

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mitcham

LEA area: Merton

Unique reference number: 102645

Headteacher: Mrs I Pinner

Reporting inspector: Mr P Kemble
7269

Dates of inspection: 28th – 31st October 2002

Inspection number: 246221

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 10 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Mark's Road
Mitcham
Surrey

Postcode: CR4 2LF

Telephone number: 020 8648 2339

Fax number: 020 8646 3831

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Conway

Date of previous inspection: 17th March 1997

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7269	Mr P Kemble	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education	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?
16472	Ms C Stormonth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
6169	Dr M Bradshaw	Team inspector	Educational inclusion, including race equality English History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
24137	Ms G Robertson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design Geography	

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Limited
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	23
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	26
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	28
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	32
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	34
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	39

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mark's Primary School is a smaller than average school, serving a diverse multicultural community in the London Borough of Merton. As a result of a re-organisation of educational provision in the borough, begun three years ago, the school's status has changed from a first to a primary school. At present, the school provides for children from the nursery to Year 5, and will have the full primary age range by the beginning of the academic year 2003/2004. Provision for Year 5 pupils, begun in September 2002, was in its eighth week during the inspection. There are 211 pupils on roll, including 42 part-time children in the nursery and 18 children in reception. Pupils are drawn from nearby local authority and owner-occupied homes. The school experiences a significant amount of pupil movement due to families arriving and leaving in the locality. Children's attainment on entry into the nursery is well below the national average. Eighty-two pupils (48.5 per cent) of compulsory school age come from twenty-five different minority ethnic groups. All these pupils have English as an additional language and speak 23 different languages. Eighteen pupils are refugees. Fifty-nine pupils (35 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, a figure above the national average. Seventy-three pupils (34.6 per cent of the total number on roll) are on the register of special educational needs, including seven pupils with statements of special educational need, well above the national average. The special needs cover a wide range of learning, emotional, behavioural and physical difficulties. St Mark's is a Beacon School for its work with special needs pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

In its first inspection as a primary school, St Mark's is an improving school with some significant strengths. Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average by the end of Year 2 and in Year 5, but standards in English and science are below average. When compared with standards in similar schools, mathematics is well above average, reading is about average and writing is well below average. In comparison with similar schools, a good proportion of pupils achieve the higher Level 3 in national tests for reading, writing and mathematics. Physical education standards are above, and information and communication technology standards below, average. Standards in all other subjects are about average. When standards are judged against levels of attainment on entry into the nursery, the vast majority of pupils, including those with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs, make good progress in reading and mathematics from nursery to Year 5. Good progress in these subjects is the result of good teaching. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum do not have enough impact on standards overall and so pupils' progress in all other curriculum areas is satisfactory. The new headteacher and key members of staff work very well together as a team and there is a strong commitment amongst all staff to continue to improve. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics and, when compared with those of similar schools, standards in mathematics are well above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Provision for pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Standards of physical education are better than average.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and enthusiasm for school are good; relationships amongst pupils, and between pupils and all staff, are very good.
- Pupils benefit from very good levels of care.
- Teamwork amongst the headteacher, staff and governors is good so that effective use is made of

staffing, accommodation, resources and available funding to support school improvement.

What could be improved

- There are not enough opportunities provided for pupils to raise the standard of their speaking and writing skills.
- Activities planned in science lessons do not take enough account of pupils' differing abilities.
- Information and communication technology is not used well enough to promote pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, and assessing pupils' achievements, do not have sufficient impact on standards.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities in lessons, and in the day-to-day running of the school, to develop their initiative and responsibility.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Most of the key issues highlighted in the previous report, when the school was a first school, have been successfully resolved and improvement is satisfactory overall. There is now a full range of curriculum policies and schemes of work for all subjects, although these have yet to be tailored to suit the particular characteristics of pupils in the school. Teachers are regularly appraised in line with legal requirements. Coverage of the information and communication technology curriculum is much improved, and pupils' standards are better as a result, although still slightly below average. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, and for assessing pupils' achievements in subjects other than English and mathematics, have improved. However, there is still work to be done for the information gathered to be analysed more critically and for it to be used more effectively to raise standards. Deficiencies in accommodation and health and safety procedures have been very successfully rectified. In addition, provision of a library and a computer suite, and redevelopment of accommodation for Foundation Stage children, are significant improvements since the last inspection. Pupils' good progress in reading and mathematics, and the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have been successfully maintained and developed further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	C	E	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
Writing	D	E	E*	E	
Mathematics	B	D	C	A	

Results in the above table show that pupils' standards were in line with the national average in mathematics in 2002. Although standards in reading and writing were well below the national average, results in mathematics and reading compared favourably with those achieved by pupils in similar

schools. In comparison with similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. Results appear to show a downward trend since 2000 in standards but do not reflect the fact that the national test results are linked closely to pupils' levels of attainment on entry into school. This is confirmed by school and national test and assessment data that shows, when compared with levels of attainment on entry, the vast majority of pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, including pupils with special needs, pupils with English as an additional language and pupils who are refugees.

Standards achieved by the present Year 2 pupils are average in reading and mathematics and are well below average in writing. Standards achieved by the present Year 5 pupils are below average in English, mathematics and science. In both year groups, standards achieved in physical education are better than, and in information and communication technology lower than, those expected for pupils of their age. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected.

Foundation Stage children make good progress overall from well below average levels of attainment on entry into the nursery. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are almost in line with those expected in personal, social and emotional development, and below expectations in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show good levels of interest and involvement in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils work and play well together. A small minority of pupils becomes restless at times in lessons, particularly in Year 4.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show considerable respect for each other and all adults in the school.
Attendance	Slightly below the national average. Pupils' increased enthusiasm for school is reflected in the reduction of unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 5
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The quality of teaching in the nursery, reception and Years 1 to 2 is more consistent than it is in Years 3 to 5, where the quality ranges from excellent to poor, but is good overall. Teaching is mainly good throughout the school in English and mathematics, including the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge, very good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants, and resources of good quality and quantity. In Years 1 to 5, in subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers rely too much on whole-class lessons, with not enough variation in the activities planned for pupils of differing abilities. This leads to insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in particular. The quality of teaching and learning for English as an additional language and special needs pupils is very good and makes a significant contribution to the good progress that they make. Very good relationships exist between all adults and pupils, and pupils respond very well to the respect shown for what they say and

do. As a result, confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment of school are quickly raised, leading to pupils' good attitudes and behaviour in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Teachers follow national subject guidelines closely, but subjects are not always adapted well enough to suit the needs of pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Needs are accurately established on entry into school and good quality individual education plans compiled. Parents are fully involved at all times.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Liaison between English as an additional language staff and class teachers is very good, so that support is matched closely to pupils' needs, helping them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. The quality of provision makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development throughout the school. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. It is good for moral and social development and satisfactory for pupils' spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Standards of pastoral care, welfare, health and safety are high. However, assessment information is not always used well enough to match work closely to pupils' needs.

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked very hard to strengthen the school's links with parents. However, despite these efforts, the number of parents working in the school or attending occasions to find out about how well their children are doing is disappointingly low.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The new headteacher has a clear idea about the school's future direction and action needed to raise standards as its effectiveness as a primary school develops. The impact of the work of subject co-ordinators on standards is inconsistent. However, teamwork is very good and the commitment amongst all staff to improve further is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors are well informed and give good support to the headteacher and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory overall. Monitoring and evaluation procedures by staff and governors gather a wide range of information about how well the school is doing. However, the information is not used as well as it might be to improve aspects of the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' standards and the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The headteacher and governors are continually looking for ways of using staffing, accommodation and resources more effectively to raise standards.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school, make good progress and behave well. • Teaching is good. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework set for younger pupils. • The way the school works with parents, keeps them informed about their children's progress and responds to suggestions and complaints. • The expectations teachers have of their children. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors endorse parents' positive views. Inspectors agree that the quantity and regularity of homework requires review. Inspectors judge the school's efforts to liaise and work with parents to be good, but judge that information passed on to parents could be more helpful. Inspectors judge teachers' expectations to be good. Provision for activities outside lessons is judged to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Strengths

- Standards in reading, mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education have improved well since the previous inspection.
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all areas of learning, and especially in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 5.
- Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2 are well above the average of similar schools; standards in physical education are above average throughout the school.

Areas for improvement

- Speaking and writing skills are not as well developed as might be expected throughout the school.
- Pupils' attainments in science are below average.
- Standards of using and applying information and communication technology are below those expected.

1. Foundation Stage children make good progress overall and they achieve well. They are prepared well for work in Years 1 and 2 because activities are often matched closely to individuals' needs identified during children's first few weeks in the nursery. During Years 1 to 5, pupils of all abilities make good progress overall in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in science when compared with their levels of attainment on entry, as a result of good teaching. Pupils benefit from good teaching of basic skills, which helps them to move on at a good pace in their learning, in reading and numeracy in particular. Pupils' achievements in speaking and writing are below the standards expected because there is insufficient emphasis on these aspects in lessons and this limits the rate of pupils' progress.
2. Average and lower attaining pupils often receive appropriate levels of challenge in their lessons, but this is not always the case for higher attaining pupils, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils with English as an additional language generally make similar progress to all other pupils because of the very good teaching they receive, either in their classroom or in groups withdrawn from lessons. Pupils with special educational needs progress well towards the targets in their individual education plans as a result of very good teaching in small groups.
3. Children in the Foundation Stage vary in their attainment at the age of three when they start school in the nursery, but attainment is generally well below average. A high proportion of children has English as an additional language and start school with a limited range of vocabulary, but weaknesses in language skills are common to virtually all children. Staff are successful at settling children quickly into daily routines and establishing high expectations of pupils' social and academic development. As a result, children achieve well and make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. This helps them to respond well to the wide range of interesting and motivating activities planned for them and, consequently, they

progress well in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical and creative development. This good rate of progress is continued as children move into the reception class. Good teaching and stimulating activities maintain children's interest and enthusiasm for school and, by the time they enter Year 1, although attainment is below the expected levels in all areas of learning, with the exception of children's physical development, which is in line with the expected standards, achievement is good.

4. The results of the 2002 national tests for pupils by the end of Year 2 show that standards in mathematics were in line with the national average, and that standards in reading and writing were well below. However, when these results are compared with those of similar schools, the picture is much better. Standards in mathematics are well above average and, in reading, they are about average. Writing standards are still well below average. In comparison with similar schools, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 is well above average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. Results over time show an overall improvement since 1997. School data, based on national test results and school assessment information, shows that pupils of all abilities make good progress from low levels of attainment on entry in reading and mathematics. Scrutiny of school data relating to the present Year 2 pupils, and a study of examples of their past work, confirm this good achievement and progress.
5. The school now has pupils up to the age of ten in Year 5, and so, as yet, there is no evidence based on end of Key Stage 2 national tests to indicate their achievements over time. School data based on the present Year 5 pupils' attainments when they were in Year 3 indicates that limited progress overall has been made in English and mathematics because standards are below the expectations for pupils of their age. However, many pupils in this year group were moved by the local education authority to other schools as a result of the re-organisation of schools in the borough. School records show that a significant proportion of the pupils who left during that time were higher attainers. A study of pupils' past work in the present Years 3 and 4 shows that the good levels of progress in reading and mathematics established in Years 1 and 2 are continued and that, when compared to levels of attainment on entry into school, they achieve well.
6. There has been a satisfactory improvement in standards by the end of Year 2 since the previous inspection. Pupils' standards in reading and mathematics are better, mainly because of the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Standards in information and communication technology, singing and physical education have also improved. Average standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education have been maintained. Standards are better because of improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, the quality of schemes of work, higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and improvements to the quantity and quality of resources. However, pupils' writing and speaking standards remain well below average and have shown little improvement.
7. Inspection findings are that, overall, pupils make good progress from their individual levels of attainment on entry. By the end of Year 2, standards in physical education are better than expected for pupils of their age. Standards in reading, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education are in line with national expectations. Standards in speaking, writing, science and information and communication technology are below expectations. In

Year 5, standards are above expectations in physical education. Standards in mathematics, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education are in line with expectations. Standards in English, science and information and communication technology are below those expected.

8. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills have benefited from the successful implementation of some aspects of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. As a result, pupils achieve particularly well in reading in Years 1 and 2, and spelling, listening and number skills in Years 1 to 5. An emphasis on basic skills has resulted in pupils developing good strategies for working out how to read difficult words and having a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of multiplication tables and other number facts. Listening skills are good as a result of the many occasions when pupils listen to stories and music, to teachers' introductions to lessons and to instructions in subjects such as physical education. Speaking skills are weak because not enough emphasis is placed on promoting these skills in lessons. Below average writing skills mainly reflect weak speaking skills, but are also an indication of the high proportion of pupils who enter school with low attainment in communication, language and literacy skills. Handwriting is generally of a below average standard. Pupils are not successful at transferring skills learnt formally in handwriting lessons to their daily written work. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their number skills in problem-solving activities in other subjects such as science and information and communication technology.
9. Pupils' achievements in science by the end of Year 2 and in Year 5 are below average because teachers plan too many whole-class lessons, so higher attaining pupils in particular are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils do not work collaboratively in groups often enough and recording of results in writing or in the form of graphs and diagrams is weak. However, teachers provide good coverage of the required curriculum and often link science activities well to other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils achieve well in art and design and design and technology because skills are taught step-by-step along with a wide range of resources and relevant projects. In geography and history, pupils are motivated by the use of interesting resources and well-planned visits. Teachers are enthusiastic about these subjects and this helps to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. As in science, too many lessons are whole-class, with not enough consideration given to varying tasks to meet pupils' differing needs. Standards in information and communication technology are below average because pupils have not had enough opportunities to practise and refine their skills in lessons. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to sing and play instruments in music and achieve well. Pupils' standards in physical education are good because teachers use praise and encouragement very effectively to promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Many pupils show good control of their bodies from an early age and teachers build on these natural talents well by providing a good range of gymnastic and sporting activities. Teachers make effective use of the many different religions and faiths represented in the school to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, them.
10. Pupils benefit from very good levels of inclusion in lessons, so that pupils of all ages, abilities, gender and background are involved in, and have access to, the curriculum. As a result, there are few differences of any significance in the achievements of boys and girls, pupils with English as an additional language, special needs pupils, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or refugees. Higher attaining pupils are generally well challenged by their tasks in reading and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, but not enough is demanded of them in other subjects.

11. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs, including that made by the seven pupils with statements, is good throughout the school. Pupils are identified early in their school career. Successful early identification is particularly important, considering the large number of pupils who transfer to the school at all ages. Staff have been quick to adopt the revised Code of Practice for special educational needs. Parents of children identified as having special educational needs said that they and their children were fully consulted at all times. Individual education plans are detailed. They contain precise, specific targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy, and sometimes behaviour. Overall, provision is very well organised. Careful timetabling ensures that all pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement. Learning support assistants play a significant part in helping pupils to achieve well. During lesson introductions, they constantly interact with pupils to find out whether they understand the information they are receiving. They work well with pupils and care very much about their progress.

12. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall because of the very good quality of teaching they receive from specialist staff and the emphasis placed by all teachers on promoting correct and appropriate vocabulary in lessons. Teachers are consistent in their approach to making sure that pupils take a full part in lessons by providing either helpful resources or extra support from teachers and learning support assistants. As a result, school data shows that in Years 3 to 5, for example, about 60 per cent of pupils, including some who are refugees, make good or very good progress in language acquisition. Twenty-six pupils from all classes are also identified as having special educational needs and make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Strengths

- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
- Behaviour in and around school is good.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and all adults are very good.
- Attendance rates have improved since the last inspection.

Area for improvement

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop independence and responsibility.

13. Pupils, as in the last inspection, continue to have good attitudes and behaviour and these attributes have a positive effect on standards across the school and the quality of school life. Parents strongly agreed in their questionnaire about how much their children liked school.

14. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. Throughout the school, pupils show obvious enthusiasm when offered interesting challenges and they are eager to take part in most activities offered. Pupils almost always settle quickly and their responses reflect the quality of teaching. For example, when teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject being taught, pupils respond keenly. Year 2 pupils were fascinated with the story of Guy Fawkes and the gunpowder plot in history, for instance. When questions are interesting, pupils focus well and show their enthusiasm with a willingness to respond. The introduction to a project on materials in science actively engaged all Year 3 pupils at a lively pace that made learning fun, but challenged pupils' thinking very well.

15. When expectations are realistic and pupils are given work that offers a good match to their ability, they work hard and show pride in their achievements. This was particularly evident in the special educational needs and English language support teaching groups. Attitudes and behaviour were consistently very good and pupils really enjoyed their lessons and the good progress they made in their learning. Children in the nursery are beginning to gain confidence and greater independence as they become familiar with the routines and patterns of the school day.
16. Behaviour in the classroom is usually good. Most of the unsatisfactory behaviour occurred in the Year 4 classroom. This reflected weaknesses in the teaching and behaviour management. Behaviour elsewhere is good. In the dining room, behaviour is good and lunchtimes are pleasant and sociable times. In assemblies, pupils show reverence by listening carefully and respectfully. Pupils really enjoy playtime as there is so much to do in the playground and pupils behave well. Boys and girls work and play happily together. There is evidence of some incidences of bullying but, as soon as it is reported, it is dealt with well. Racial harmony is a real strength and pupils mix easily, comfortably and are proud of their heritage and experiences that enrich learning so much. There was one fixed period exclusion in the last academic year.
17. Relationships in the school are very good. Most teachers speak positively to pupils and value all their efforts. The atmosphere in most classrooms is happy and relaxed. Pupils listen well to their teachers, follow instructions and enjoy praise for good work and effort. Pupils are usually friendly, helpful and courteous. Pupils are also supportive of each other and there was spontaneous applause in some classrooms when pupils achieved well.
18. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory overall. Its main strength is that the school has successfully established an atmosphere in which pupils can confidently grow and flourish, and where respect for others is encouraged with pupils aware of the feelings of others. Pupils' writing and personal discussion times show how they reflect on aspects of their lives and value their own and others' talents and differences. Assemblies produce a good sense of community. Pupils said they really enjoy assemblies and thought they learned some strong messages about goodness and a better understanding of why they should be kind to others. They also learn how to share and celebrate the wide range of cultures represented in the school.
19. Pupils are keen to help with daily routines and they carry out jobs willingly and conscientiously. Older pupils feel that they could do more and want to have more responsibility to help with the smooth running of the school day. A few help with the shared reading programme and some girls were seen helping younger pupils in the playground. The 'healthy' school project, personal and social education and school trips, especially the residential trip, help to extend personal development well.
20. The weakness in personal development is the lack of opportunities for pupils to become more independent learners. Pupils need more chances to think for themselves and show initiative, to develop their own ideas and acquire better research skills. Many lessons are too teacher-directed and this restricts pupils' freedom to choose, to observe, to question and to investigate their own learning.
21. In the year for which national comparisons are available (2000/2001), the attendance rate is slightly below the national average. Attendance has improved in the current academic year, and is above the previous year's national average. The rate of unauthorised absence has improved and is broadly in line with the national level.

Holiday taking during term time accounts for a significant amount of absence. When pupils are taken on holiday, it hinders the continuity of their learning in school. A small number of pupils also have poor attendance and, despite the school's efforts to urge parents to send their children to school, little progress has been made in some cases. Punctuality on arrival at school is satisfactory. A small number of families are persistently late but the majority arrives on time and most school days have a prompt and punctual start.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; it has improved well since the last inspection.
- Teachers develop very good relationships with their pupils.
- The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been used well to improve pupils' reading and numeracy skills; basic skills are taught particularly well.
- Pupils benefit from very good teamwork amongst teachers and learning support assistants.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers plan too many whole-class lessons with too few opportunities for collaborative group work.
- Levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils are not always demanding enough, particularly in Years 3 to 5.

22. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Of the 64 lessons seen during the inspection, about 67 per cent were good or better, including about 19 per cent which were very good and three per cent which were excellent. About 30 per cent of lessons were satisfactory. Five per cent of lessons were less than satisfactory. These figures represent a satisfactory improvement on those reported at the time of the previous inspection, when about 50 per cent of lessons in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 3 were judged to be good or better and 50 per cent satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is more consistent in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, than in Years 3 to 5, where it ranges from excellent to poor. This partly reflects the school's change from a first school to a primary school and the attempts that staff are making to adjust teaching methods to meet the needs of the older pupils.
23. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and reception is good overall. About 55 per cent of the lessons seen were good or very good and the remaining 45 per cent were satisfactory. Teaching is effective in enabling children to make good progress in all areas of learning. There are very good working relationships between staff and children. Staff provide good role models and have high expectations of children's work and behaviour. Activities are well planned and tasks are well matched to the needs of the children. Assessments are used effectively to identify individual targets and to help with planning lessons. Plans have clear learning objectives that build well on what children already know and can do. Teachers, nursery staff and learning support assistants work very effectively as a team and this promotes children's learning well. They have a good understanding of how young children learn. Children's confidence and independence are strongly promoted. A good range of resources is available and is used to good effect.

24. At present, Foundation Stage organisation is not making most effective use of new accommodation. Staff are aware of the problem. They have identified the need for help and guidance to make changes to their current pattern of teaching the reception and nursery children separately, in order to provide a more continuous development of children's skills between the two classes. Staff work hard to provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment. Teaching promotes the requirements of the national early learning goals and provides a good foundation for pupils' National Curriculum work in Year 1.
25. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. Of the lessons seen, about 70 per cent were good or very good and the remaining 30 per cent of lessons were satisfactory. An important reason for the good quality of teaching is the very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils. Teachers are very conscious of the wide range of abilities and backgrounds of their pupils and work hard to make pupils feel confident and secure. For example, in a very good Year 1 literacy lesson, the teacher used a story to encourage pupils to say how they might feel if they found themselves in similar predicaments to the characters in the story. Pupils spoke freely about their feelings. The teacher also set little challenges, which maintained pupils' interest and attention. At all times, the teacher posed questions that matched pupils' varying needs and, because they were at ease in the classroom, pupils responded well. A good Year 2 numeracy lesson was characterised by the teacher's very effective use of praise and encouragement to motivate pupils and encourage them to participate fully in the lesson.
26. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 5 is good overall, but is not as consistent as it is in the rest of the school. Of the lessons seen, about 65 per cent were good or better, including about 30 per cent that were very good or excellent. Of the remaining 35 per cent of lessons, 20 per cent were satisfactory and ten per cent were less than satisfactory, including one lesson which was judged to be poor. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan interesting and motivating activities that sustain pupils' interest throughout the lesson. An excellent example of this was seen in a Year 5 science lesson, where the teacher matched the level of difficulty of the activities closely to pupils' varying needs. Pupils concentrated for long periods because the tasks were not too easy, but were just challenging enough to create interest and a desire to succeed.
27. Good lessons involve very good management and organisation of pupils' learning. There were examples of good practice in most lessons, as pupils moved from whole-class gatherings, where they sat together on a carpet, to working individually at their desks and then moving back again to the carpet. During these movements, some pupils were often organised to work with learning support assistants or specialist teachers. Very little time was lost during these procedures, and interruptions to pupils' learning were kept to a minimum as a result. Lessons that are less than satisfactory or poor are characterised by uninteresting activities, inappropriate resources or poor behaviour management, as was the case in unsatisfactory or poor science, geography and religious education lessons seen in Year 4.
28. Pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge. This means that, in most curriculum areas, teachers are successful in teaching pupils basic skills. Teachers have developed good subject knowledge in literacy and numeracy through training and by effective analysis of the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation by the co-ordinators of the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers use large and small texts well to promote pupils' reading skills. However, not enough use is made of other subjects of the curriculum to promote pupils' speaking and writing skills. A strong

emphasis on mental and oral work as a result of successful training in the use of the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines has resulted in pupils making good progress in mathematics. There is still work to be done in improving pupils' problem-solving skills. Teachers' subject knowledge in information and communication technology is much improved since the last inspection, although teachers do not make best use of computers to promote learning in other areas of the curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge in religious education is variable.

29. The quality of teachers' planning is satisfactory. Teachers work hard in preparing lessons and resources. However, because they mainly base their choice of activities on national schemes of work which have not been adjusted to meet the specific needs of pupils at St Mark's, activities are not always appropriate or successful. This is reflected in many of the lessons seen during the inspection which were judged to be satisfactory or less than satisfactory. There is a tendency for teachers to plan too many whole-class lessons, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics. As a result, insufficient consideration is given to varying the main activity in a lesson to suit the needs of the differing abilities of pupils or to the inclusion of collaborative group work.
30. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is satisfactory. Pupils have benefited significantly from practising reading skills at home. However, homework arrangements vary from class to class and this lack of consistency reduces the overall impact of homework on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Opportunities are missed to use homework as a vehicle for independent research skills and as a preparation for further work in school.
31. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs in classes and in small withdrawal groups by the special educational needs co-ordinator and special needs staff is excellent and helps pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching by all teachers is very good overall. Class teachers are aware of the pupils on the register of special educational needs and all make reference to providing suitable activities to promote learning. Good attention is given to ensure that the work set is appropriate and builds on pupils' previous learning.
32. Special educational needs pupils are included in every aspect of lesson planning and their withdrawal from lessons is planned to support their progress, rather than exclude them from class activities. Class teachers and the skilled, knowledgeable co-ordinator carefully plan individual education plans for the pupils' work. Targets are limited in number and progress towards achieving them can be easily measured. Pupils are given very good skilled assistance from all the committed staff. The combined attention from teacher and support staff has a most positive impact upon the good progress that the pupils make in their learning.
33. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with English as an additional language is very good overall. The co-ordinator, along with an unqualified teacher, provide very well-planned sessions for individual or groups of pupils, either in classes or in the English as an additional language room. One of the main reasons for the success of the teaching is that activities are linked to pupils' classroom work. Pupils are helped to develop and extend their vocabulary, as well as their numeracy skills, through practical, oral and written activities. For example, four reception pupils, including three Somali refugees and a child from Ghana, were observed making good gains in their learning as they role-played the making of a birthday cake they had heard about in a class story. They were successfully encouraged to use the correct vocabulary as they delighted in mixing tomato sauce, baked beans, sugar and jam and then tasting the result!

34. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in science, art and design, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education. Art and design and design and technology lessons are characterised by the provision of a wide range of materials with which pupils can experiment. Geography lessons are made more relevant by links with pupils in other countries, but activities chosen are not always well matched to pupils' needs. In history lessons, there is an imbalance between the teaching of facts and the teaching of skills. Pupils benefit in music lessons from the use of some good quality percussion instruments with which to compose and perform. Pupils do well in physical education lessons because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. In religious education lessons, teachers sensitively introduce pupils to the wide range of religions and faiths represented in the school.

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

Strengths

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and helps them to make good progress.
- Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good and helps them to make good gains in language acquisition.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Areas for improvement

- Subjects of the curriculum are not used well enough to promote pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.
- The time allocated to literacy and numeracy lessons is sometimes too long.
- Subject schemes of work based on national guidelines have not been adapted sufficiently to suit the needs of pupils at St Mark's.

35. At the time of the previous inspection, the school provided a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The most important weakness related to information and communication technology, where provision did not meet statutory requirements. Satisfactory progress has been made, both in relation to improving pupils' opportunities in information and communication technology, and developing a curriculum suitable for pupils up to the end of Year 6.
36. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils, which meets statutory requirements. The vast majority of the work planned follows the national guidance provided in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the subject schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the local syllabus for religious education. The school recognises that there is a need to adapt these documents to meet its own needs but, currently, it follows the local education authority's guidance during the transition period involving first and middle schools. The school continues to emphasise the development of the key skills of literacy and numeracy. However, in all year groups, the formal lessons based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies exceed the recommended time significantly, and this affects the time available for other subjects. The current organisation of the morning, including when playtime occurs, means that time is not always used to best effect.
37. There is a satisfactory curriculum in place for children in the nursery and reception, which covers all areas of learning. The range of activities enables children to make good progress, especially in the area of communication, language and literacy. The organisation of activities takes appropriate account of the Foundation Stage guidance.
38. The curriculum for pupils in the remainder of the school provides a satisfactory range of activities that is helping to prepare them for secondary school. It is currently enhanced by a short session of French each week in Year 4. All subjects are supported by relevant policies, but some of these are in need of review in order to adapt them to suit the needs of pupils at St Mark's. Opportunities to use and develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects are not planned in sufficient detail. Attention is given to developing pupils' knowledge in all subjects, but the development of skills is not always given sufficient emphasis. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been satisfactorily introduced, although the time allocated to each lesson exceeds that recommended.
39. The school develops pupils' personal, social and health education well. The introduction of a personal, social and health education programme, which includes personal circle time, when pupils discuss aspects of personal development, effectively linked with religious education, assemblies and specific lessons, has helped this process. As well as within the National Curriculum requirements in science, drugs awareness and sex education will be developed further at an appropriate age as the school expands up to Year 6. The school nurse and other

visiting adults make a positive contribution to this work. Pupils do not have enough chance to develop independence in their learning, or to take on roles of responsibility.

40. Over 40 per cent of full-time pupils in the school have been identified as having special educational needs, the vast majority of whom have learning difficulties. The school responds very well to the new Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Currently, the school provides very well for pupils with particular learning needs and curricular opportunities are also very good for pupils who have statements of special educational needs. Particularly notable features of the provision are regular assessments of the progress that pupils make towards learning targets and the detailed, informed records kept of their progress. A study of the special educational needs register, pupils' individual education plans, and discussions with the co-ordinator, class teachers, visiting support teachers and learning support staff indicate that most pupils are making good progress towards meeting their individual learning targets. Provision is made very well for pupils who have a specific learning difficulty in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from parts of some lessons for extra literacy and numeracy support. Teachers and support staff try to ensure that they rejoin the work of the class appropriately. Their curriculum, although slightly different in some aspects, is no less valuable or stimulating. The provision for pupils with behavioural and physical difficulties is equally comprehensive and detailed, and they make the same good progress towards targets set as a result.
41. Almost half of the pupils in the school are ones for whom English is an additional language, and over 30 are at an early stage of language acquisition. These figures include almost 20 refugees. In each class, these pupils for most of the time follow the same curriculum as the rest of the class. However, well-organised and focused teaching from English as an additional language staff, learning support assistants and class teachers provides pupils with additional support in lessons or in withdrawn groups to make sure that they are able to benefit from lesson activities. Provision is directed primarily at developing and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of appropriate vocabulary, so that, for example, pupils can take a full part in a science investigation or a music lesson unhindered by concerns about understanding specialist words and phrases.
42. A significant success of the school is the way in which it cares for, supports and ensures that pupils with specific needs make good progress. Planning is very good, whether this is within the classroom or in small groups. Even when pupils are withdrawn for support, careful planning means that they cover similar areas of work as the other pupils. Very good support is given to pupils with medical conditions or physical disabilities so that they have full access to the planned curriculum.
43. The success of the school in meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 is evident in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. The school is not as successful in maintaining this picture for older pupils. Throughout the school, however, pupils are valued, made to feel welcome and encouraged successfully to see themselves as individuals and as important parts of the school community.
44. The school has satisfactory links with the community, particularly the local Anglican church, the police, school nurse, dance and musical groups, and Wimbledon Football Club. Pupils visit parts of the community when, for instance, studying local geography or World War Two. They go further afield to visit, for instance, the London Museum. Pupils in Year 4 have the opportunity to attend a short residential visit. A satisfactory

range of activities is available at lunchtime. These include a dance club, board and other indoor games, and choir. Opportunities are also available to learn to play musical instruments such as the recorder and violin. The school does not yet provide any extra-curricular activities after school, but it intends that some will be developed in the near future.

45. Satisfactory links exist with partner institutions, although these are being extended and developed with the school's changed status. Currently, for instance, there is no specific link with the secondary school to which most pupils will transfer after Year 6. Co-ordinators from different schools meet regularly and links have been established with another primary school, which has been established from a previous middle school. These links are benefiting both schools during the period of transition. Boys from a local independent school are welcomed for work experience, as are trainee teachers. The school enjoys Beacon School status for its work with pupils who have special educational needs. This is enabling it to share its expertise with other local schools.
46. In the previous inspection, the school was described as successfully promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Currently, provision for pupils' personal development is good, and is especially strong in the area of cultural development. There is no specific policy to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and subject policies contain no guidance. The school's success in this area depends on the actions of individuals and their desire to achieve the school's aims.
47. The school's arrangements for developing pupils' spiritual awareness are satisfactory. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and it usually interests and engages pupils. Stories are often well told, but the significance of these in relation to pupils' personal development is not explored or explained sufficiently. Assemblies usually contain a prayer, which is used in such a way that all pupils, whatever their faith, can be included. Moments of reflection within the assemblies are relatively brief. The new, recently introduced religious education programme should provide opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual awareness further. Within other subjects, spiritual development is less evident. There are few opportunities for pupils to question in a way that develops insight or to experience excitement in finding out for themselves. In a Year 1 English lesson, pupils were effectively guided to consider how one of the story characters might have felt following the problems that had been caused.
48. Moral and social development is promoted well through a range of activities, including the personal, social and health education programme. Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution, such as when pupils sing 'The Community Song', but the moral and social aspects of some of the stories are unclear. Provision for moral development is good, especially in ensuring the promotion of racial equality and tolerance, and a respect for the wide range of different cultures in the school community. Pupils are encouraged to think about the implications of their actions on others and about what is right or wrong. The school has an appropriate behaviour policy, and pupils have contributed to school rules. However, these are not always implemented consistently by class teachers. Throughout the school, adults act as good role models and pupils are encouraged to respect each other and views that are different to their own.
49. Arrangements to promote social development are good. During discussions, pupils are encouraged to listen to others. The programme of visits plays an important role in

developing social skills. During personal, social and health education lessons, pupils consider social issues such as waste and recycling. Racial harmony is promoted very well and supported effectively through the school's documentation. Pupils have opportunities to develop an understanding of some features of citizenship such as when Year 5 pupils were asked to vote whether to continue a circle time lesson into the lunch hour so that everyone could have a go. Although pupils often work in groups, these are rarely organised so that pupils have experience of co-operating with each other. Pupils have limited opportunities to develop independence in the way in which they work and roles of responsibility are limited.

50. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. There is particularly good encouragement for pupils to become aware of the wide range of cultures represented in the school community. The struggles of campaigners for civil rights in America and South Africa, such as Martin Luther King, Sojourner Truth and Nelson Mandela, have been taught very effectively and resulted in informative hall displays. Pupils in Year 4 benefit from French lessons. Assemblies are used well to introduce pupils to the work of different musicians such as Louis Armstrong. Visits from theatre, dance and music groups and visits to museums help extend pupils' cultural awareness. In art and design, pupils were introduced to the work of Mondrian, and then used a computer program to produce pictures in his style. The religious education programme also provides opportunities to study the wide range of faiths represented in the school, including Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Strengths

- St Mark's is a very caring school and pupils' pastoral needs are very well met.
- Care for pupils with medical conditions or disabilities is outstanding.
- Arrangements for child protection, security, health and safety are very good.
- Procedures for promoting pupils' good behaviour are effective.
- Procedures for improving pupils' attendance are good.

Areas for improvement

- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are not sufficiently systematic or effective.
- Pupils are not involved enough in finding out what they need to do to improve and in looking at ways to do this.

51. The school continues to take very good care of its pupils, maintaining its position since the last inspection, and this helps to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. Most staff have very good relationships with pupils, and pupils are confident in their approaches to their teachers or other adults in the school. This helps pupils feel safe and secure and is a real strength of the school. Staff give a high priority to a wide range of procedures to encourage good attendance, good behaviour and to safeguard pupils' welfare. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed high levels of confidence in this aspect of the school's work.
52. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registers are consistently maintained using attendance computer software and all absences are followed up. The school takes all reasonable steps to improve attendance and this is reflected in the recent improvement in attendance rates. Despite good efforts by the

school to discourage holiday taking during term time, many parents take their children away and this disrupts learning. The school is keen to encourage good punctuality as an important life skill and has run effective campaigns to keep reminding families to 'get in line by 5 to 9'.

53. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. Rewards and sanctions are used well to encourage good work, effort and behaviour. Pupils are familiar with the school, their own class rules and the high expectations for behaviour and most behave well. Although behaviour management of pupils is a strength in most of the teaching, one teacher clearly did not have these skills and strategies and made some negative comments that resulted in unsatisfactory behaviour and a strained atmosphere in the classroom. The procedures for eliminating any oppressive behaviour are good. When any bullying is reported, it is investigated and effective action is taken to stop it. The school meets the statutory requirement to have a racial equality policy and treats the rare racist incidents very seriously and sensitively.
54. The arrangements for child protection and children who are fostered are very good and meet all the statutory requirements. The headteacher is the designated person and she is fully trained. There are clear procedures to ensure that all staff are well briefed on procedures. The school is vigilant and any suspicions are carefully monitored. When pupils are sick or injured, they receive good care and attention despite not having a medical room. Pupils were seen lying in the reception area with little comfort or privacy.
55. Pupils with medical conditions and disability are very well known and their care is outstanding. The school goes beyond normal bounds to fully include these pupils and has helped to significantly improve the quality of their lives by giving unstinting care and the help they need. The working partnership with local health agencies in this regard is excellent.
56. The management of health and safety has improved since the last inspection and the issues raised at that time have been addressed. The headteacher is to shortly undergo some additional training on risk assessment and record keeping to help improve the health and safety arrangements even further. The school is drawing up an Internet security policy and has installed effective safeguards to protect pupils from access to inappropriate web sites.
57. Much of the monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory and is informal, promoted by staff who sustain very good relationships with pupils. Most teachers are able to support pupils and give them good advice for improving

attitudes and social skills and encourage a good work ethic. The personal, social and health education programme and circle times help to extend the personal development and citizenship of pupils well.

58. The school provides very well for the support of pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator has an excellent working relationship with staff, which facilitates the prompt identification of pupils with learning difficulties or behaviour problems. Teachers ensure that the very high numbers of special educational needs in all classes receive appropriate support on a daily basis. The organisation and the quality of the records collected and organised by the co-ordinator, including the register of special educational needs, are excellent. Individual education plans, compiled by the co-ordinator in consultation with the class teacher and support staff, are reviewed regularly and learning targets modified accordingly. The overall quality of individual education plans is excellent. They are very detailed and give precise attainable learning targets. All teachers have a special educational needs file which is comprehensive and clearly used well.
59. The English as an additional language co-ordinator maintains detailed records and assessments of pupils' attainments. Very close liaison with staff is one of the main reasons why support for English as an additional language pupils is effective. The co-ordinator regularly reviews pupils' progress with staff and makes adjustments to her planning accordingly. The English as an additional language support assistant who works with pupils from ages three to seven works closely with the co-ordinator to give very good levels of support to pupils. Both members of staff make effective use of assessment information to prepare detailed lesson plans, and these make a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils make.
60. The previous inspection reported that assessment procedures needed to be improved for the foundation subjects and religious education, and that more use should be made of the information gained. Limited progress has been made. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are improving, but are not yet satisfactory in all subjects. Particular strengths are the very effective assessment procedures used in relation to pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
61. Assessment procedures in the nursery and reception are good. Children are assessed systematically shortly after they enter the school, and this information is used well to plan children's work and the organisation of groups. In the remainder of the school, satisfactory procedures are in place to assess pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. National Curriculum tests, including national optional tests, are used well to determine the rate of pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Results from the use of commercial tests add to this information. Satisfactory use is made of this information, although work does not always meet the needs of higher attaining pupils from Year 3 onwards. In science, assessment is based on simple statements of what is expected, identifying pupils who exceed these and those that do not reach the expected standard. In other subjects, a similar procedure to that used in science is to be introduced, but current assessment procedures are unsatisfactory because they are not systematic and do not identify the skills that pupils should be acquiring. There are useful plans to develop assessment procedures for religious education now that the new syllabus has been introduced.
62. The headteacher makes effective use of the data obtained from National Curriculum and optional tests to assess pupils' progress as they move through the school. Good use is being made of technology to analyse this data but, as a consequence of re-

organisation procedures by the local education authority, the detail available to her at this stage is limited and is not sufficient to identify particular patterns related to different groups of pupils. The available information is being used effectively to set whole-school targets, but is not used effectively enough to set individual targets for pupils. However, the very effective procedures in place for the assessment of pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with learning difficulties provide a model of good practice for the school, particularly in the way that pupils are involved in the setting of individual targets for improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Strengths

- Parents overall view of the school is good.
- Parents are pleased with the new headteacher's openness and availability to them.
- The school works hard to encourage parents to become more involved in their children's education and the life of the school.

Areas for improvement

- Reports to parents about their children's progress do not meet statutory requirements.
- The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is unsatisfactory overall.

63. The partnership with parents is not as strong as it was at the last inspection. This is mostly because many parents do not respond to the good efforts made by the school to involve them in its work and in their children's learning. Parents are, however, pleased at the more welcoming and approachable ethos the new headteacher has already created and believe that this is the start of a new era and a better working relationship with parents. Parents are positive and happy with most aspects of the school and feel that the teaching is good and that their children are making good progress and the school expects them to work hard and do their best.
64. Parents had some slight disagreement at the meeting and in questionnaire responses about extra-curricular activities, the quality of information they receive about their children's work and how closely the school works with them. Inspectors found that the range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory for a primary school. The lunchtime clubs are well attended and enjoyed by pupils. The quality of some of the information parents receive is however unsatisfactory. School reports are inconsistent. They mainly contain information about curriculum coverage and pupil enjoyment and there is insufficient information about the new knowledge, skills and understanding pupils have acquired over the year. Weaknesses are inconsistently identified and advice for improvement and targets are rarely given. Consequently, reports do not meet the statutory requirements. Letters tell parents about events and serve their purpose satisfactorily, but the absence of a regular newsletter meant that parents did not feel in touch with day-to-day activities and all the good things that were happening in school. Parents who were spoken to did not know about the range of lunchtime clubs. The Year 5 class assembly held during the inspection attracted only three parents because advanced warning of the assembly was not given to parents.
65. The school welcomes parents to help and get involved in the work of the school but is not always rewarded by parental contributions. This makes links with parents less

effective. Year group meetings were carefully planned and arranged at the beginning of the school year to give parents an outline of the teaching and learning intended. The response, however, was disappointing when the turnout was low, especially in one year group when parents representing only three children attended. The parent days in the nursery elicit a slightly better response when half the parents come and see what their children are learning. Parents of nursery pupils were pleased at the induction arrangements, which were tailored to parents' preferences to exchange information and parents are closely involved in the build-up to full-time education.

66. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is unsatisfactory overall. The Parents' Association is small and run by six very dedicated and determined parents who keep trying to get parents more actively involved in the school. Some parents show a reluctance to do much and do not like attending meetings and more formal occasions. The Parents' Association is trying to overcome parental reluctance by holding informal coffee mornings and, with some success, is getting more parents to become involved in the school. In this way, many parents were persuaded to help to make the Golden Jubilee party a big success. When parents' talents are known, they are used well. African dancing and music for pupils were arranged by parents who provided a rich learning experience to support the Black history month. The pre-school active hour for part-time nursery children is also run by a mother and helps children indulge in very enjoyable messy and noisy learning activities. Social and fund-raising events helped to raise funds that have paid for some display boards and plants for inside and outside the school. Each pupil was given a special memorial cup for the Golden Jubilee.
67. The arrangements for consultation are good but are only attended by about half of the parents. Staff commendably make themselves available to parents everyday to deal with more urgent issues. The headteacher is a highly visible presence in the playground before and after school and parents were seen taking advantage of these good opportunities to talk to staff.
68. The combined governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus contain all the required information and are written in an easy to read 'parent friendly' way. The school is inventive and always thinking of new ways to get parents more involved. The school helpfully offered classes in parenting, literacy and numeracy along with a crèche. These attracted a small number of parents to take part. Those parents confirmed that they gained positively from attending when they understood more clearly how their children are taught and how they can help support them more.
69. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is satisfactory overall. Parents are keen to support their children when they know they are performing in school productions, special assemblies, sports activities, dance days and concerts. Only two parents volunteer to help regularly in the classroom but, when other needs arise, like help with school trips and swimming, parents do this willingly. Parents are happy with the arrangements for homework that have improved

recently. They feel they are given opportunities to support their children's learning at home. Homework is given regularly, albeit inconsistently in some year groups, but does form an active part of learning, especially for English and mathematics.

70. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and can play a full part in the reviews of their children's individual education plans. However, only about a third of parents take advantage of the invitation into school to discuss their children's progress. These parents are well pleased with progress and sign the individual education plans for the next stage of their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Strengths

- The new headteacher is successfully establishing an open, democratic style of leadership.
- Teamwork amongst all staff is very good.
- The reflection of the school's aims and values in its life and work is very good.
- Governors are very supportive of the school and manage the budget well.
- Pupils benefit from effective and efficient use of staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

Area for improvement

- The work of governors and staff in monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent.

71. The headteacher was previously the deputy headteacher of the school and took up her post in September 2002. At the time of the inspection, she had only been in post for eight weeks. Consequently, she has not had time to make a significant impact on the life and work of the school as its headteacher. However, work and experience as the school's deputy headteacher has helped her to form a clear idea about the future of the school and the action needed to raise standards. Staff commented that they are pleased with her style of leadership, which is open, democratic and supportive. The headteacher has made it her policy since her appointment to be available to parents, and there is evidence that her regular presence in the playground at the beginning and end of the day is already proving popular with them. The headteacher is promoting the aims and values of the school well through her strong commitment to educational inclusion and the development of positive relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils.
72. The aims of the school are reflected very well in the strong emphasis placed by all staff on pupils' personal and social development. Pupils benefit from a very caring, secure environment as a result of the consistent implementation of the school's policies for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Senior staff and subject co-ordinators provide very good role models for pupils in the way that they show respect for each other and for what pupils say and do. The results of this approach are evident in the good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, the very good relationships and the successful integration into school life of pupils from a wide variety of abilities, race and religion.
73. The contribution that staff make to the management of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher has several managerial responsibilities. She benefits in this respect from experiencing for herself the effectiveness of school policies such as

procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of standards by subject co-ordinators. However, the headteacher is aware that she holds too many responsibilities at the moment, and that some of these will be delegated to staff, when appropriate. A member of staff is currently giving good support to the headteacher as acting deputy headteacher until a permanent appointment is made.

74. Subject co-ordinators work hard to carry out their roles and responsibilities. At the time of the previous inspection, it was reported that co-ordinators did not carry out their roles effectively enough in the way that they monitored the curriculum. There has been a satisfactory improvement since then. Co-ordinators have a clearer understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects. However, there is a lack of consistency in the way that co-ordinators carry out their roles and so the impact of their work on raising pupils' standards is variable. In particular, most co-ordinators' plans for what they hope to achieve each year lack timescales, methods and success criteria.
75. Where management is rigorous, for example in the work of the special educational needs and English as an additional language co-ordinators, the improvement in pupils' standards is clearly evident. The headteacher is aware that procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching and learning require review. She is also aware that the appointment of a deputy headteacher to strengthen the senior management team's overview of how well the school is doing is a high priority.
76. The leadership and management of pupils with special educational needs by the co-ordinator are excellent. Effective monitoring of pupils' individual plans and liaison with parents ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate care in the school. The co-ordinator has successfully developed procedures to regularly update pupils' individual education plans. Regular meetings with outside specialists are helpful in making sure that knowledge and strategies for pupils' development are clearly understood and analysed. The governor for special educational needs is new to her post. However, she is very aware of her responsibilities and is prepared to fully support the special educational needs co-ordinator in her role.
77. The management and support of pupils with English as an additional language is very good. The co-ordinator is new to the post since September 2002. She has taken the role over from the headteacher, who was the co-ordinator at the school before her appointment as headteacher. The co-ordinator, and the experienced English as an additional language learning support assistant, work very closely with the special needs co-ordinator and class teachers to provide support which is linked to pupils' daily class lessons. Pupils receive extra support depending on need, either in the classroom during lessons or in groups withdrawn from the classroom. Twenty-six of the pupils are also designated as having special educational needs and their needs are effectively met in conjunction with the special needs co-ordinator. Planning for each pupil in each lesson is very detailed and is the result of a close analysis of teachers' planning and discussions with them. Her record keeping is meticulous and her analysis of assessment data is very effective in following pupils' progress and establishing targets for them to achieve.
78. Standards of teamwork amongst all staff are very good. For example, staff have managed very well over the last three years the difficult process of changing the school from a first to a primary school. This process is not complete and the headteacher and staff are still working effectively to allay parental concerns and to try and make sure that pupils' education is not affected by the changes. Pupils benefit

from very good liaison between teachers and learning support assistants and this aspect makes a major contribution to pupils' academic and social development.

79. The members of the governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities conscientiously and give good support to the work of the headteacher and staff. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are knowledgeable about school and national test results and analyse these, in conjunction with the headteacher, to establish priorities for action in the school development plan. Governors have worked hard to support staff in the process of school re-organisation and this has been the focus of much of their attention over the last three years.
80. At the time of the previous inspection, governors' procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum were reported as requiring further development. There has been a satisfactory improvement since then and governors are more aware of curriculum content and the effectiveness of teaching methods. However, the purpose of governors' formal visits to school is sometimes general rather than specific and is not always linked to priorities in the school development plan, which limits the effectiveness of these visits as a means of monitoring and evaluating school improvement.
81. The school development plan is a helpful working document which outlines clearly the school's priorities for each academic year and the financial implications. The headteacher and governors make effective use of an annual review of the work of the school by personnel from the local education authority, along with their own assessment of the school's success, to make adjustments to the school development plan each year.
82. The school has satisfactory, and improving, procedures to manage its finances. The school administration is very good and does much to support the smooth running of the school's finances. Revised terms of reference have been agreed for the finance committee, which will now meet at least once a term to set and review the budget. The headteacher and chair of the finance committee receive monthly budgetary information so that a careful check can be made on spending patterns. School development planning is well supported by the careful financial planning of the headteacher and governors. This has been particularly important during the school's transition from a first to a primary school. The budget surplus is presently higher than nationally recommended figures, but governors have sensibly allowed for additional expenditure as school numbers expand over the next two years. Governors recognise that they do not yet have adequate procedures to monitor the impact of their financial decisions on standards of attainment beyond those in English, mathematics and science such as the impact of the new computer suite on pupils' information and communication technology standards.
83. The last audit was almost three years ago, and was not available for examination. The governors' minutes indicated that the results were satisfactory, and the financial administrator has ensured that the minor recommendations have been acted upon. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are used very effectively and support for these children is an important strength of the school. The headteacher, supported by the governors, ensures that careful consideration is given to costs when purchasing new resources. Criteria, in addition to the lowest quote, are used to decide which tenders are successful such as attention to safety with the recently purchased physical education equipment and additional support following completion of the computer suite. The

headteacher carefully compares the school's performance with that of similar schools, and provides the relevant information to the members of the governing body.

84. Pupils' academic standards when they join the school are well below average and they make good progress in reading and mathematics, especially by Year 2. Standards in speaking, writing, science and information and communication technology are below average. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good. The curriculum is satisfactory in breadth and balance but, with the exception of English and mathematics, schemes of work are not sufficiently well adapted to suit the needs of pupils of different abilities in class lessons. Curriculum subjects are not used as well as might be expected to promote pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The quality of teaching is good overall, especially in English and mathematics, but there is too much whole-class teaching, and this affects the progress made by pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Standards of care are high. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and standards, and those for assessing pupils' attainments, vary in effectiveness and their impact on standards. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are usually good. Unit costs are high, although this is a reflection of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
85. The match of qualifications and experience of staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Teachers' quality and experience broadly match the demands and range of the Foundation Stage curriculum, the National Curriculum and the primary age range. All teaching staff, including the headteacher, have responsibility to manage a curriculum subject, special educational needs and English as an additional language. They are suitably qualified and benefit from regular training in the subjects they lead. This keeps them informed of the latest developments. There are informed procedures to help teachers who are new to the school and those who are newly qualified; they receive valuable support from the more experienced members of staff. Arrangements for managing the performance of teaching staff are firmly established and are satisfactory.
86. A strength of the school is the provision of a good number of experienced and effective learning support assistants. They work closely with teachers and provide valuable assistance, particularly when supporting lower attaining, special needs and English as an additional language pupils in literacy and numeracy.
87. The school administrative staff carry out their administrative duties very effectively and are central to the running of the school. The experienced site manager and his staff maintain the school in excellent order. Lunchtime staff perform their duties in a friendly, capable way. All non-teaching staff are valued members of the school community and reflect the strong team spirit, with everyone playing a significant part in the running of the school.
88. The accommodation is satisfactory and provides a bright and attractive learning environment. The refurbishment programme is almost complete and it has improved the quality of school life considerably. Most of the classrooms are of a satisfactory size and there are additional teaching rooms and areas for learning support. The English as an additional language support room, however, is too small. When up to eight pupils are at the teaching table, there is hardly room for the teacher to move around the room. The reception classroom is too small for all the learning intended. There are opportunities to work in the nursery space but these opportunities are not

taken regularly enough to use the whole of the Foundation Stage space available well. The library refurbishment is almost finished and there are useful plans to further develop its use.

89. Despite its age, the building is well maintained and clean and is a credit to the hardworking team of caretaker and cleaners. Governors effectively prioritise the most needed maintenance and carry these jobs out first to ensure pupils' comfort and safety.
90. Learning resources in most subjects are at least adequate and accessible. The new computer suite is providing a significant improvement to the level of resourcing in information and communication technology. Pupils benefit from a good range of equipment and resources in physical education. The new library has a satisfactory quantity and quality of books, reflecting the wide range of minority ethnic groups in the school. However, there is a narrow range of reading scheme books which, although used well, does not fully meet the needs of the older pupils in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

91. In order to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Raise pupils' standards in speaking and writing by:

- i) providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to express their views and opinions, discuss matters amongst themselves and talk about their work to the rest of the class;
- ii) making more effective use of other subjects of the curriculum to encourage pupils to write in different styles and for different purposes;
- iii) planning more activities that inspire pupils to write at length;
- iv) improving the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their written work.

(Paragraphs: 1, 8, 28, 38, 84, 115, 118, 119, 159, 170, 171, 192)

(2) Improve pupils' standards in science by:

- i) planning more opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment through co-operative group work;
- ii) ensuring that, during experiments and investigations, pupils of different abilities have tasks that are matched closely to their needs.

(Paragraphs: 9, 49, 84, 144, 147)

- (3) Raise pupils' standards in information and communication technology by:
- i) planning more opportunities for pupils to have access to computers;
 - ii) making more effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
- (Paragraphs: 28, 38, 84, 124, 129, 138, 167, 173, 175, 176)*
- (4) Improve the impact that the monitoring and evaluation work of senior staff and subject co-ordinators has on pupils' standards by:
- i) reducing the amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2;
 - ii) establishing regular opportunities for co-ordinators to critically analyse teachers' planning, pupils' work and colleagues' teaching;
 - iii) developing consistent procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English and mathematics;
 - iv) providing more challenging activities for higher attaining pupils;
 - v) producing action plans that indicate specific standards identified for improvement and how, and by when, improvement is likely to be achieved.
- (Paragraphs: 2, 9, 10, 16, 20, 22, 27, 29, 43, 53, 60–62, 74, 80, 82, 84, 122, 125, 134, 137, 139, 145–147, 154, 160, 165, 166, 184, 198)*
- (5) Give pupils more responsibility and independence by:
- i) including more collaborative group work in lessons;
 - ii) involving pupils more closely in talking about and establishing what it is they need to do to improve;
 - iii) looking for ways that pupils of all ages can be involved in the day-to-day running of the school.
- (Paragraphs: 9, 20, 39, 49, 98, 115, 123, 137, 144)*

OTHER POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE SCHOOL

- (1) Ensure that annual reports to parents meet statutory requirements and clearly show what it is that children need to do to improve.
(Paragraph: 64)
- (2) Continue to promote ways of involving parents in their children's learning and the life and work of the school.
(Paragraphs: 52, 63–70, 94, 95)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	29	18	2	1	0
Percentage	3	19	45	28	3	2	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 – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	21	169
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	59

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	71

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	82

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

National comparative data	5.2
---------------------------	-----

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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	18	28	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	13	7	16
	Girls	23	20	28
	Total	36	27	44
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	78 (74)	59 (68)	96 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	10	13	9
	Girls	19	22	21
	Total	29	35	30
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	63 (53)	76 (66)	65 (57)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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	84	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	9	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	12	1	0
Black or Black British – African	37	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	8	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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 – Y5

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.88
Average class size	23.86

Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	778,099
Total expenditure	739,976
Expenditure per pupil	3,374
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,356
Balance carried forward to next year	40,479

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	212
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	17	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	52	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	44	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	35	12	0	6
The teaching is good.	50	37	7	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	41	9	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	24	9	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	31	9	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	56	30	11	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	65	28	0	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	37	25	10	10

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

Strengths

- Children in the nursery and reception make good progress in all areas of learning from well below average levels of attainment on entry.
- Progress is very good in personal, social and emotional development.
- Children exceed the expected standards in physical development by the time they enter Year 1.
- Children benefit from very good teamwork amongst all staff.
- Assessment information is used well to match tasks closely to children's individual needs.
- Children are prepared well for work in Year 1.

Area for improvement

- Staff are not making the most effective use of the new accommodation.

92. The quality of education for the Foundation Stage is good and provides children with a solid base for the next stage of their education and a good foundation for future learning. No judgement was made in the previous report. Children in the Foundation Stage are catered for in nursery and reception classes. They are admitted into the nursery in the year in which they are three on a part-time basis only. Children transfer into the reception class in the term they reach their fifth birthday. Children in the reception attend full-time, including having lunch at school. At the time of the inspection, there were 42 nursery children attending on a part-time basis and 18 full-time reception children on roll. In January 2003, there will be another intake of reception children, bringing the class size to 30. There is a good number of qualified and experienced staff, consisting of two qualified teachers, a nursery nurse, a classroom assistant and further support assistants who care for special educational needs children and an unqualified teacher who supports children with English as an additional language.
93. The curriculum offered is satisfactory in its breadth and balance. All children are taught the nationally required Foundation Stage areas of learning. Teachers plan a variety of stimulating activities and this is one of the main reasons why children enjoy school and are keen to attend. Children's experiences are successfully extended by effective use of people in the community who visit the school and share their work and life. For example, children benefit from regular visits by a policeman with his car and firemen with a fire engine.
94. If parents take full advantage of all the available opportunities, then they and their children are very well prepared for entry into the nursery. There are arrangements for parent meetings, visits to the nursery for children and parents and a valuable home visit by staff. These procedures are very useful in helping children to settle quickly into nursery routines. Staff are working hard to try and improve on the number of parents who take advantage of the good quality induction programme.
95. Although children have a wide range of abilities, overall levels of attainment on entry to nursery show a higher percentage of well below average attainment than is normally found within the local education authority and nationally. Assessments are carried out

early on in a child's first term by staff and the results are shared with parents. The expectation is that, by sharing this information with parents, it will help them to become involved in supporting their children's learning. By the time they enter Year 1, children's attainment in most areas of learning is below that expected nationally. However, children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. This is because all children benefit from the caring, supportive environment and the structured learning opportunities provided. Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and develop necessary skills and attitudes for learning. The staff work well together on curriculum planning to ensure that children do not repeat the same activities in the reception year that they did in the nursery. Parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress through informal discussion, a more formal discussion in reception and an open day in the nursery.

96. The accommodation is only just satisfactory. The Foundation Stage has recently been relocated in a converted classroom. The main room ceiling has not been lowered and there are not enough soft furnishings to absorb noise. There are two rooms: the nursery occupies the larger area, whilst a small and rather cramped room is occupied by the reception. The toilets and cloakroom areas are shared. Staff have not yet fully exploited the accommodation to maximise its potential. They are at the stage where nursery and reception staff share expertise and resources for most of each day, but there is work to be done in refining arrangements and teaching methods further. Outdoor provision has the potential to be very good. It is well fenced, has a sturdy climbing frame and slide and a covered area. There is easy access, if required, to the adventure play area in the main school playground.

Personal, social and emotional development

97. Children's personal, social and emotional skills are well below those expected when they enter school. As a result of good teaching, they make very good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, attainment is just below nationally expected levels. A significant minority reach the levels expected. Children enjoy coming to school and most happily leave their parents and carers. They settle into nursery and school routines well because the teachers are well organised and organise lots of good support from caring assistants. Most children in the nursery have to be taught how to play co-operatively with each other; how to share and how to take turns. These skills take time to be learnt.
98. Staff help children well to develop responsibility, for instance by choosing an activity. However, staff do not fully encourage children to clear away after themselves. Children's attention and concentration are often limited to begin with. Staff are skilful at intervening to try and extend children's perseverance and concentration when completing tasks such as jigsaw puzzles or when playing a game.
99. Teachers create a secure environment, where expected behaviour is clearly identified. Rules are clearly established and most children soon become used to teachers' expectations. There are, however, a significant number of boys in the reception class who do not respect these rules and, on many occasions during the inspection, their behaviour was poor. Children learn to respect and care for each other. Their ideas and work are valued and teachers give positive feedback. Celebrations, such as birthdays and Christmas, develop children's awareness of cultural and religious differences well. Reception children are expected to join in whole-school assemblies and they also join Year 1 and 2 pupils at lunchtimes. Most have acceptable manners and politely ask the lunchtime staff for help.

Communication, language and literacy

100. Children enter the nursery with attainment well below that expected for their age, particularly in conversational skills, the range of their vocabulary and hand control for writing. Although all children make good progress, the majority of attainment is still below the level expected by the time children enter Year 1.
101. The quality of teaching is consistently satisfactory or better. Activities foster children's language and literacy skills well. Children are encouraged to listen attentively and enjoy story time. Imaginative, spontaneous play is encouraged by staff, who carefully intervene to ensure that language is developed and children's vocabulary is increased. For example, children were seen in role-play in the home corner using language appropriate to meal times. 'I'm hungry,' said one child, pretending to be a toddler. 'Baked beans,' said the imaginary mother, stirring a saucepan. Mmmmm!' was the reply. Teachers give children good opportunities to talk about their experiences and interests throughout the day.
102. Children are encouraged to recognise and write their own names. In the nursery, children recognise their names before they carry out a focused task with the teacher. Reception children find their name for lunch registration. Nursery children are taught the skills necessary for reading in the reception class, looking at the big books and learning letter sounds. However, the length of time the children are expected to sit is often far too long and their attention wanders. All children enjoy the big books and listen attentively. Parents are expected to be involved in the learning process from the time children come into the nursery. Children are given a book to take home and enjoy with their parents. This link between home and school to foster their language and literacy skills is a good feature of the Foundation Stage. Staff make excellent use of the library. Children are used to going for story time and to change their books. Children with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported and encouraged to participate in all activities. A range of well-prepared activities and good use of questions encourage children to think for themselves. These have a positive impact on their progress.

Mathematical development

103. Children's attainment in mathematical development on entry into the nursery is well below that expected for children of their age. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, attainment is below expected levels. Teachers support children's learning well with a wide variety of resources and few opportunities are missed to reinforce number work during many of the daily tasks and routines. Children make good progress in counting skills, number recognition and mathematical language. They count further than five in the nursery. Some children count to 15, but the majority has difficulty in counting numbers further than 10. Sand and water play reinforce the idea of capacity and volume well. These are two of the children's favourite activities. Children in the reception class continue

to make good progress in learning to count and in recognising numbers. They know the names of common shapes such as squares, triangles and circles. They learn about height and length and how to play games with dice.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

104. Children's attainment in this area of learning is extremely low on entry. Many good opportunities are provided for children's knowledge and understanding of the world to be developed. As a result, by the time children enter Year 1, their attainment has improved but is below that expected nationally.
105. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Through constant encouragement and caring support given by the teachers, children settle quickly into the new environment of school life. Regular routines help to rapidly establish a strong sense of security. Registration and snack times are used as an opportunity to talk about family, home and past and present activities in their lives. They discuss the day's weather; children enjoy trying to predict if it will stay dry so they can go outside to play. Children show limited understanding of some of the features of their community such as local shops. Knowledge of the wider world is very poor. For example, some nursery children did not know what a kangaroo was, whilst some reception children did not know the words 'paw' and 'claw'.
106. Children in the nursery learn to explore their world. Teachers constantly provide children with opportunities to understand their world through creative activities that stimulate their senses. For instance, children investigate the effect of liquid soap in water and marvel at the bubbles being formed in a wand. Investigative activities planned around the changes in cooking ingredients provide further opportunities for observation and questioning. Reception children plant conkers and carefully watch any changes as the conkers grow. All these activities help to promote a sense of wonder, curiosity and a keen interest in the world around them. Children have experience of using technology. They freely use the computer and, in reception, they demonstrate how to use a mouse.

Physical development

107. By the time children enter Year 1, they make good progress from low levels of attainment on entry into the nursery and attainment is below that expected nationally. Children make very good progress in their musical development and attainment is in line with expectations.
108. The quality of teaching and learning is often good. Children are successfully encouraged to explore sound in an imaginative way. They listen intently to taped music and join in appropriately. They play instruments in reception and accompany themselves competently when singing a variety of songs. They keep a steady rhythm when singing. Joining in actions proves to be a challenge most children cope with well. This is one of the children's favourite lessons. One reception boy listened so well, he picked up not only the rhythm but also the pulse of a song. Children listen and pay attention to music for a sustained period of time. Nursery children quickly learn 'Five currant buns' to celebrate a pretend party.
109. In a range of creative activities, children show developing skills and evident enjoyment. They explore a wide range of materials including sand, paint, clay, crayons and glue. There are insufficient opportunities for children to experience role-play, particularly in the reception class, to stimulate their imagination and to act

stories they have heard. However, teachers link this area of learning very closely to the classroom themes and give children imaginative tasks to complete.

Creative development

110. Children's attainment on entry is below that expected nationally. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress. By the time children enter Year 1, the majority has attained the expected levels.
111. Nursery children have regular access to outdoor play. Reception children have specified times for outdoor play and also take part in the school's physical education programme. Children's control of their bodies is well developed because teachers provide good experiences for them to explore different movements and actions. Outside activity is always well supervised. Children move confidently inside and outside. They are aware of space and do not bump into each other. Their control of wheeled toys is excellent. They manoeuvre at speed around the outside play area and cleverly avoid obstacles. Climbing frames give good opportunities for children to climb, jump, stretch and balance. Children were regularly observed on the climbing frame chasing each other to the top with skill and speed and chattering imaginatively. They use a good range of small equipment such as scissors, paintbrushes, crayons and pencils. Some show reasonable control of the small equipment and staff provide daily opportunities for children to develop these skills. By the time they enter Year 1, most children reach the expected standards in body control, but not the finer hand control, which is necessary for writing and creative work.
112. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. Children with special educational needs are identified quickly and an accurate assessment of their need is then made. Children who are from homes where English is not spoken are very well supported by additional staff who speak to them on a one-to-one basis, building confidence and security. Staff encourage parents to come in and help settle their children and younger siblings are welcomed.

ENGLISH

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in reading in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils make good progress in spelling in Years 1 to 5.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in writing are well below average.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on developing speaking skills in lessons.
- Opportunities are missed in other subjects of the curriculum to promote pupils' literacy skills.

113. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were described as satisfactory, although in the subsequent National Curriculum tests, the Year 2 pupils' results were well below average in reading and writing. When children enter school, their English attainment is low, but good progress results in attainment being about average in

reading by the end of Year 2. Current pupils' attainment in Year 5 is below average, but this is related to a significant decline in the number in the year group and changes in the characteristics of the class. Teaching and pupils' progress were described as good at the time of the previous inspection, and this remains the case.

114. Overall standards are below average in Years 2 and 5. Pupils throughout the school listen well, but lack confidence when speaking. Good progress in reading results in average attainment by the end of Year 2, with about three out of ten pupils achieving the high standards. Currently, attainment in reading is below average in Year 5. Throughout the school, attainment in writing is below or well below average. Results in reading and writing improved at a rate greater than the national improvement from 1997 to 2000, but fell in 2001. Very good support by additional teachers and support staff help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language, make good progress, especially in reading. A significant number of pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition; they are very well supported and making rapid strides. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in the first part of the school, but this slows after Year 2.
115. Standards of listening are in line with national expectations, but speaking standards are much lower. Pupils in Year 2 listen carefully and understand what is said to them. When speaking, however, many are quiet and lack confidence, answers are often in short phrases rather than sentences, and the vocabulary used is not extensive. Pupils in Year 5 listen well and take note of the views of the teacher and others during discussions. Their speaking is improving because of the encouragement of the class teacher, but many remain quiet, lack confidence and rarely answer at length. The school has recognised these weaknesses in speaking and intends to develop more opportunities as it is thought this will also improve pupils' writing. Pupils make good progress in listening, but not enough in speaking. There are a number of reasons for this; they include few opportunities for pupils to work together and co-operate in groups, and teachers talking at pupils too much, rather than with them. In the best lessons, such as was seen in Years 1 and 3, teachers' use of questions is good, and they encourage a wide number of pupils to answer.
116. Standards in reading are about average by Year 2, but below in Year 5. Higher attaining seven-year-olds read accurately, and correct their own errors as they go. They enjoy books, recall what they have read, understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction and have made good progress. Other pupils read text appropriate to their attainment accurately, but there is not always an enjoyment of reading. Steady progress takes place beyond Year 2, although higher attaining pupils do not extend their skills as fast as might be expected. One reason for this is that pupils find some of the reading material rather uninteresting. Pupils in Year 5 read fiction with satisfactory expression and reasonable understanding of the text. They are less confident when finding information from non-fiction books, although they understand very well how to use the contents and index pages. Some older readers, however, do not pay careful attention to punctuation and meaning, stopping

and starting a reading session at the end of a page, even though in mid-sentence. In a particularly good Year 3 lesson, pupils made good progress in understanding the distinction between prose and a play script.

117. Reading standards are satisfactory because pupils are taught basic reading skills effectively. Many read at home and young pupils, in particular, enjoy reading and talking about books. This was especially noticeable among Year 1 pupils. Pupils are encouraged to develop their reading through participation in drama. A good example was seen in Year 3 when two pupils read text arising from the fairy story 'Rumpelstiltskin' in the form of a play script. In each class, there is usually a regular, daily reading session, which is helping to improve standards. The biggest handicap to improving reading skills more is the limited range of reading texts for higher attaining and older pupils.
118. Writing is well below the expected standard at the end of Year 2 and in Year 5. There are weaknesses in grammar and punctuation, and the quality of handwriting and presentation is often poor. However, the most important weaknesses are that pupils' writing lacks excitement, imagination and contains a limited vocabulary. The writing opportunities presented do not engage pupils, and many of the older pupils find English tedious. There are examples of improvement, as is evident in some of the work in Years 1, 3 and 5. There is a good pace to the work of pupils in these classes and they are making good progress. Pupils write using a satisfactory range of different styles and formats, but rarely is the amount produced sufficient. Good writing does occur, for example about Martin Luther King, Sojourner Truth and Nelson Mandela. The vocabulary used by pupils is quite narrow and unexciting. The work of most pupils contains errors in grammar and spelling mistakes, reflecting the poor speaking skills. Writing across the curriculum is not developed sufficiently to enhance the skills being learnt in lessons. Basic punctuation, such as capital letters, full stops and question marks, is usually used accurately.
119. Handwriting is practised regularly and pupils in Year 2 are making appropriate progress towards using a joined script. In the handwriting books, this work is often neat but, throughout the school, many pupils show poor control of pencils and pens and this results in letters that are not consistent in size or formed accurately. Most pupils do not maintain the standard seen in practice books in their other work and some presentation is untidy. There are examples of neat, carefully presented work, including work of lower attaining pupils, but these are not the norm. Although writing skills are carefully taught, teachers do not consistently use a joined script when writing on the board or marking pupils' work, including when reminding them to use a joined writing.
120. Standards of spelling are just below average in much of the school. The regular teaching of spelling and spelling rules is having a positive result. During Year 2, simple words are usually spelt correctly. Teachers use word and sentence work satisfactorily to reinforce accurate spelling of individual words, and pupils are increasingly transferring this knowledge to their other writing.
121. The quality of teaching is good, and there are examples of teaching that is very good. None less than satisfactory was seen during the inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily, although it has not yet been modified to meet the school's particular needs. In virtually every case, the length of English sessions exceeds the recommended hour, sometimes significantly. This results in literacy being developed and used to a limited extent in some other subjects. Extra time is also provided for reading, spelling, handwriting and comprehension activities.

These activities reflect the school's desire to raise pupils' literacy skills, but their impact is less than might be expected because many pupils consider the activities uninteresting. They do not, therefore, persevere and produce good quantities of work.

122. In the best examples of literacy lessons, teachers make sure that the lesson moves along at a brisk pace by varying the activities and keeping pupils alert and interested. However, the whole-class sessions at the end of lessons to review what has been learnt are not used consistently. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are supported very well by adults within class or in groups withdrawn for specific help. They are encouraged to make responses and, in the group activities, they are challenged very well. The standard of planning varies too much from class to class. In the best examples, the work matches pupils' levels of ability well, but in other less successful examples, the planning lacks sufficient detail. There are occasions when pupils have to sit and listen for too long and this sometimes results in restlessness and inattention.
123. The quality of learning varies but is usually good. Pupils learn effectively when they are challenged, such as in the Year 1 lesson when the book 'By the Stream' was used to develop an understanding of the sequence of events in the story. Similarly, interest and involvement in a Year 3 lesson about the distinction between prose and a play script was brought about because of the teacher's skilful use of resources. At other times, such as in a Year 4 lesson in which pupils were being encouraged to deduce the characteristics of individuals from the text of a story, insufficient resources limited pupils' progress. The quality of marking varies too much from class to class. In the best examples, such as in Year 3, it is detailed and contains comments that praise pupils or suggest ways in which they can improve. Occasionally, specific targets are set but, generally, pupils are unaware of how they can improve because they are uncertain of where they are. In these cases, targets are too general and not aimed at improvement through achievable targets.
124. Satisfactory use is made of the skills pupils have learned in literacy lessons in other areas of the curriculum. History does make a good contribution for older pupils such as when writing about civil rights campaigners. However, little reference is made for pupils to link what they have learnt in English to their work in other subjects. Some appropriate use is made of information and communication technology, but this is not very extensive. Older pupils wordprocessed Nelson Mandela's comments about his life and displayed them as speech bubbles. The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development. It introduces them to poetry and, in Year 1, the teacher encouraged pupils to reflect how one of the story characters might have felt following the problems that had been caused.
125. The co-ordinator leads the subject effectively. There has been a good analysis of current strengths and weaknesses, and the co-ordinator recognises some of the improvements that need to be put in place, including how to meet the needs of pupils in Years 5 and 6. A satisfactory range of assessment procedures is in place, including reading tests and the use of annual optional tests for reading and writing. These are used well to track the progress of individual pupils, but the information has not been used to any great extent to review and modify current provision. There are plans in place to increase the opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor lessons and to scrutinise pupils' work. Resources are currently adequate, but need to be developed to meet the greater needs of pupils in Years 5 and 6, and to provide more exciting reading materials.

MATHEMATICS

Strengths

- Pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 when compared with those of similar schools are well above average.
- Pupils make good progress in numeracy in Years 1 to 5.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes and behave well in lessons.
- Teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines in their planning and this helps lessons to be interesting and motivating.

Area for improvement

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their knowledge and understanding of number in other areas of the curriculum.

126. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were reported to be satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and Year 3. Standards have been maintained since then and are about average by the end of Year 2 and in Year 5. The 2002 national test results for pupils aged seven show that, when compared with those of similar schools, pupils' standards are well above average. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls or pupils from different minority ethnic groups. The results of school and national tests and assessments indicate that pupils make good progress in mathematics in Years 1 to 5 and that most achieve average standards. An analysis of school data shows that pupils who stay at the school for their entire primary career make particularly good progress. A scrutiny of current work and the results of optional national tests, and discussions with pupils, indicate that most pupils in Year 2 are working in line with national expectations. The majority of pupils in Year 5 are working at the level expected nationally, with a significant minority working below that level.
127. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily throughout the school. It is providing teachers with clear guidance on what they might expect from their pupils and this, in turn, is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
128. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy mathematics lessons and contribute eagerly to teachers' challenging questions. The teacher uses resources well to motivate pupils and encourage them to participate. She makes mathematics learning fun for them, giving them confidence to try to answer. Year 1 pupils count accurately to 30. They add numbers together and use the correct symbols, recording them in exercise books. They form their figures clearly and co-operate well as they use number lines to solve and record simple addition sums. In Year 2, pupils are very keen and respond enthusiastically to their teacher's questions. They refer to a number line to help them solve problems. They learn to count in fives and tens to 100 and do so with increasing accuracy. Pupils use coins to make amounts to £1 and develop an understanding of place value. They name two-dimensional and three-dimensional

shapes and begin to describe some of their properties with the correct mathematical vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils explain how to recognise a pentagon 'because you count all the five sides'.

129. Teachers help pupils well to develop problem-solving skills. For example, a box of mixed shapes was presented to pupils in a Year 2 class. The teacher asked: 'How do you think we could put these into sets?' A higher attaining pupil answered: 'We could find all the circles first, then the squares. Is that it?' The same pupil did not use this strategy when sorting pentagons and hexagons. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their developing problem-solving skills in other subjects of the curriculum such as science and information and communication technology.
130. Pupils in Year 3 work competently with three-digit numbers, identifying the value of each number. This work is well within the capabilities of many of them. Pupils make good progress in devising quick methods of learning multiplication tables and have great fun doing so. Their positive attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to the good progress that they make. In Year 4, pupils are encouraged to understand and use negative numbers. An average attaining pupil was able to work out their own sequence, for example: 8, 4, 0 -4 , -8 . In Year 5, pupils are challenged to describe the methods used to reach answers. This is helpful to other pupils with their calculations. For example, when telling the class how he had achieved his answer to the problem '60 divided by 5', a pupil said: 'I can't remember the word for it but I used the 5 times table.' 'Yes', replied teacher, 'you worked the inverse rule.'
131. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 are appropriately challenged and pleased with their success as they begin to understand the concepts involved. Year 5 pupils work confidently in the four rules of number. They understand fractions, percentages and decimal fractions as well as the properties of shape. In Years 1 to 5, there is insufficient recorded evidence in their exercise books of pupils being given the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding to real situations to consolidate their learning and understanding and to make activities relevant.
132. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported in all classes. Special needs pupils are mostly taught in ability groups and receive additional help from either the class teacher or, more often, the learning support assistant. This support is very effective as the assistants are well prepared and focus on the learning objectives, as a result the pupils respond very well to the extra support they receive. For example, during a Year 5 lesson, special needs pupils were given white boards on which to write their calculations. This helped them to work confidently and achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language are sometimes helped in groups withdrawn from the class. For example, four Year 4 pupils were observed working on mental oral work with the English as an additional language teacher. The very good quality of the resources and the strong emphasis on correct vocabulary made a significant contribution to the good progress pupils made during their time with her.
133. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good throughout the school. They enjoy mathematics and the sense of achievement when answers are correct. Teachers work hard to build pupils' self-esteem by praising their efforts and achievements. Pupils respond positively to this encouragement. Year 4 pupils need constant

reminders about their behaviour, but when activities are stimulating and interesting, they work hard and concentrate well. Analysis of pupils' work shows that most take care and presentation overall is satisfactory.

134. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There are instances of excellent teaching in Year 5. In the best lessons, activities match pupils' different needs and pupils move on in their learning at a good pace. However, levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently demanding, and this slows the progress that these pupils make. A consistently good feature of teaching across the school is the effective use of resources, such as number lines, counting sticks and white boards and pens, which allows pupils to be active participants in lessons, maintaining their levels of concentration. In the most successful teaching, the purpose of the lesson is made clear to pupils at the start. This means that pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Good use is then made of the final session of the lesson, when the purpose is reviewed with the whole class, so that both teacher and pupils know whether or not they have achieved the objectives. This good practice is not followed consistently by all teachers.
135. Good lessons start with a brisk review of previous work and a short session devoted to developing pupils' mental skills. Pupils often show each other and their teacher answers to mental calculation on white boards so that teachers can pin-point any pupils experiencing difficulties. The pace and timing of most lessons is satisfactory with a good amount of time allocated for pupils to carry out independent tasks. Occasionally, teachers talk to pupils for too long and, as a result, pupils lose concentration, become restless and do not have time to complete their tasks. In the very best lessons, pupils are invited to explain their strategies to the rest of the class, which helps to clarify their thinking. In an excellent lesson, the teacher was enthusiastic and shared her feelings with the class. 'I am really enjoying myself, how about you? Shall we do more? Good. Let us get on.'
136. Learning support assistants make a considerable contribution to pupils' achievements. They usually work with lower attaining pupils. They emphasise the use of appropriate vocabulary and reinforce the teaching points that have been made. Learning support assistants are positive in their approach. They sit with pupils at the beginning of the lesson, quietly explaining teaching points as they are made. As a result, pupils are more confident and better prepared to tackle written and practical tasks as the lesson progresses.
137. Most teachers use assessments of pupils' attainments information well to plan activities that focus on the weaknesses they have identified. Good use of questions at the start and end of lessons also enables teachers to make quick judgements about what pupils have learnt. Teachers do not, however, share this information often enough with pupils and involve them in setting targets for progress and achievement. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality. A few teachers mark well by encouraging pupils, identifying their mistakes and indicating clearly how they might overcome them. However, much of the marking is restricted to ticks and a positive comment.
138. Teachers plan their work carefully. Detailed termly and weekly plans provide a steady development of pupils' skills between year groups and key stages. There is generally a good coverage of the required areas of learning. The exception to this is

data handling, where coverage is inconsistent and varies from class to class. Information and communication technology makes only a limited contribution to pupils' learning.

139. The headteacher is the mathematics co-ordinator and has had the responsibility for the past two years. She has a very clear vision of how standards might be raised further. Analysis of data from statutory and optional assessments has worked well to identify weaknesses in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Some monitoring has taken place in the form of observing teaching and work scrutiny. The co-ordinator has useful plans to formalise the monitoring and evaluation of standards and the quality of teaching and learning so that it is a regular feature of her practice.

SCIENCE

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities are missed to provide higher attaining pupils with more demanding activities because there are too many whole-class lessons.
- Pupils' work is not always sufficiently neat and tidy.

140. In 2002, by the end of Year 2, attainment recorded in teacher assessments was below the national average. The results indicated that most pupils achieved the expected Level 2 but very few pupils achieved the higher Level 3. There was no difference in the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standard in each attainment target. There were no significant differences in the attainments of boys or girls or pupils from different minority ethnic groups. The performance of the present Year 2 pupils indicates that attainment is similarly below average, but with a slightly higher percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Standards attained by the present Year 5 pupils are below average overall. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 5 from a low level of attainment on entry into the nursery and reception.
141. During Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in their acquisition of knowledge and in the development of skills. This is due mainly to the good quality of teaching and learning. A high proportion of pupils has special educational needs, and many are at the early stages of English language acquisition, factors which tend to hinder the progress made by these pupils. However, teachers work hard with special needs and English as an additional language teaching staff and learning support assistant colleagues to provide additional support for pupils. As a result, pupils gain a satisfactory knowledge and understanding across all areas of science. For example, Year 1 pupils are familiar with the five senses. They know about the conditions necessary for a seed to grow into a healthy plant. In a lesson for Year 1 pupils about light and dark, a learning support assistant worked with a pupil with language communication difficulties. Her quiet, sensitive support made sure that the pupil was fully involved in all the activities and made a similar rate of progress to that of the other pupils in the class.
142. Year 2 pupils know about some of the constituents of healthy eating and are developing a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the forces required to

move objects. A class of Year 2 pupils was observed taking part in an investigation to establish which forces were needed to move a selection of toys such as a car, a pushchair and a vacuum cleaner. The teacher maintained pupils' concentration well by asking them questions as they moved from toy to toy. A member of the English as an additional language support staff worked with some of the pupils, helping them to use appropriate scientific vocabulary as they pushed and pulled the toys. The range of understanding in the class was wide. Special needs and lower attaining pupils found difficulty in deciding what force was moving a carriage attached to an engine being pushed along. A higher attaining pupil knew that gravity pulls objects back to earth.

143. During Years 3 to 5, satisfactory progress is maintained because teachers generally plan a range of interesting practical activities for pupils, which sustains interest and concentration in lessons. Co-operation between class teachers, special needs and English as an additional language staff continues to be successful in including all pupils in the activities planned. In a good lesson for Year 3 pupils, the teacher introduced pupils to new work on materials with a lively whole-class discussion about 'properties'. She related much of this to pupils' own experiences, and this helped them to take part keenly in the lesson. By careful use of questioning, she encouraged pupils to offer a range of scientific vocabulary, such as 'flexible' and 'rigid', 'fragile' and 'strong', and other less scientific, but equally descriptive, vocabulary such as 'stretchy' and 'squashy'. Pupils' learning was consolidated by a well planned task, in which each pupil was given a label with a property of a material written on it and had to place it in an appropriate position in the classroom. This simple but effective activity promoted good levels of discussion as pupils talked with each other about the task. During the lesson, a small group of pupils was withdrawn by the English as an additional language teacher and benefited from very good teaching which extended pupils' knowledge and understanding of the key vocabulary used in the main lesson.
144. Year 5 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the functions of the main organs of the body and healthy lifestyles. There is a small minority of pupils that achieves standards in their work above those expected for pupils of their age. However, the standard of recording results of investigations and pupils' ability to make predictions and draw conclusions from results is below average overall. One reason for this is that pupils are not always aware of what it is they need to do to improve or are set targets to achieve by their teachers.
145. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but lacks consistency. Of the six lessons seen during the inspection, two were very good, three were good and one was poor. There are variations in teachers' subject knowledge, the methods used in lessons and the management of pupils. The very good lessons are characterised by interesting, motivating activities that are matched closely to the different levels of need amongst pupils. For example, in a Year 5 lesson about living things, the teacher had planned a wide range of activities, ranging from studying plant and animal specimens to watching a video of a baby moving in its mother's womb, which kept all pupils interested and keen to participate throughout the lesson. In the poor lesson in Year 4, a lack of subject knowledge and uninspiring activities led to restlessness and lack of concentration from many pupils and they made very little progress.
146. Teachers rely too much on whole-class methods to teach science. This method is useful at times, particularly when a new theme is being introduced, or more commonly as part of a complete lesson at the beginning and the end. Teachers' planning shows that there is insufficient variation in the activities planned to match pupils' needs and this hinders the progress made by higher and average attaining pupils in particular. Activities for lower attaining, special needs and English as an additional language pupils are more often adjusted to suit their abilities or stage of

language development but even these pupils often tackle the same task as all other pupils in the class.

147. The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and has not had time to make an impact on pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning. However, she has already made an accurate analysis of need. She recognises that there is not enough challenge for higher attaining pupils in teachers' planning. The co-ordinator is aware that this is mainly because information gained from tests and assessments of pupils' achievements is not analysed rigorously enough in order to identify areas for improvement. She has useful plans to encourage pupils' literacy and numeracy skills more effectively in the way investigations are recorded.

ART AND DESIGN

Strengths

- Teachers make good links with other subjects, which increases pupils' interest and involvement.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of materials and media with which to experiment.

Area for improvement

- There are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

148. Standards in art and design are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and in Year 5. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. During the inspection only two lessons were timetabled. This is because some classes teach art and design alternatively with design and technology. Judgements are made additionally on a scrutiny of pupils' work, a study of work on display, pupils' sketchbooks, teachers' planning and interviews with Year 5 pupils.
149. In Year 1, pupils make good progress and achieve well because of the wide range of opportunities planned for them to experience different materials and media. For example, they explore different types of materials to make a collage. They enjoy the feel of different fabrics and carefully choose colours of paper to complement the fabrics, finishing their design with bright coloured materials or feathers. Art is linked well to other subjects and this helps to make activities relevant for pupils. They study materials and their properties in science and then become creative with the materials in art. Another effective link is made with literacy and listening to stories. Pupils work with paint to make puppets for the 'Gingerbread Man' story and illustrate their extended writing with pictures. Pupils use pencils well to draw self-portraits, paying

great attention to detail and including such features as eyelashes and nostrils. They use information and communication technology effectively to create colourful pictures using a computer paint program.

150. In Year 2, pupils further develop their observational skills. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and encourage them to look closely at shape, colour and design. For example, in one Year 2 class, pupils drew body movements in charcoal after making a jointed model in science. Pupils made commendable efforts in sketching movement such as running, hopping and walking. They used different types of paper very effectively when creating collage portraits. Great attention was paid to the colour of skin, hair and eyes. In another Year 2 class, pupils learnt how to use a frame to look through and to draw what they actually saw.
151. Pupils make good progress in their ability to draw people more accurately in Year 3 as a result of good skills and technique teaching. For example, pupils were observed learning how to sketch people using a 'sausage and circles' method to look carefully at size and proportion. They drew pictures of a good standard of two pupils, carefully showing the relationship of one to the other. There are examples of bright imaginative art, particularly in Year 4, where pupils had been studying work on the surrealist art movement. They looked at an eye and designed one using surrealist techniques. They painted a design and made three separate blocks for printing, one for each colour. They printed on different types of paper to create different effects of smooth and roughness. Pupils had worked hard over a number of weeks using bright contrasting colours. In Year 5, pupils show immaturity in their art work. For example, they found imagining a magic box to draw very difficult. The teacher knew her pupils well and was aware that they might find the tasks challenging. To help them, she had brought many examples for pupils to sketch and this helped some pupils to achieve well. Knowledge of the work of famous artists is poor. Pupils could name Van Gogh but could not name any of his works or recall any subject of his work.
152. Pupils' attitudes to art and design work are mainly good. In Year 1, pupils talk positively and proudly about their work. They explain in great detail how they carried out the work. Year 4 pupils show enthusiasm for the surrealists but the oldest pupils want their work to be perfect and become disappointed with their own efforts. When they complete work that they know is good, they talk about their efforts enthusiastically.
153. In the lessons seen, teaching was good. Tasks provided different levels of challenge for different pupils. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and give them lots of support to help them achieve well. Pupils benefit from visits to an art gallery and from visits by professional artists who work alongside them in lessons.
154. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. The national art and design scheme of work has been successfully adopted and there are useful plans to adapt its content to suit the needs of pupils at St Mark's. Opportunities to observe her colleagues at work in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are limited. Assessment procedures are in the early stages of development. The school does not keep a portfolio of work to show teachers the standards that can be achieved by different groups of pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- Pupils are developing a good awareness of the designing and making process.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils benefit from their teachers' good subject knowledge.

Area for improvement

- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are too informal to be as useful as they need to be.

155. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and in Year 5. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. However, since then, the scheme of work has been adjusted in line with current national guidelines, the range of tools and materials has been extended and pupils benefit from regular well-planned opportunities to design, make and evaluate models and products. Standards are no better than last time because the subject has not been the focus of a major whole-school review of provision and the quality of teaching and learning during a period when the school has given close attention to the implementation of national literacy and numeracy initiatives.
156. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan interesting activities that fully involve pupils and effectively capture their interest and imagination. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their work and are proud of the models they make. By the end of Year 2, pupils generate ideas confidently and have a satisfactory understanding of the process of designing and making. For example, a study of pupils' past work shows that Year 1 pupils worked hard to create colourful and imaginative decorations, with cress seeds growing on top of papier-mâché heads. Pupils benefited in this activity from a successful combination of design and technology and science as they also learned about living things. Year 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, made satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of fastenings as they designed and made houses.
157. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher successfully maintained pupils' interest and motivation by planning a series of short activities linked to the overall theme of designing and making photograph frames. After a short discussion about what makes objects stand up without falling over, the pupils went outside to observe and talk about how some objects, such as a climbing frame, were supported. Back in the classroom, pupils drew simple diagrams of some of the support methods they had observed. Then, the teacher shared a collection of different types of photograph frames with the pupils. Levels of discussion and involvement were good as pupils offered views and opinions about the different methods of support and the style of decoration. The way that pupils' interest was sustained during the lesson made a significant contribution to the progress pupils made and they achieved well as a result.
158. Pupils make particularly good progress in their knowledge and understanding of how to make models with moving parts. The past work of Year 3 pupils shows some complex models of good quality. 'Moving Monsters' made with simple pneumatic systems demonstrated imagination and innovation in the design and make process.
159. Pupils benefit from a range of helpful worksheets which guide their research and design activities. For example, Year 4 pupils were observed studying a range of different style purses. Their teacher had provided a helpful school-produced

worksheet on which pupils could make sketches and observations about their findings. This gave particularly good guidance to pupils with special educational needs and they achieved well as a result. Teachers recognise that many pupils with weak literacy skills benefit from the practical nature of design and technology activities as there is less need to write at length than there is for other subjects. However, pupils are not encouraged to use sketchbooks in which to complete their designs, which would help them to refer back to original designs and give them some indication of how they improve over time. The amount of written comment, labelling and lists of materials is limited in pupils' design and technology work in Years 1 to 5 and, as a result, opportunities to promote pupils' writing skills, and those of pupils with English as an additional language in particular, are missed.

160. Assessment procedures are largely informal. Teachers plan work and support for pupils carefully. Teachers are familiar with the national guidelines and have a good knowledge and understanding of what pupils should be able to achieve at respective ages and abilities. However, the lack of more formal assessment procedures means that lessons tend to be whole-class in method, with not enough demanded of higher attaining pupils in particular, which means that they underachieve.
161. The subject is co-ordinated at present on a temporary basis by the headteacher. She has accurately identified areas for future development such as assessment and the development of a portfolio of annotated work samples to provide teachers with good ideas and an overview of standards. The subject is linked well to work in other curriculum areas such as art and design and science, but opportunities are missed to further promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils benefit from a good range of materials and equipment for use in lessons.

GEOGRAPHY

Strength

- Pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge.

Area for improvement

- Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently by their tasks.

162. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. However, additional evidence was gathered from a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and a discussion with Year 5 pupils, which was sufficient to judge that pupils' standards of attainment are in line with those expected by the ages of seven and ten. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.
163. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a sound understanding of the features of the seaside when studying an imaginary place. They learn to use geographical vocabulary, such as cave, beach and rock, in their work. They enjoy learning about the seaside. In an excellent interactive classroom display created by their teacher, Barnaby Bear sits on a deckchair on an imaginary beach created in a seed tray! Inspired, one pupil wrote: 'I went to Brutten, I want to swim in the water.' In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils learnt their home addresses and began their mapping skills by looking at a map of the local area and identifying the location of the school.

164. Year 5 pupils have learnt that water is a universal need. They draw and label the movement of water within the school. One pupil wrote: 'When clouds cool, they drop water onto the hills. When the tap is turned, the water shoots out.' Pupils showed great interest in their work. They reported where the main stopcock for the school was situated, after the site manager had shown them where it was during their research into the flow of the school's water system. They knew the function of the stopcock, remembering the exact words used by the site manager. Year 4 pupils tried to identify reasons people would look for when choosing a new location to settle. They remembered what they had learnt in previous history lessons about the Roman settlement of Britain and applied this knowledge well to their task. They knew that settlements needed to be near water but not too close because of flooding.
165. Pupils' attitudes to geography are satisfactory amongst all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. It is particularly good in Years 1 and 2 where teachers capture pupils' interest immediately at the start of a lesson. This is achieved partly by the introduction of interesting and motivating resources. In Years 3 to 5, pupils' attitudes and responses are more variable. In one lesson, a significant number of pupils were rude and disrespectful to the class teacher. They were disinterested and preferred to talk with each other rather than participate. Year 5 pupils said that geography was one of their least favourite lessons because it was 'dull and boring'.
166. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lesson observed, in Year 1, the teacher made geography interesting and exciting for the pupils. She used the immediate locality well so that pupils could identify with what the teacher said. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They encourage pupils to develop their observational skills and relate these to map work. Pupils' knowledge of more distant places and cultures is promoted well through studies of a range of countries around the world. One class has made effective links with a school in Uganda where one of the pupils used to live. They write regularly to their pen friends, telling them about life in Mitcham. Teachers focus well on key words in their lesson planning. This is helpful to all pupils, and to pupils with English as an additional language in particular. Reinforcement of key words helps all pupils to be fully involved in lessons. Less attention is paid to the needs of higher attaining pupils, who often work on tasks that are the same for the rest of the pupils in the class.
167. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She has led staff well in adopting the national geography scheme of work but its content has not been reviewed or evaluated to determine its appropriateness for pupils at the school. Information and communication technology is rarely used in geography. She has few opportunities to observe her colleagues teaching in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development, but staff have begun to record progress and to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses to help raise standards. A residential excursion for Year 4 pupils enriches the geographical curriculum and is a good feature of provision.

HISTORY

Strengths

- Pupils in Years 1 to 5 are developing good levels of knowledge about historical events.
- Good use is made of the subject to promote pupils' cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- The time allocated to history is lower than might be expected.
- Historical enquiry skills are not promoted sufficiently well.
- Not enough is demanded of higher attaining pupils.

168. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and in Year 5 is similar to that expected nationally. This is similar to that reported during the previous inspection for pupils in Years 2 and 3. Curricular planning has improved by the use of national guidance. However, there is still the need to modify this to meet the school's particular needs. The time allocated to history is rather low. Pupils' work tends to focus on historical facts but the development of historical skills is more limited. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills to describe some historical events and people. Effective use of a 'big book' about Guy Fawkes resulted in Year 2 pupils becoming familiar with the events that led to bonfire night celebrations. In another Year 2 class, very good teaching made a significant contribution to developing pupils' understanding about the use of historical evidence.
169. The development of pupils' historical knowledge and some good use of literacy skills are evident in Years 3 to 5. Visits to museums and use of the local area, such as when studying World War Two, help to maintain pupils' interest in history. Attainment in Year 5 is about the expected standard, however pupils' knowledge is better developed than their skills. Pupils in Year 3 know about the Romans, including some of the features of their life and how they invaded much of Europe. Similarly, Year 4 pupils know about life in Ancient Egypt such as the use of hieroglyphs to communicate. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote their names correctly using either Roman lettering or hieroglyphs. Pupils in Year 5 record satisfactorily some of the main events during the Victorian era.
170. The use of pupils' literacy skills is satisfactory, but the amount of writing is often limited and the range of styles used is not extensive. Numeracy skills are not used satisfactorily to help pupils develop an understanding of chronology and the passing of time. Timelines, both on displays and in pupils' books, are not accurate mathematically. The subject contributes very well to the school's provision for cultural development. Particularly detailed work displayed in the hall showed a good understanding about campaigners for civil rights in America and South Africa, including Martin Luther King, Sojourner Truth and Nelson Mandela. This work also involved the effective use of pupils' information and communication technology skills.
171. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with occasions when it is better than this. In the best lesson in a Year 2 class, the teacher's very good subject knowledge ensured pupils learnt about using historical evidence, as well as gaining facts. Pupils listen well, but their verbal contributions are quite limited. At times, teachers talk at length and questions limit opportunities for discussion. Only in the best lessons are pupils encouraged to co-operate, share resources and discuss what they have found out. In most lessons, there is little variation in the tasks set. However, the effective support of learning support staff and the presence of additional teachers

help to ensure pupils with learning difficulties or those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. In most lessons, pupils are well behaved and interested in the work but, if sat on the carpet for too long, some pupils become less attentive and restless.

172. The subject has not had a high profile recently, but it is well managed by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She has few opportunities to observe her colleagues at work in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. However, she is aware of the main strengths and weaknesses of the subject, and understands the need to develop the curricular guidance further and establish more secure assessment procedures. She recognises that further resources will be required to extend pupils in Years 5 and 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Strength

- Pupils use information and communication technology equipment confidently and generally make satisfactory progress in the development of basic computing skills.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils do not have sufficient access to computers.
- The subject is not used well enough to support pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum.

173. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' standards and progress were reported to be unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard since then to improve levels of provision and pupils' standards. The curriculum has been successfully reviewed to meet current national requirements, teacher training has taken place and resources updated and extended. As a result, pupils are making better progress than before in basic computing skills. Standards are now slightly below average by the ages of seven and ten. Standards are no better mainly because of the limited amount of time each week that pupils have access to a computer.
174. By the end of Year 2, most pupils handle the mouse confidently and competently control a cursor on the screen to run programs. They wordprocess simple sentences using shift, full stop and the space bar. Higher attaining pupils change text size and fonts, print and save their work. Most Year 5 pupils access a program on a computer, save and retrieve work from disk. However, the skills of the older pupils in particular are not as advanced as might be expected because pupils do not have enough time each week to practise and refine their skills. This is partly due to there being one computer per class of pupils, but is also due to opportunities being missed in teachers' planning to promote pupils' learning through information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum.
175. On the occasions when pupils were observed using computers during the inspection, pupils had good attitudes to their work and enjoyed what they were doing. For example, Year 2 pupils worked in pairs using a paint program. The program was very effective in developing pupils' control of the mouse and the cursor. Pupils concentrated very hard as they tried to draw figures and shapes, fill them in with a variety of colours and print out the results. Year 5 pupils showed considerable interest

and keenness as they used computers during lunchtime, confidently following on-screen instructions in a logic program.

176. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Programs used by pupils mainly support learning in literacy and numeracy and this has been successful over time in extending pupils' learning in spelling, sentence construction and number facts. Up until recently, teachers have tended to teach a skill to pupils in small groups and then provide computer access to pupils on a rota basis over a period of time for the skill to be practised. Teachers show good levels of subject knowledge as a result of recent training and pupils benefit from their expertise when skills are taught. However, there are long periods of the week in most classes when computers are not switched on, or are on but are not being used. Consequently, too much time elapses between a pupil being taught a skill and an opportunity to practise it. For example, in most literacy lessons in most classes during the inspection, computers were not in use.
177. The school has been aware of these shortcomings for some time and action to rectify the situation has been good. A computer suite has been installed with fifteen up-to-date workstations, and much of this work has been helped by the hiring of the services of computer technicians. The suite was not fully operational during the period of the inspection, but Year 5 pupils were observed being introduced to the suite and its equipment. They worked excitedly in pairs to wordprocess rules for the use of the suite.
178. Lower attaining pupils, pupils with special needs and pupils with English as an additional language benefit from the use of computers in lessons or in groups withdrawn from the classroom. In this way, information and communication technology is used well to support learning and helps special needs and English as an additional language pupils in particular to make good progress towards targets set for them by teachers. Information and communication technology is not used well enough across the curriculum to support other subjects, largely because of shortages of hardware and software.
179. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard, in conjunction with the headteacher and governors, to establish the computer suite in order to raise standards. She has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' standards and has useful plans to address these during the current academic year. For example, all the software recommended in the national guidelines has been installed on the computers in the new suite in order to help staff use information and communication technology more effectively to promote pupils' learning across the curriculum. She has few opportunities to observe her colleagues at work in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

MUSIC

Strengths

- Pupils perform confidently and with considerable enjoyment.
- A significant number of pupils benefit from instrumental tuition.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The subject is used well to promote pupils' personal and cultural development.

Area for improvement

- Opportunities are missed to promote pupils' spiritual development.

180. Standards in music by the end of Year 2 and in Year 5 are average and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection, with the exception of singing, where standards have improved and are now average. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress throughout the school. A significant number of pupils achieve well in learning to play the recorder or violin. Effective use is made of visits by musicians, visits to concerts and participation in musical activities with other schools to stimulate pupils' interest in making music. The subject makes a significant contribution to the progress made by pupils with English as an additional language in extending their vocabulary and diction.
181. Standards of singing are satisfactory overall, an improvement on the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. In lessons and assemblies, pupils sing tunefully with a good awareness of dynamics such as 'loud' and 'soft'. Teachers encourage pupils to sing words clearly and they explain the meaning of words to pupils. This is particularly helpful to pupils with English as an additional language in extending their knowledge and understanding of words in an enjoyable and meaningful way. Pupils do not always sing with as much volume as might be expected. Although this helps to make sure that they do not spoil the tuneful way in which they sing by shouting, there are occasions, for example, when pupils sing hymns or songs in more than one part, when more volume would help the performance. Pupils know a wide range of songs and hymns and take part in those that involve actions with considerable enjoyment. The school choir is well attended and pupils benefit from opportunities to sing in concerts at school, and to senior citizens in the local community.
182. Pupils' standards of composing and performing are broadly in line with expectations. A class of Year 2 pupils was observed working in groups to compose an accompaniment to a song, using unpitched percussion instruments. With very few exceptions, pupils worked well together, discussing what they should do and listening to each other play. Pupils benefited from being given the responsibility and trust by their teacher to organise their own learning in this way. Pupils then performed their compositions to the rest of the class. Their teacher encouraged them to listen carefully, not only to when others were playing, but at the beginning of the lesson as the teacher introduced the song. The teacher moved the lesson on at a good pace and had high expectations of what pupils could achieve. As a result, pupils of all abilities made good progress in their composing and performing skills.
183. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers manage pupils well and very little time is lost in lessons. For example, in a lesson for Year 3 pupils, the teacher had planned a variety of activities related to promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of duration and timbre and their listening skills. By moving pupils on from one activity to the next, she successfully maintained their interest and motivation

throughout the lesson. A song featured in the lesson was about Robin Hood and contained some old English words and phrases. The teacher spent some time discussing with pupils who Robin Hood was and the meaning of the words. This was helpful to all pupils, but especially those with English as an additional language, and pupils from different cultures, who were unfamiliar with the story of 'Robin Hood and his Merry Men'. Useful opportunities were provided for pupils to make observations and comments about the song. One pupil commented: 'It makes me feel like marching.'

184. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise varies so that not all teachers know how to improve the quality of music such as when to breathe in singing or how to improve a composition. Teachers make effective use of a recently introduced commercial scheme of work, which contains lesson plans and a wide range of recorded music on compact disks and this helps to support less confident members of staff. By following this scheme throughout the school, teachers provide coverage of all the required areas of learning and pupils benefit from a progressive development of their skills from Year 1 to Year 5. However, this means that there are times when the content does not always meet pupils' needs if the set plan is not adjusted. For example, in a lesson for Year 4 pupils, too much time was devoted to one singing activity. The class contains a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and many of these pupils soon lost interest as a result. There was a problem with the CD player during the lesson, which the teacher overcame very well, but there was not enough variety in the activities to maintain motivation and concentration.
185. Teachers make good use of the subject to promote pupils' personal development. By encouraging pupils to perform in front of others, either individually or in groups, teachers successfully develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. A very good example of this was seen in the nursery, where a group of pupils with English as an additional language sang songs to each other. There are occasions in lessons when opportunities are missed to use music to promote pupils' spiritual development, mainly by encouraging pupils to talk about how music affects their emotions.
186. Two co-ordinators work well as a team to provide staff with helpful guidance and support. They have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of strengths and areas for improvement through their work in organising assemblies, concerts and extra-curricular activities. They have few opportunities to observe their colleagues at work in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinators are aware that the implementation of the new commercial scheme of work needs to be evaluated at regular intervals to determine how its use is affecting standards.
187. The co-ordinators are successful in maintaining a strong emphasis on music in the life of the school. For example, 28 Year 3 to Year 5 pupils attend choir club at lunchtimes. Thirty Year 1 to Year 5 pupils receive violin lessons from a local education authority peripatetic teacher. Approximately 40 pupils attend the two lunchtime recorder clubs. The co-ordinators have made a significant contribution to maintaining the numbers of pupils involved by liaising well with parents and encouraging them to support their children's learning. Pupils benefit from increased access to a range of musical experiences such as involvement in an African

drumming session and regular music workshops. A large number of pupils attend a concert in the Festival Hall each year and a school concert is organised for parents to attend at the end of each term.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strengths

- Pupils' standards are above average by the ages of seven and ten.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The subject is used well to promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Area for improvement

- Opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to discuss how their own or others' performances might be improved.

188. Standards in physical education by the end of Years 2 and 5 are above average and are higher than those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Increasing use is made of physical education activities to successfully promote pupils' personal development. This is particularly effective in promoting many pupils' self-esteem and confidence, and especially those with special educational needs.
189. No lessons were seen in athletics or swimming during the inspection. However, evidence from gymnastics, games and dance lessons seen, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers, is sufficient to show that, by the end of Years 2 and 5, pupils of all abilities make good progress in ball skills, controlling their body movements and swimming. Boys and girls take part in lessons with equal enthusiasm and have good attitudes to physical education. Most pupils work well in pairs or larger groups, but a small minority of immature pupils in Years 1 to 5 does not readily share equipment or take turns. The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all the required areas of learning.
190. Year 2 pupils were observed in a good games lesson based on developing ball skills. The teacher made effective use of the first few minutes of the lesson as pupils changed into their physical education kit to encourage quiet, sensible behaviour and to remind pupils of health and safety routines. As a result, the lesson moved on at a good pace because there were no unnecessary interruptions and pupils performed safely on the hard playground surface. Pupils listened carefully to their teacher and tried hard to achieve the standards set. The teacher made effective use of pupils to demonstrate good practice and this helped pupils to increase their efforts to develop skills. Most pupils showed good levels of co-ordination as they threw, caught, kicked and trapped large balls. There were a few instances where a small number of pupils did not work well together in pairs, but the teacher quickly resolved the situations through firm but sensitive action. The teacher effectively used praise and encouragement throughout the lesson to motivate and encourage pupils to achieve well.
191. Year 5 pupils were observed taking part in team games in the school hall. Behaviour was very good as pupils watched their team mates competing. Those pupils who were losers showed particularly good levels of sportsmanship. The teacher at the start of the lesson established positive attributes as she discussed with pupils how to conduct themselves, especially when they were not involved in the action. Pupils

made good gains in their skills development because of the teacher's close attention to detail and the help she gave pupils to attain the high standards set. The vast majority of pupils ran, jumped and moved with good body control. Higher attaining pupils showed a good understanding of tactics by shielding a ball from an opponent or moving into a space to receive a pass.

192. The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils make good progress from Year 1 onwards because teachers plan lessons which focus on specific skills. For example, pupils achieve well in games and swimming as a result of well-planned opportunities for them to practise and refine their skills. Teachers include a wide range of activities that require co-operation, patience, sharing and taking turns, making a significant contribution to pupils' personal development as a result. All the lessons seen during the inspection were characterised by teachers working effectively to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, often by using praise and encouragement well. Lessons would have been better if teachers had given pupils more opportunities to evaluate their own or others' performances in order to promote all pupils' speaking skills, and those with English as an additional language in particular. Pupils benefit from a lesson format used consistently by all staff, which includes warm-up and cool-down sessions at the beginning and end. For example, this format was used well during a lunchtime dance club, helping pupils to prepare for their exertions during the main part of the lesson and to settle their bodies down when they had finished.
193. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She has led staff well in reviewing and revising the curriculum policy and scheme of work. She gives good advice to colleagues when they plan their lessons. The co-ordinator has worked effectively with colleagues to improve the progressive development of skills between year groups and key stages and this, coupled with continuing use of the subject to promote pupils' personal development, is mainly why standards are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. She has, however, few opportunities to observe her colleagues at work in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils benefit from a good range of resources for hall work and outside activities. Year 4 pupils gain significantly from a residential visit to an activity centre, where they take part in outdoor pursuits such as abseiling and orienteering.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Strengths

- Pupils are introduced sensitively to the wide range of faiths and religions represented in the school.
- The subject is used well to promote pupils' personal development.

Areas for improvement

- The time allocated to lessons is lower than might be expected.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are directly related to the level of teachers' subject knowledge.

194. The previous inspection indicated that pupils' work was in line with that expected in the local education authority syllabus. Pupils made satisfactory progress. The new syllabus has been introduced, but the time allocated to religious education is rather low. Pupils' work meets the standards expected and, because of the organisation of the curriculum, they are sensitively introduced to the wide range of faiths represented

in the school community. Teaching is very variable, but satisfactory overall. Currently, there is no co-ordinator for the subject.

195. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory. They know about the way some religious festivals of different faiths are celebrated, and that special meals are also prepared. This knowledge continues to extend satisfactorily during Years 3 to 5. Pupils in Year 3 have an understanding of special religious books such as the Bible or the Qur'an, and how they need to be treated with respect. They also know that different symbols are used to signify particular features of a faith such as a cross in Christianity. Pupils in Year 4 know that Jesus was born and lived in Palestine.
196. By Year 5, excellent teaching helped pupils to develop a clear understanding of Muslim beliefs. Particularly through contributions to discussions, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or for whom English is an additional language, display satisfactory understanding of the areas covered.
197. In most lessons, pupils behave well and are keen to contribute, but restlessness can develop when they are kept on the carpet for too long. Pupils' learning is directly related to the quality of teaching. Inappropriate resources, in the form of a modern atlas, meant that Year 4 pupils could not complete the task of finding where Jesus lived, because they were looking for Palestine. The subject knowledge of some teachers is insecure and, as a result, themes are not covered in the required depth. Conversely, excellent knowledge, the effective use of resources and the involvement of Year 5 pupils, ensured very rapid progress in understanding the beliefs of Muslims.
198. The curricular organisation is satisfactory, but the headteacher recognises the need to develop a scheme to reflect the school's particular characteristics. The contribution of religious education to pupils' personal development is good. The study of a range of faiths raises pupils' awareness of different cultures. Respect is promoted when pupils are encouraged to listen to other pupils talking about their beliefs and in relation to the handling of sacred texts. In Year 5, the lesson made a particularly good contribution to spiritual development as pupils considered the six beliefs of Islam. Assessment is yet to be developed to reflect the contents of the new syllabus. There are helpful plans to develop more effective assessment procedures to reflect the contents of the new syllabus.