understood the recommendations of the subject plans..

148. Teachers make appropriate use of the work of artists to teach pupils skills and art appreciation and this has a positive impact on the pupils' work. For example, in Year 4 pupils had looked critically at the work of Salvador Dali and one pupil said that he liked his work because it was surreal. The pupils had increased their awareness of colour mixing in pastels as a result. In Year 6 pupils had developed their understanding of the art of other cultures through a visit by African artists. They had developed the techniques of using slabs and coils when making masks and pots. When making hats for a carnival, pupils said that they had used vivid colours as found in Jamaican fruits and traditional clothes. A very good range of artists' work, which is displayed in all parts of the school, helps to support pupils' knowledge and understanding of art.

149. The teaching of art is satisfactory overall. In all year groups teachers have very good relationships with pupils, who as a result are confident to express their views, to choose materials and explore techniques. Teachers often plan and organise lessons well so that pupils are able to work independently, concentrate and work hard to complete the tasks. In the good and very good lessons teachers know the next stage in the learning and structure the tasks to match pupils' responses. For example, in sketchbooks in Year 6, it was evident that the teacher had taken pupils forward at different rates according to their ability in colour mixing because of her own understanding of where the work was leading. In lessons of this good quality, teachers question pupils skilfully and help them to evaluate and improve their work. In teaching that is just satisfactory, there is less emphasis on evaluation and pupils are not always able to explain what they are doing or to evaluate their design or the materials used.

150. The subject is led effectively and appropriate areas for development have been identified. However, standards are not monitored carefully enough to ensure that weaknesses are identified and incorporated into the action plans for the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

151. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These judgements are the same as those found at the last inspection. There have, however been significant improvements in the organisation of the subject over the past year, mainly because of the enthusiasm and hard work shown by the new co-ordinator and this has led to pupils in Years 1 and 2 improving their skills in designing and evaluating products.

152. The plans for teaching design and technology follow national guidelines. They show that all aspects of the subject are taught as pupils progress through the school. As a result, pupils therefore build successfully upon their previous skills and knowledge as they complete the units of work. By the end of Year 2 they design and make simple moving vehicles. Their designs, some done using a computer program, show they have thought carefully about the construction and are labelled to show where the doors and the lights, for example, will be situated. They make the models from cardboard boxes, adding simple axles and wheels to ensure they move smoothly.

153. Pupils in Year 3 learn how to make their models stronger by using more advanced joining techniques. They develop their skills in using tools when they make picture frames. Year 4 pupils design their own books, explaining on their diagrams how they will be made and what materials they will use. They evaluate their finished products, saying what they would do to make them better.

154. By the end of Year 6, pupils carry out a long term project to design a shelter. They walk around the locality, taking photographs with a digital camera and drawing simple diagrams of shelters that they see. They consider what the different shelters are used for and why they are constructed from certain materials or in certain ways. Back in the classroom they work in small groups to design a model shelter to counteract different weather conditions, for example, the wind, the rain or the sun. They work extremely well in groups, listening well to one another's ideas.

155. Work seen during the inspection shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject as they move through the school. Year 5 work however, shows little progress in design skills from Year 4.

156. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. This is the first year that teachers have used the new plans and they are still developing confidence in teaching the various units of work. The lesson seen in Year 4 showed teachers encouraging the children to reflect carefully on their designs for torches while they were making them, to see what they could adapt and improve according to the materials they had. The good ratio of adults to children meant that pupils with special educational needs were well supported and made good progress. A very good lesson in Year 6 showed pupils making great strides in their learning. The pupils worked very successfully on a practical exercise to use all the information they had collected to come up with their own designs for shelters. The sequence of lessons had been planned extremely well to build carefully on pupils' skills and understanding over the term. Good questioning extended pupils' knowledge and understanding and pupils worked at a brisk pace because the teacher gave them clear guidelines about what they were expected to complete within the time available. She kept bringing them back together to discuss what they had found out and this helped to emphasise the new learning points.

157. The subject is led satisfactorily and appropriate areas identified for future development. However, she has been unable to monitor provision in older classes to see where further improvements can be made.

GEOGRAPHY

158. During the inspection lessons in geography were observed only in Years 2 and 3. Judgements are therefore based on the lessons seen, scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work in all years, and discussions with pupils in Year 6. The evidence indicates that pupils reach generally average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the

last inspection when standards were just below average. Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils who have English as an additional language benefit from the support and encouragement of their teachers and teaching assistants and achieve at the same rate as other pupils in the class.

159. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall although good teaching and learning was seen during the week of the inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. In a good Year 2 lesson, careful planning ensured that pupils became aware of their own area and contrasted it with a Spanish island. The resources given to pupils were well matched to their abilities. The teacher used questions well to encourage pupils to observe closely and to draw conclusions from their observations. Clear explanations ensured that lower attaining pupils understood new vocabulary. The theme was developed appropriately in the Year 3 lesson observed where pupils had been using travel brochures to explore the physical differences between locations and the effect of weather on people's activities.

160. In Year 6 pupils were able to make appropriate use of maps at different scales to locate features and to plot routes. They had a clear understanding of how to use four figure coordinates, well supported by their work in mathematics. However, they do not always use correct geographical vocabulary because there are not enough opportunities for recording their work and reinforcing what they have learned orally. They have a secure understanding of where they live, which develops appropriately through the school. They are able to discuss issues such as amenities and general safety confidently. Pupils in Year 5 have good opportunities to begin to understand how factors relating to traffic congestion can affect their lives, when they investigate the possible effects of a hypothetical congestion charge in Romford. Opportunities for pupils to explore other localities are provided in the school visit to the Isle of Wight but not all pupils take part and the development of pupils' geographical skills is not planned well enough.

161. In the school's previous inspection it was found that while the subject used national guidance appropriately to plan for the different elements of the National Curriculum, there was insufficient detail to ensure that pupils' skills developed progressively. The school now uses nationally recommended plans and this is helping standards to improve.

162. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. There are appropriate plans for the subject's development but pupils' work and lessons have not been monitored closely enough to ensure that weaknesses are identified and action is taken to address these. Assessment in the subject is generally satisfactory. Arrangements to assess the subject linked to National Curriculum levels are in place but have not yet been completely implemented. Resources in the subject are satisfactory and meet the needs of the curriculum.

HISTORY

163. By the end of Year 2, due to consistently good teaching, standards of attainment are above those expected nationally. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with the expected levels. This is a change since the last inspection when standards in Year 2 were the same as those expected nationally and standards in Year 6 exceeded national expectations. The fall in standards of the work of the older pupils is mainly due to the lack of progression in their skills of historical enquiry, which is an area the school has identified for development.

164. Pupils throughout the school enjoy history. They are keen to discuss what they have learned and in class they are focused, well behaved and eager to contribute to lessons.

165. In Year 1, pupils make a good beginning in the development of their knowledge of the past as they use photographs and pictures to compare the differences between seaside holidays now and 100 years ago. Pupils in Year 2 know about and understand the lives of people in the past. They are well informed and very enthusiastic as they recall the story of Florence Nightingale, identify the unhygienic features of hospital life that she found in the Crimea and describe how she improved conditions for the soldiers. They also remember the date and events of the Great Fire of London,

know about Samuel Pepys' Diary and tell the story of how he buried his cheese to save it from burning. The written work in Year 2 shows good progress over time. Pupils present information in a variety of ways, have a sense of time and set out their own opinions of historical events.

166. In Year 3, pupils begin to use computers to look for information. For example, a CD ROM is used to research a verbal report on the Anglo-Saxons. Pupils' sense of history develops well as they locate the civilisations they are studying both in time and in place. For example, Year 5 pupils identify the City States on a map of Greece and on a timeline they have made. Pupils ask and answer questions about what has survived from the past and what it reveals. In Year 4 they use their knowledge of mummification, the Pharaohs, the use of papyrus and the hieroglyphics on the tomb walls to describe life in Ancient Egypt. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of key dates, periods and events in the history they have studied. At the start of a lesson in Year 6 pupils demonstrate good recall of the significant events in Queen Victoria's life.

167. By contrast, pupils' understanding and experience of historical enquiry is weaker and is not systematically developed from year to year. In Year 6 pupils do not study history until the summer term. It was evident, as they began research into Victorian leisure activities, that they had not used their enquiry skills for some time. Many found it difficult to find out relevant information, even though the materials given to them for research were limited and carefully selected to match their abilities.

168. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Lessons follow nationally recommended guidelines and there is joint planning across year groups. Staff foster good relationships with pupils in class and pupils with special needs are given good support, ensuring that they make good progress in learning. Time is almost always used well, enabling pupils to finish their tasks. A variety of teaching methods are used to suit different learning styles. Speaking and listening skills are developed through the frequent use of 'hot seating', and the pairing and grouping of pupils for independent work.

169. There are, however, some areas for improvement. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked but teachers' comments in their books rarely focus on what has been achieved and what should be done to further improve historical knowledge and skills. Planning does not presently take sufficient account of the need to promote progress in pupils' enquiry skills. In Year 3 the use of worksheets inhibits the development of pupils' own independent writing as it limits the quality and quantity of work produced.

170. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A sound commercial scheme has been introduced to further support the planning of lessons. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are unsatisfactory and the school is seeking ways to improve these procedures. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. Well-chosen visits to places of historical interest such as the British Museum and the Imperial War Museum enhance pupils' understanding of the topics they are studying.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

171. Attainment in information and communication technology is as expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar judgement to that made in the last inspection. However, since then national expectations in information and communication technology have risen considerably and the school has made many good improvements to the provision to enable pupils to reach expected standards by the time they leave. For example, the development of the computer suite, giving pupils regular access to good quality machines, has improved the rate of learning as all pupils can learn new skills simultaneously and not have to wait for their turn. The provision has also been much improved by the purchase of other good quality resources such as interactive whiteboards, digital cameras and interesting educational software. This equipment shows pupils the value of technology in their everyday learning.

172. Teachers are now more skilled in the subject and their confidence has been a major factor in helping pupils to learn effectively. Training is continuing with a current focus on control

technology. All aspects of the subject are taught over time, although some areas are covered in greater depth than others. For example, skills in word processing, data handling and graphics are particularly strong whereas work in control technology and the use of sensors to monitor external events is still at an early stage of development. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress as they move through the school. This is a direct result of the consistently good teaching they receive and the very good support given in lessons by teaching assistants.

173. Information and communication technology makes a good contribution to the development of literacy skills through pupils using word processing programs to write and present their work. However, pupils' typing skills are not well developed and they can enter text only very slowly; this frustrates them and limits their output in the allocated time. There are also well-planned links to numeracy, mainly in the area of data handling. The school is also working to find appropriate links to other subjects to add interest and relevance to the pupils' work.

174. Pupils in Year 2 successfully use a computer for word processing and know how to change the size, style and colour of the text. In data handling they create graphs using data collected in class. Pupils confidently use the Internet and employ search engines to find out information about topics such as weather. They know how to program a floor robot to follow a set of instructions. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of multimedia work and their presentations are of a good quality although they have not yet incorporated sound in their work. They know how to create a database and interrogate it using a filter. Pupils have a good knowledge of the use and impact of information and communication technology on their lives and in the wider world and are very capable users of modern technology. For instance, they used a video camera to make a successful feature film to show the damage to the pond after it had been vandalised. Using control technology to operate other equipment is an area yet to be fully developed although the school has firm plans to introduce this soon.

175. The quality of teaching is consistently good or better with no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and their own skills are well developed. This enables them to teach the subject confidently and demonstrate to pupils the correct procedures. The interactive whiteboards installed in some classrooms are used very effectively in lessons in all subjects to show pupils exactly what to do and introduce new skills to the class.

176. Pupils are very well managed and respond positively to the opportunities offered to them. They handle equipment with care and share it sensibly when working with a partner. Teaching assistants help individual pupils who need extra support in their work. Many of these assistants have good computer skills themselves and are able to support learning effectively. Teachers plan work carefully in year groups to help pupils develop their skills in a systematic way. Pupils respond well to the good teaching, behave well in lessons and are eager to learn more. This was clearly seen in a very good Year 1 lesson in which pupils were using a variety of programs to improve their computer skills. The intense concentration was obvious as the pupils worked extremely hard to complete their tasks. They were very proud of their efforts and reluctant to end the session.

177. The subject is led satisfactorily. Assessments of exactly what pupils know and can do have been introduced to help teachers plan future suitable work closely matched to pupils' prior attainment. These assessments are not yet linked to National Curriculum levels to judge standards against national criteria. Pupils also save their work and this builds up a useful record of what they have done in lessons.

MUSIC

178. Standards in music are as expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were below those expected for pupils' ages. Weekly music lessons are taught and these cover all the necessary elements of the subject. Progress is satisfactory overall although the amount of progress made in classes varies considerably and is

dependent upon the expertise of individual teachers. A new scheme of work has been introduced and, although this provides some guidance, some teachers still require additional support to ensure that pupils cover enough ground during lessons.

179. In Year 6, pupils learn very quickly because of the very good subject knowledge of the teacher who takes all three classes for their music lessons. Pupils know how many beats certain notes are worth and can clap out different rhythms during a piece of music. They use musical terms with confidence because the teacher introduces new words carefully and expects the pupils to use them when answering her questions. 'Why is it important to have the time signature at the beginning of the music?' she asks. Pupils respond well, showing that they have understood her earlier explanation. In this lesson, pupils were encouraged to listen carefully to a piece of music, noting when the drum was played and then trying to clap the rhythm themselves. Their written work shows that they have listened to a variety of music, from Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' to modern music by T-Rex, noting how the moods of the various pieces were achieved.

180. Pupils generally enjoy their music lessons, particularly when they are encouraged to use musical instruments to practise things they have learned. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, all the pupils were able to take part, using drums to show that they could play different rhythms. In Year 2, pupils worked in groups to compose 'weather music' carefully selecting the instruments they required to make appropriate sounds. They then performed their compositions to the rest of the class.

181. Standards in singing are weak in the older classes. Whilst younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing tunefully and enthusiastically in assembly, clapping and stamping in time with the music, older pupils are shy and lack confidence in singing higher notes. Weekly assemblies are held which focus specifically on singing and these provide a useful opportunity to teach pupils some of the finer points about diction and rhythm. However, other assemblies observed gave very little attention to singing. Often pupils sing along to music on a CD but very little encouragement is given to them to develop their skills.

182. Teachers' lack of subject knowledge is the main reason why progress varies so much between classes. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall, however, it is satisfactory. Teachers are sometimes not sure how to translate the advice given in the published scheme into practice and their explanations and instructions can become confused. This results in pupils not always knowing what is expected of them. In some cases, the lessons cover the same ground as in earlier lessons and this makes the pace of both the lessons and the pupils' learning slow.

183. Although the co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, insufficient lesson observations have meant that these important weaknesses have not been identified. Action plans for the subject do not therefore concentrate on developing those aspects of provision which will in turn, improve standards. A few pupils receive instrumental tuition in brass, strings and woodwind and there is a small orchestra which performs occasionally to the rest of the school and to parents. A choir has been started which has attracted about 35 girls and boys and they are currently practising for the local music festival. Annual concerts allow pupils of all ages to perform in front of their parents and friends. Although these important events raise the profile of music at specific times during the year, overall, music is not obvious in the school on a day-to-day basis. Many opportunities are missed during assemblies, for example, to remind pupils about different types of music and their composers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

184. Standards in physical education have been maintained since the last inspection. They match standards expected for pupils in Year 2, and are higher than expected by the time the pupils are in Year 6. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a strong commitment to extra-curricular activities. Pupils' learning and enjoyment of the subject benefits from well-organised inter-school events and the input provided by staff in activities such as keep fit and athletics before

and after school. The skills gained in these sessions help the pupils' achievements in normal class lessons.

185. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum through a good range of well-planned physical activities. This is due to good leadership of the subject and provision of a wide range of clubs staffed and available on a regular basis. All pupils have a thorough understanding of the relationship between exercise, and health and fitness. Swimming is available to older pupils, and, by the time they leave the school, many pupils have certificates and badges for swimming considerable distances and for personal survival. Recently teachers and pupils took part in a 5000-metre 'swimathon', raising money for charity. The school has also recently achieved the Sports Activemark in recognition of its commitment to physical education.

186. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. They give clear instructions and use their very good relationships with the pupils to support their learning. Lessons are well paced to keep pupils interested and involved in physical activity. For example, in an outdoor games lesson in Year 6 one teacher acted as a pace maker during the warm up session, ensuring that pupils kept moving at an appropriate speed. Teachers introduce the basic skills confidently and intervene appropriately to correct pupils' techniques. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils were shown how to hold a bat correctly to project the ball in a given direction. Pupils respond well, enjoying the opportunities to work together and to develop their social skills in team situations, such as early teamwork in football in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are fully included and integrated into lessons. They make good progress.

187. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are confident about the subject and demonstrate skills effectively. They are enthusiastic and use praise effectively to motivate pupils. This inspires pupils to try harder to improve and ensures that they are prepared to persevere with tasks and practise their skills. Space, indoors and outdoors is well used and teachers ensure that pupils are mindful of safety. Consequently, pupils show an appreciation of the importance of warming up and relaxing after exercise.

188. The subject is well led and there is a useful operational plan to secure further improvements. There is a clear view of the current strengths and weaknesses in physical education and where overall provision could be strengthened still further, for example through opportunity for improved monitoring and evaluation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

189. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below those expected for pupils' ages. Lessons now take place regularly in all classes each week; pupils' written work shows progress over time and has increased in quantity and improved in quality.

190. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although observations included one unsatisfactory lesson in Year 5 but strong teaching in Year 6. Pupils are making sound progress in their lessons, although in Year 5 there are gaps in pupils' knowledge of the major world religions. In contrast, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing a good understanding of Sikhism and Judaism. Teachers use a variety of interesting methods to engage pupils in their work. In Year 1, a pupil took the 'hot seat' and donned the School Crossing Patrol Lady's hat as she went into role as a person who helps us; she answered questions from the class. In Year 3, a group of pupils worked together, sharing tasks, as they researched and prepared a talk on a Sikh festival to present to the class.

191. Pupils' work is well presented and is recorded in several different ways. For example, in Year 6 pupils draft instructions on how to know whom one should trust, whilst in Year 2 they draw 'mind maps' to show what Christmas means to them. Pupils express their own views and use appropriate language to share their feelings and reflections. In Year 6 the teacher reassures pupils

that there is no right or wrong answer to the question, "Is Gandhi a special person?" They must make up their own minds and be able to defend their opinion.

192. Pupils formulate questions to further their understanding; in Year 4 for example, they ask questions to find out what is taking place in two photographs of Jewish men wearing tillats and kippahs. Pupils respond well to teachers' considerate management; they listen carefully, concentrate and generally do their best. A few pupils, however, show a lack of respect for others' religions when religious clothing is displayed and modeled.

193. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They receive careful support from adults and pupils from the Language Unit are well integrated into lessons. Teachers' plans build well on what has already been learned. However, marking in books does not focus sufficiently on extending pupils' religious knowledge and understanding. Lessons ensure continuity by starting with a review of work covered in the previous week. For example, in Year 1 pupils are questioned on the stories of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan before they begin the group task of producing their own version of a parable. Good links are made with literacy, particularly in promoting speaking and listening skills through pairing pupils as talk partners, involving them in group work and through a good balance of a teacher-pupil dialogue in lessons. Work in pupils' books shows sound development of handwriting, layout and the quality of written work.

194. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The Locally Agreed Syllabus is used to support teachers' plans and these are monitored by the co-ordinator. Further information about standards is collected through discussions with pupils but lessons have not been observed to give a complete picture of provision in the subject. Resources for religious education are adequate but the co-ordinator has identified the need to audit them against the newly completed Agreed Syllabus. Teachers make some use of local resources, including parents. One parent comes into to tell pupils about the celebration of Eid. Visits to places of worship are usually restricted to the local church and this restricts the opportunities pupils have to find out at first hand about different religious practices.