

INSPECTION REPORT

ELLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Maidenhead

LEA area: Windsor and Maidenhead

Unique reference number: 109820

Headteacher: Mrs Rehana Juna

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Nuttall
31046

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 June 2003

Inspection number: 246938

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cookham Road Maidenhead
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Appropriate authority:	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Spear
Date of previous inspection:	2 – 5 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9528	Derek Bowers	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?
23235	Fred Riches	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, music and English as an additional language	
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, physical education, equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
13691	Barbara Burke	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ellington is a smaller than average primary school with 141 pupils on roll aged between three and eleven. There are more boys than girls. 50 children attend the nursery part-time and 12 children are in the reception class with some Year 1 pupils. There are four additional classes catering for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Almost all pupils live in the local North Town area of Maidenhead in a mix of local authority and owner-occupied homes. About 33 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is high. 84 per cent of pupils are from ethnic minorities, mainly Pakistani, and all speak English as an additional language. 77 per cent of these pupils are at an early stage and require additional support. Two pupils are recently arrived refugees and one pupil has a traveller background. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery and reception class is well below average. 42 per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is above average. 16 pupils have a statement of special educational need and this is well above the national average. The school accommodates twelve pupils in its speech and language (SPAL) resource with many of these travelling some distance to attend.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ellington is a good school with very good and excellent features. The pupils achieve well because the teaching is good with a significant proportion that is very good and at times excellent. There is excellent leadership and management provided by the headteacher and she is very well supported by the leadership team and the governors. Standards are improving from a very low starting point. The pupils have made good progress, especially since nearly all of them started school in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school is fully inclusive and ensures that all pupils are cared for very well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils of all abilities, cultures and backgrounds achieve well, especially in English.
- Teaching is good and consistently strong in the Foundation Stage.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and she is supported very well by the leadership team and the very effective governing body. Everyone associated with the school takes great pride in their links and aspire to provide the very best for pupils.
- The school is fully inclusive and ensures that all pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, have equal opportunities.
- The school's care, guidance and provision for pupils' personal development are very good, with cultural development outstanding.
- Very good lunchtime and after school activities enrich the curriculum.
- Staff supporting pupils in the speech and language resource are highly professional and very effective.
- The initiatives to involve parents in the life of the school and the contribution of the community to pupils' learning are excellent.

What could be improved

- Further improve standards in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6.
- Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) in order to raise standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in June 1997 in spite of challenges presented by problems with leadership, behaviour and substantial recruitment difficulties. Standards in national tests in Year 2 and 6 fell at first, but are improving. The quality of teaching is much better than it was. In the last two years, since the appointment of a permanent headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to address areas for development highlighted by the last inspection. Good improvement has been made in curriculum development, particularly in science where pupils have more opportunities to carry out investigations. School development planning now focuses clearly on raising standards. There have been significant improvements to the accommodation during the last two years. The staff and governor team is fully committed to Ellington and the school is in a very good position to move forward further.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E
 very low E*

(Similar schools are those with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Similar school grades on this table refer to those in the 35 – 50% band)

Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 national tests are now rising. In 2002 there was good improvement in most subjects. The table shows that standards at the end of Year 6 rose significantly in mathematics and science last year with some improvement in English. Pupils in Year 6 did particularly well in mathematics and science last year when compared to their peers in similar schools. In the last three years standards in national tests in Year 2 have been well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with similar schools, results were also well below average. These low results are due to the many pupils in Year 2 who are still in the early stages of learning English. Test data shows a significant improvement on previous years, particularly in reading and writing indicating the success of the school's focus on improving English skills.

The large majority of children starting school in the reception year are in the early stages of English language acquisition and, consequently, standards are well below average for their age. Children make very good progress in the nursery and reception class in most areas of learning but standards overall are still below those expected for their age when they finish the reception year. Infant pupils make good progress although they still achieve standards in reading and science below those expected by the end of Year 2. In writing and mathematics, pupils at the end of Year 2 are well below expected levels for their age. This is because most of them are still learning English as an additional language. Junior pupils continue to make good progress. Currently standards at the end of Year 6 are below average in science and well below average in English and mathematics. These pupils have experienced considerable instability during the majority of their junior years because of recruitment and retention problems with teaching staff. Pupils learning English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs throughout the school, make good progress because they receive effective support. Standards in art and design are now in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In most other subjects, standards are below average because of the necessary concentration on English. In music and ICT standards at the end of Year 6 are well below average. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement

about standards in music and religious education at the end of Year 2. In addition, no judgement can be made about standards achieved in religious education at the end of Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils' attitudes to learning, to school and to each other are good. The pupils try hard, are very enthusiastic and cooperate with others well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The standard of behaviour is good. This is helping pupils to make good progress in an orderly and effective learning environment.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are gaining maturity and relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils show particularly good respect for other people's values and beliefs.
Attendance	Below average. Attendance levels are below average but improving well each year. Unauthorised absence rates are too high with some families taking extended leave that results in pupils missing a great deal of time in school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

A large proportion of teaching is either good or very good and some of it is excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This is an extremely positive picture considering the significant difficulties in recruiting experienced and effective staff. In the Foundation Stage, staff work very well as a team in both nursery and reception settings. They make the classrooms and outdoor areas exciting, happy learning environments. Children respond very well to this and achieve very well in all areas of learning. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall with very good features. In one lesson seen the teaching was excellent. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is also good overall with several examples of very good teaching and learning. The teaching of literacy is very good throughout the school. Teachers have been concentrating on the priority of oracy throughout the school and this has resulted in significant improvement in speaking and listening skills. The teaching of numeracy skills is good, but there is still room for further development of the use of mathematical investigations, to help pupils apply their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills at their own level of challenge. Particular strengths in teaching include the support given to pupils' individual needs and the very good relationships teachers establish with pupils. Areas for development include the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects and more planned opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There are many opportunities for pupils to experience a range of practical and relevant activities and tasks. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills could be improved. The Foundation Stage curriculum is stimulating and improves basic skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils receive good support. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and are provided with effective support including very good provision in the speech and language resource.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The majority of pupils speak another language as well as learning English and very good provision is made for them through bilingual support, focused teaching and accurate assessments of their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Excellent provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Pupils have excellent opportunities to explore and celebrate not only the national culture and their own heritage but also the rich diversity of cultures found in the wider world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There is a very good level of care provided and highly effective assessments are used to support individual needs and ensure that all pupils make good progress.

Parents believe this is a good school and they regard what the school provides for their children highly. The school provides parents with excellent information about its work and their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher is an excellent leader, with a clear educational vision. She is very well supported by the school's leadership team. During a very difficult two years they have established a calm and positive environment, ensuring that everyone works together to achieve the best for pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors work very effectively in the best interests of the school. They use their many talents very well to best advantage. Many visit the school during the school day and all are fully involved in meetings. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. This is excellent because there are clear priorities in the school improvement plan and reviews of progress that include careful analyses of standards and effectiveness.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. There are very clear spending priorities. Finances are managed very well ensuring that the pupils benefit from the most effective resources in a positive and supportive learning environment.

The school has a very good number of appropriately qualified teachers who between them cover the age and ability range of the pupils suitably, meet the demands of the curriculum and promote effective learning. The school's very spacious premises are well maintained and now provide a very good range of facilities to support learning and the delivery of the curriculum. Resources are satisfactory overall. The recent development of the ICT suite, together with computers in all classrooms, and the new interactive whiteboard and digital projector, mean the school is now well placed to move forward with its teaching in this subject.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Their children make good progress and are well behaved • The teaching is good • The school expects children to work hard • They feel comfortable approaching the school • Leadership and management are good • New children are helped to settle into school well 	

The partnership with the parents is very strong. Inspectors agree whole-heartedly with the positive views listed above.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are now improving after an unsettled few years following the last inspection. The number of pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is significantly higher than it was when the school was last inspected and this has a major impact on the school's results. At the end of Year 2 standards are currently below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6 standards are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. This is a broadly similar to the picture at the time of the last inspection in Year 6, with improvement in reading in Year 2.

Starting school

2. When children start in the nursery their understanding, skills and knowledge are well below those expected of children this age. A large proportion of children who first start nursery, or who join the school's reception class, are at the very early stages of English language development. Nearly all have experience of another language, usually Punjabi, and there are some Urdu speaking children. Other first languages also include Arabic, Shona and Chinese. The children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes) and by the time they start in Year 1 a small minority are close to achieving the early learning goals¹ in all areas of learning², although standards are understandably still below those expected.

Standards in national tests

Year 2

3. In the six years since the last inspection standards have been well below average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 national tests. Compared with similar schools, results were well below average. Though standards in tests are low, many pupils are still developing their language skills. The results are an indication of how difficult the pupils find the tests as they have to read and interpret language which is not familiar to them at the age of seven. Consequently, very few pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in the tests, reflecting the fact that nearly all the pupils are coming to terms with spoken English, reading and writing. The test results in 2002, show significant improvement on previous years, particularly in reading and writing, although standards are still well below average by the age of seven.
4. In addition to the fact that pupils in this school are learning English as an additional language, there are other important factors that have contributed to low standards in Year 2 over the last five years. Following the last inspection there were a series of headteachers and acting headteachers in post. Many of these appointments were short-term and the school experienced great instability as a result. Several experienced and effective teachers left after the last inspection and classes were

¹ Early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage.

² The areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

then taught by a multitude of supply teachers who had great difficulty coping with the demands and challenges presented by the school. As a result, teaching declined and standards fell even further. Governors at the school had tremendous difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers and, consequently, the significant needs of the pupils were not addressed.

5. In April 2001 a new and permanent headteacher was appointed and standards have been rising steadily with last year showing the greatest improvement since the last inspection. The improvements were not fast enough to catch up with similar improvements in other schools but, nevertheless, they represent a more positive picture.

Year 6

6. Test results in Year 6 in 2002 show very good improvement and progress on previous years in mathematics and science. The results in these subjects show that standards rose to just below the national average in mathematics and in line with expected levels for science. Standards in English were well below those expected by the age of eleven but still better than the previous year. In comparison to similar schools, Year 6 pupils at Ellington achieved well above their peers in mathematics and science and only just below in English. When compared to their starting points on entry to school, pupils in Year 6 last year made very good progress.
7. There are several reasons for the recent very good improvement and these include the consistently good teaching of newly appointed staff. The headteacher's thorough monitoring of pupils' progress and the effective support established where it is most needed has also had a strong impact on raising standards.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage

8. While most children communicate appropriately for their age in their first language, mainly Punjabi, almost all children start school with very low levels of communication, language and literacy in English. This means that overall children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. As a result of very good teaching in the Foundation Stage most children make very good progress during their time in nursery and reception. The majority are on course to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning but later than is usual. Only a small proportion reach the goals by the time they start Year 1.

Years 1 and 2

9. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Standards in English and science are below average with standards in mathematics well below average. In English, standards are higher in speaking and listening and reading than they are in writing. This reflects the emphasis the school places on oracy and the teaching of reading. In mathematics, standards are highest in number work, but lower in using and applying mathematical knowledge particularly in problem solving activities. Standards in science are strong in practical investigational work. In all three subjects, there has been good improvement as a result of focused work by the school. Pupils who are more able or gifted and talented in English and mathematics are identified and challenged well. As a result, they make equally as good progress as their peers.

10. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain average standards in art and this is the same as at the time of the last inspection. Standards in most other subjects are below the national average and this is because of the school's concentration on English skills and the lack of stability in staffing until last year. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in music and religious education because of insufficient evidence.

Years 3 to 6

11. The current Year 6 has a larger proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language, including many with special educational needs, than last year's cohort. This is why standards overall are lower than standards last year. Standards this year are broadly the same as those at the time of the last inspection. These pupils have experienced considerable instability during the majority of their junior years because of recruitment and retention problems with teaching staff. In English and mathematics, standards are currently well below expected levels. In science, standards are below average. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well in English and make good progress as a result.
12. As with Year 2, standards in art are in line with average levels. In most other subjects, standards are below average, apart from in music and ICT where they are well below average, and again, this is due to the concentration on improving English skills throughout the school. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in religious education.

Target setting

13. The school, working with the local education authority, has set suitably challenging targets for pupils' performance in Year 6 tests in English and mathematics this year, which it is likely to meet.

Achievements of pupils with special educational needs

14. A significant proportion of pupils have special educational needs and this inevitably impacts on overall standards. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, including those pupils with speech and language difficulties, is good. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and pupils make good progress towards their individual targets. They also achieve well in relation to prior attainment. Support is clearly focused and teachers plan work that is appropriate for pupils with special educational needs.

Factors specific to pupils speaking English as an additional language

15. The large majority of children starting school are Punjabi speakers. On entry to the school, children's communication in their own first language is reported by bilingual staff to be variable, but overall as expected for their age. Few pupils have any experience of playgroup activities and the home culture of the large majority is not one in which the use of toys and books for play and learning is widely encouraged. The cultural background of the families is mainly that of the Mirpur district of Pakistan, where the spoken Mirpuri Punjabi dialect is the major means of communication and the written language of Urdu is not widely used in the mainly rural communities. A very small number of children speak Arabic, Shona or Chinese as their first language.

Achievement of children learning English as an additional language in the Foundation Stage

16. Most children starting the nursery therefore enter a cultural and social setting very different from that of their pre-school, home experience. Their breadth of

knowledge and understanding is very limited and their ability to express themselves in English is very poor, as hardly any families use English at home. They make very good progress in the nursery and reception settings because of the commitment of the teachers and support staff and the close communication with parents, through class teachers, nursery nurses, bilingual assistants and the bilingual headteacher. Children learning English as an additional language focus particularly on the areas of communication and language alongside personal, social and emotional education, in order to understand and settle into the English education system.

17. The children make very good progress because of the variety of experiences offered, the structured routines of the sessions and the focus on communication, but many are still working towards the early learning goals when they start Year 1.

Pupils learning English as an additional language in Years 1 to 6

18. Pupils with English as an additional language in Years 1 to 6 achieve well in speaking and listening and in basic reading skills. Their progress in writing is satisfactory, given the starting point, which is a cultural background with very little written language. Pupils' comprehension and written communication skills clearly inhibit their progress in several subjects. Only towards the end of Key Stage 2 are the skills of developing bilingual pupils sufficiently advanced for them to apply these successfully in test situations.
19. Since the last inspection, staffing and leadership upheaval has resulted in poor progress for some pupils. Prior to last year, results in national tests for the large majority of pupils learning English as an additional language had been poor. Comparisons with similar schools and with national averages, however, should be treated with caution. The stable staffing for Year 6 last year made a big impact on the ability of developing bilingual pupils in their understanding of science. While written English and mathematics tests still showed pupils underachieving, in science, the focus on spoken communication alongside practical activities followed by written recording raised standards dramatically. Pupils achieved as well as their peers nationally and achieved standards well above those in similar schools.
20. Currently, pupils throughout the school are achieving well because their learning is focused and the staff and leadership of the school are gradually winning the pupils' and families' commitment to learn. The school is on course to reach the challenging targets set for each of the oldest four year groups to achieve by the end of their time at Ellington.

Educational inclusion

21. Teachers' strategies successfully motivate all groups of pupils and enable them to participate fully in their lessons. As a result they achieve well and make good gains in their learning. In mathematics for instance, good examples were seen in all classes of all groups of pupils being provided with appropriate work and therefore being suitably challenged.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Attitudes

22. The pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons and assemblies are good. In all year groups the pupils are keen to come to school and in almost all lessons show interest and enthusiasm. Most pupils participate well in discussions and are keen

to give answers or offer information. For example, in a lesson for the reception class the children were thrilled that they had correctly recognised words beginning with the letter 'd'. The pupils also concentrate and co-operate well when they work in small groups. Concentrating well for the whole of a lesson is difficult for some pupils but they are set targets and teachers give positive encouragement to them by discussing how well they remain focused on the tasks set. Very occasionally a few pupils get over-excited but they generally settle quickly as a result of good, consistent management by the teachers.

Behaviour

23. Behaviour in lessons, registration periods and assemblies is good. This shows a very good improvement over the past two years due to a greater stability of staffing and consistent use and implementation of the behaviour policy. Positive strategies to reinforce good behaviour include popular rewards such as team points, tokens, stickers and certificates. The staff liaise closely with parents to eradicate inappropriate behaviour, following closely the procedures outlined in the behaviour policy. Behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes is good. The pupils play or talk constructively in groups and there is a friendly atmosphere. Most children are invariably polite and show respect for each other and for adults, including visitors.
24. There have been no permanent exclusions and only a single short exclusion during the previous year. The staff monitor interactions between the pupils closely and there is no evidence that bullying is a significant problem in the school. Any incidents between pupils are dealt with promptly and effectively. The pupils involved are encouraged to write down their own versions of such incidents and to suggest ways of avoiding similar situations in the future. They show honesty in their statements and this often proves to be an effective way of reinforcing expectations of good behaviour.

Relationships and Personal development

25. Relationships between all adults and pupils are very good. The staff are warm and friendly and show respect for the pupils; they are very good role models in the way they react to others positively. Overall, the relationships between the pupils are good and often very good. The pupils co-operate well in group activities in lessons and play well together at breaktimes. They are clearly aware of the impact of their actions and show respect for the views and beliefs of others.
26. In all classes the pupils take responsibility for a number of duties. The older pupils help with preparations for assemblies and have playground duties, for example, as play leaders. They perform these tasks well. The pupils respond well during discussions in assemblies and class circle times and these contribute positively to their growing maturity. The opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning are rather limited but when these arise they generally respond well.

Attitudes and behaviour of pupils learning English as an additional language

27. Pupils learning English as an additional language are developing more positive attitudes to school in the current stable staffing situation. Pupils' parents keep close contact with the headteacher about behaviour. Pupils and their parents are aware of the expectations and behaviour has improved after being reportedly poor on occasion during the period of staffing upheaval. Pupils throughout the school still find it harder to concentrate during afternoon sessions and behaviour is not as good in the dining room or in lessons after lunch as it is in morning sessions and

assemblies. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards each other during play and lunchtimes is good.

Attendance

28. Attendance is below the national average for primary schools but it has improved significantly during the current year. The level of absences is affected by the long holidays taken by a few families to visit their relatives abroad. These result in a slowing down in the progress made by the pupils involved. The improved attendance this year owes much to the hard work of the staff in monitoring absences, giving incentives for good attendance and stressing regularly to parents the importance of good attendance. Registration at the beginning of the day is prompt and thorough. Any unexplained absences are investigated the same morning. Most pupils arrive punctually for lessons each day. Late arrivals are marked clearly in the registers and any patterns of lateness are monitored closely.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

29. The overall quality of teaching is good, with either good or better teaching occurring in over four fifths of the lessons seen. In two fifths of the lessons teaching was at least very good. In two lessons it was excellent. No teaching was unsatisfactory. This is a good improvement since the last inspection where almost all teaching was either satisfactory or good and a small minority was unsatisfactory. Parents also agree that teaching is good. This is an extremely positive picture.
30. Very good lessons occur in all classes. In the last year, owing to stability in the staffing, the teaching has made good improvements, especially its impact on addressing the issues related to pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The stimulating environment provides excellent opportunities to accelerate the acquisition of language skills. Teaching is managed and organised well. A close liaison between the class teachers, specialist teachers and bi-lingual support staff, as well as joint planning sessions, enables individual pupils' needs to be discussed and catered for extremely effectively. The staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the pupils' needs. High quality and culturally relevant displays, resources and visual aids are used well throughout school. This has a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the good progress made throughout the school in the acquisition of English.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

31. Staff work very well as a team in both nursery and reception settings. They make the classrooms and outdoor areas exciting, happy learning environments. Children respond very well to this and achieve very well in all areas of learning. Nursery and reception staff show outstanding commitment in their preparation and planning. In both settings there is a good balance between structured activities and independent learning through play. This is more difficult to achieve in the reception setting as the class is a mixed Reception/Year 1 class, but the teacher ensures the balance through careful deployment of staff, creating times for all to work together and times for separate activities. Staff in the nursery ensure that children experience a balance of activities during each week, drawing children to work and play alongside them when they are directing focused teaching and assessment. Good levels of staffing ensure that adults prompt and promote conversation through giving a running commentary on the children's activities and by asking direct questions. All staff assess informally throughout the

day and show their knowledge of the children's abilities by drawing children to specific tasks occasionally. In the Reception/Year 1 class, a special needs assistant made particularly good use of a whole class session to note down assessments of children's responses.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

32. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall with very good features. In one lesson the teaching was excellent. Where teachers show secure knowledge of the subject and share their enthusiasm through positive introductions to lessons, pupils respond and learn very successfully. In one very good Year 1 science lesson, the teacher's careful planning and effective use of growing cress, enabled the pupils to discover and understand that green plants need light to grow. The pupils were clearly enjoying their teacher's company as they discovered what had happened to the cress and she made sure they felt valued as she praised their spoken comments and observations. Similarly in a Year 2 religious education lesson the teacher prepared a 'treasure box' to gain pupils' attention. Inside the box was a pearl which linked into the story of 'The wonderful pearl'. The teacher encouraged her pupils to think about special things in their lives before focusing successfully on the treasures that God has given us all. This very good preparation of resources helps to make learning relevant and interesting for pupils. Teachers work hard to affirm positive behaviour and effort by pupils, which helps those who are less motivated to focus better. The quality of pupils' art work around the school shows good examples of teachers' expectations and of the way they recognise and celebrate the effort and skills shown by the pupils in their learning.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6

33. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is also good overall with several examples of very good teaching and learning. Teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils, plan interesting tasks and manage pupils effectively. In one very good Year 6 lesson in science, the teacher led pupils to demonstrate good knowledge gained from previous lessons before discussing circuit diagrams and how these assist in building circuits for a specific purpose. She then challenged the pupils to create a burglar alarm and their enthusiastic responses demonstrated the effectiveness of her lead into this session. In many of the very good lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, it was teachers' clear expectations and the brisk pace of lessons that urged pupils to respond and focus well, maintaining concentrated effort. The small minority of pupils who find concentration difficult are handled well by teachers who recognise that a more practical approach is needed after lunch when pupils find it even harder to stay on task. Good use is made of homework tasks to support and enhance learning although the homework set is not always completed, which reduces its effectiveness.

Teaching of literacy

34. The teaching of literacy is very good throughout the school. It was particularly strong in a Year 1 lesson seen where the class teacher and the support assistant combined to present an excellent literacy session in which all pupils learned very successfully and made very good progress. Teachers give good attention to phonics and contextual reading strategies and keep thorough records of the pupils' progress. They provide thoughtful opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills within the literacy hour and in other subjects. Throughout the school teachers have been concentrating on the priority of oracy and this has resulted in significant improvement in speaking and listening skills. In lessons across the curriculum, teachers regularly plan opportunities for the pupils to discuss their

own ideas in pairs, groups and in class sessions. This not only increases the pupils' self confidence but also vastly improves their ability to speak English even though the majority are at the early stages of learning it as an additional language. Research skills are under-developed. Though pupils learn successfully through their teachers' well-planned, carefully directed lessons, they have limited opportunity to conduct and record research, in order to show their understanding by using independent study skills, either individually or collaboratively.

Teaching of numeracy

35. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. Consequently pupils make good progress. The teaching of numeracy skills is good, but there is still room for further development of the use of mathematical investigations, to help pupils apply their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills at their own level of challenge. The school has implemented the numeracy strategy well. Skilled and experienced teachers are giving the benefit of their training to recently recruited staff from overseas, who have only just received training in the strategy. Strengths in the teaching of numeracy include the planning of effective activities to meet the wide range of individual needs and the clear explanations given by teachers in the introduction to tasks. Two areas requiring further development by teachers are the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning and the presentation of pupils' work. Errors, particularly in number calculations, occur as a result of poor presentation and lack of organisation when recording work.

Teaching in other subjects

36. Generally the quality of teaching in science and other subjects is good, with some examples of very good teaching. Teaching has improved significantly in science since the last inspection. Subject knowledge and confidence in ICT has increased but this has still to make an impact on raising standards in the subject. Personal, social and health education are taught effectively and this has had a positive impact on pupils' very good personal development. Individual teachers have particular strengths and in some subjects such as music and art, teacher expertise lifts the lesson.

Strengths in teaching

37. There are particular strengths that underpin the quality of teaching in all classes. These are:
- very good relationships;
 - good planning involving support teachers and assistants;
 - support for individual needs including where English is an additional language and where pupils have special educational needs;
 - the very good promotion of and opportunities for speaking and listening skills.

In all classes very good relationships between staff and pupils are evident. These set a firm foundation for pupils' learning and help pupils to approach learning tasks positively. Planning has improved since the last inspection. This is partly because of the introduction of national guidance for the Foundation Stage and the literacy and numeracy frameworks. Staff have also concentrated on planning in more detail since the appointment of the current headteacher two years ago.

Areas for development

38. In spite of the good quality of most of the teaching, there are some over-arching areas for improvement. These include:

- the use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum;
- the presentation of work and the use of marking, particularly in mathematics;
- opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning.

Teachers do not regularly use ICT to enhance the pupils' learning in other subjects. Therefore, the pupils have fewer opportunities to practice their ICT skills in different contexts. Use of the Internet and other research facilities is under-developed and teachers need to plan actively more opportunities for pupils to work independently to research in subjects like history and geography. Teachers mark work regularly, usually with a tick to show that work is correct. Sometimes positive comments are noted. Opportunities are often lost to note what a pupil needs to do to improve.

Equal opportunities

39. Teachers know their pupils well and value all as individuals. Their knowledge is gained through their day-to-day professional judgements and through the school's thorough arrangements for assessment. In the school as a whole, and particularly in Year 6, boys outnumber girls. Teachers mostly manage this very well. They are clearly aware of the need to ensure that boys do not dominate lessons and that girls are fully and equally involved in their learning. In a Year 6 history lesson, for example, the teacher skilfully directed her questioning to ensure that the generally quieter girls had their share of opportunities to take part in the discussion. Occasionally, the behaviour of a small minority of boys is unsatisfactory and has an impact on the pace of learning. Support teachers and teaching assistants make an important contribution to the teaching and learning process. They work closely with the class teachers to provide sensitive and caring support that not only promotes pupils' learning but also their successful integration into whole class activities.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs

40. A strength of the school is the way in which teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. This is particularly the case for pupils supported by the speech and language resource. Teachers are very effective in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are able to take a full part in lessons across the curriculum. Class teachers and teaching assistants work together closely to provide carefully targeted support for individual pupils. Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' education. Clear assessment, identification and provision lead to positive learning outcomes for pupils.

Teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language

41. Raised expectations among all staff, stimulated by the high expectations of the headteacher, are the key to the good teaching and learning for the large proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language. All class teachers are closely aware of the needs of all pupils learning English as an additional language. They have built trusting relationships with them. They are committed to involving the pupils in learning styles that involve a lot of speaking and listening, to help develop pupils' communication skills in English. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, where staffing levels are higher and the structured arrangement of sessions creates a routine based on several short activities. Teaching of English as an additional language is good throughout the rest of the school.

42. Pupils learn well overall because teachers invariably share the aims of the lesson and clearly explain what they want pupils to do. They learn most successfully in lessons where teachers ensure they are active and involved in speaking a lot themselves, clarifying and explaining their understanding to each other. This was particularly effective in a Year 6 science lesson, where pupils explained their knowledge of electrical circuits to each other. Where pupils do not learn so well, it is because they appear either tired or lacking in concentration. This is particularly true in afternoon lessons, when pupils appear to find it difficult to maintain interest, perhaps because of the length of time they have been concentrating on listening to English.
43. Class teachers keep detailed assessments of pupils' progress and use these alongside the records kept by teachers from the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) service, who work alongside class teachers. These teachers give good support to groups of pupils identified as still at an early stage of English language acquisition. Their contribution is more successful in situations where class teacher and support teacher have thought through the implications of the teaching methods to be used. In lessons observed, the role of EMA teacher was more effective in support than as the lead teacher of a group.
44. Teachers working with the EMA service are extremely knowledgeable about the way pupils learn and about strategies to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing. The class teachers have more practice at showing the skills of class and group management. There is room for further monitoring and sharing of both sets of skills among all staff, to ensure that pupils stay on task when not working directly with their usual class teacher. In the main, pupils are dependent on their class teacher for discipline. They do not exhibit skills in being able to work productively on their own. Good collaborative work was observed only in Year 6 and even in this year group only during morning sessions.

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

45. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that effectively supports pupils' intellectual, physical and personal growth. Its notable strength is that it is entirely relevant to pupils at Ellington as a result of the headteacher's clear understanding of their particular needs. Initiatives introduced since the headteacher's appointment have strengthened this provision considerably. The curriculum is now firmly rooted in her determination to ensure that pupils' experiences are rich and stimulating. Teachers plan carefully and are encouraged to arrange an extensive range of extra activities that enhances the basic curriculum considerably. These include, and arise from, successful working partnerships with the community, local businesses and neighbouring schools. Although mostly recent, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

The Foundation Stage curriculum

46. For the past year or so, the reception and nursery provision and planning has dovetailed well. Previously, very different approaches were in place and the Foundation Stage curriculum was not developed fully. Staff plan well together to ensure that all children in the Foundation Stage are provided with a full, enjoyable, inclusive curriculum, that is well targeted to their ages and stages of learning. The curriculum is stimulating, involving a variety of visitors, such as fire fighters with tenders and police with cars, as well as visits, to Odds Farm for example. The

organisation of the sessions also gives children a secure routine and the range of activities prepared for both indoor and outdoor play and learning offer children structured choice.

Curricular planning

47. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and meets statutory requirements. Throughout the school there is a heavy emphasis on developing literacy skills. This effectively meets the learning needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language as well as the significant minority who have more specific difficulties with speech and language. The National Literacy Strategy is used well by all teachers and this is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. There is a suitable emphasis also on developing numeracy skills but, although the National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented satisfactorily, there are inconsistencies in the way it is used in some classes. This leads to a lack of continuity in numeracy from one year to the next.
48. In other subjects, policies are being reviewed and updated and a planning framework is being put in place to provide teachers with clear advice on what is to be taught in each class. It is based on the national guidelines for each subject and forms a rolling programme. In view of the complex picture of mixed age classes this is an area that will need to be re-visited each year to ensure that pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily. Teachers make the most of opportunities in many of these subjects to reinforce literacy skills. However, this often has the effect of squeezing the time that is available for developing particular subject skills, for example in geography and history.
49. Teachers' planning, based on this framework, is very good. In their weekly and half-termly plans they give clear information about key teaching points and the associated knowledge and skills to be taught. Using their '*traffic light system*' they check how these are built on over time. The headteacher and subject leaders monitor teachers' plans and as a result the quality is consistent throughout the school. These arrangements have dealt effectively with weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection.

Equal opportunities

50. The school's arrangements to ensure equality of access to the full curriculum are excellent. The headteacher's highly inclusive philosophy is clearly evident in all aspects of school life and is shared by all adults. A particular strength is the way that pupils with very specific learning needs receive individualised and often very specialised support so that they can work alongside their classmates. Teachers regularly check pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and a range of booster and other programmes are being used to raise standards and improve their access to the curriculum. All pupils have open access to sport and extra-curricular activities and this encourages their enthusiastic response to clubs and teams.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs

51. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for, both in the school as a whole and in the speech and language resource. Where possible, pupils are taught in mainstream lessons. When a pupil is withdrawn for small group work, it is usually done at a time when other pupils are following a similar activity. Pupils' needs are identified early and both class teachers and support staff are aware of individual requirements. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and

progress is tracked carefully. There is very good inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into all school activities.

Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language

52. The school adapts the curriculum very well to the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. Teachers in the Foundation Stage focus on personal, social and emotional development alongside communication and language. They deploy bilingual assistants effectively to help children access the curriculum. They develop children's speaking and listening and their ability to take turns and use equipment carefully in all other areas of learning. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 work closely with teachers from the EMA team to ensure that pupils with the greatest need for support receive it. All pupils have access to the full National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum is taught with a clear emphasis on speaking and listening in subjects across the curriculum. The school also provides a range of additional activities, which many pupils learning English as an additional language attend.

Personal, social and health education

53. The school sees this as a vital area of the curriculum and is working through its action plan to develop an agreed whole school approach. Each class makes effective use of sessions such as circle time to explore values and beliefs and to address areas of conflict. These have contributed well to recent improvements in behaviour. A subject leader has been appointed and she has made a good start on designing a framework which also deals with issues such as healthy eating, drugs awareness, relationships and sex education. The headteacher and governors are very well equipped to deal thoughtfully with the sensitive issues that this area raises for many parents.

Additional activities including visits and visitors

54. When talking to pupils in the playground and in a more formal discussion with pupils in Year 6, it was clear that they are very appreciative of the much improved opportunities that teachers provide outside normal school hours. One boy said with great pride, "Our teacher came all the way from New Zealand to help us." The very good range of activities not only extends and develops pupils' skills but also provides them with the chance to follow their particular interests alongside pupils from other classes. Many activities are seasonal and others depend on the skills and expertise of current staff but clubs have included chess, computer, cross-stitch, pottery and science. Sports activities include cricket, football, netball, petanque and rugby.
55. Very good advantage is taken of the school's location to arrange an interesting and often exciting variety of visits and visitors to support and extend pupils' learning. For example, classes have visited Ascot race course, Windsor Castle, the Chiltern Open Air Museum as well as the local mosque, a church, a supermarket and the river to look at locks and weirs. All have very clear links with the curriculum and form the basis of a good deal of follow-up work in the classroom. There are regular visitors to school including theatre groups and musicians, the police and the fire service. There are regular visits also by the local Imam and vicar as well as representatives of other religions. They share their views and beliefs and help pupils extend their understanding of the importance of respecting the feelings of people whose views may differ from their own.

56. While these activities support and extend pupils' classroom experiences they are also important in promoting their personal development. In addition they are an indication of the school's determination to provide a broad and stimulating curriculum.

Links with the community

57. Governors and the headteacher are justifiably proud of the excellent community links that have been established as a result of their open door policy. The very successful Ellington Community Project with its vision of 'Equal Access for All' is a clear reflection of their view of the school at the heart of the community and the responsibility they feel towards parents as well as pupils. Its intention to attract members of the community to enrol on adult learning classes has also led to several mothers becoming volunteer helpers in the school and higher attendance at parents' meetings. Pupils have gained enormously from the strong links that have been forged with local businesses. For example, higher attaining pupils' literacy skills are currently being extended by the challenge of working with the editor of the local newspaper to produce the paper's children's page. In addition, there are regular visits to assemblies, reading sessions and other classroom activities by staff from a variety of local firms and agencies. These have included engineers, caterers, customs and excise officers and department store staff who have supported pupils' reading activities while at the same time presenting them with positive role models.

Links with partner institutions

58. The headteacher has succeeded in promoting a genuine partnership with local schools. This is helping to boost many people's perception of Ellington and to improve its reputation locally. For example:
- pupils in Year 1 worked alongside their peers from a beacon school³ with reciprocal visits and lots of parental involvement from both schools;
 - pupils from a neighbouring Church of England primary school attended a special Ramadan assembly;
 - a local secondary school provides support for pupils in design and technology and next year will provide taster sessions in French.

These links are being used very effectively to enhance the curriculum and broaden pupils' experiences. However, there is scope to develop them further by providing a forum for staff from neighbouring pre-school providers as well as primary and secondary schools to exchange ideas and share good practice.

Personal development

59. The school sees pupils' personal development as an essential part of its work. Overall provision for this is very good and the school has done extremely well to improve so quickly given the earlier staffing difficulties and a period of instability since the last inspection. Re-establishing and improving the quality of work in this area has been central to the school's improvement. That it is now better than it was at the time of the last inspection, when it was good, is testament to the hard work of all concerned and the vision of the new headteacher. It is outstanding in cultural development as a result of the school's strong emphasis on celebrating the rich diversity of cultures within the community and the sheer range of opportunities it makes available.

Personal development of pupils learning English as an additional language

³ Beacon status is awarded to schools that display outstanding practice in particular areas of education

60. The school makes very good provision for the personal education of pupils learning English as an additional language. Displays throughout the school draw particularly well on the cultural backgrounds of pupils learning English as an additional language. Staff work hard to build the self-esteem of the youngest children, who find it difficult to communicate in English at first. The focus on personal and social education in the Foundation Stage continues through Key Stages 1 and 2, with clear emphasis on expectations of behaviour and the way to treat each other. The school's display of a tree of faith showing five major ways from God to God is symbolic of its commitment to respecting the spiritual and religious standpoint of all individuals in its community. The school has clear expectations, sets clear moral standards and pupils know right from wrong. However, the school does not yet provide sufficient and varied opportunity for pupils learning English as an additional language to develop independent learning skills and positive, self-disciplined attitudes to their work. These pupils remain dependent on their class teachers for control. The school dining arrangements do not currently promote satisfactory personal development.

Spiritual development

61. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Daily class or whole school assemblies provide good opportunities for moments of quiet reflection or focused prayer. Although the school has a determination for collective worship, care is taken to allow all to recognise and identify their own God and beliefs during these times. In a whole school assembly the Ellington Tree was very well used to illustrate the school's central tenet that all 'Our roots are in God' and to identify the symbols of the major world faiths. Pupils showed their joy when singing an African 'welcome' song and in their spirited rendition of 'Sing Hosanna' with accompanying harmonies. Stories in class assemblies are often chosen to illustrate issues relevant to pupils such as how we speak and behave towards others. Visits by the local Imam, vicar and members of the Jewish, Hindu and Sikh faiths all support this well.
62. Pupils often have opportunities to reflect on their own feelings, emotions and reactions in the course of personal and social education and there are a number of displays around the school exploring these themes. In religious education pupils are encouraged to think about similarities and differences in their own lives, appreciate the significance of festivals, symbols and artefacts and learn about rites of passage in the main world faiths. In other subjects such as history and literacy they have opportunities to consider others' emotions and in science and art to marvel at the beauty of their world. Outbursts of excitement and delight, as when the youngest pupils observed the intricacy of small creatures such as tadpoles and snails support this process well.

Moral development

63. Moral development is also good and is central to the school's aim to 'create a happy, safe environment where children are treated fairly'. Pupils are developing a sense of right and wrong as a result of the very good guidance provided. Staff are good role models through the care they show their pupils and the way they behave towards one another. Pupils are responding well to the expectations of adults and this is promoted successfully and extended through the positive and systematic use of rewards and the celebration of achievements that have been introduced. Teachers remind pupils, as necessary, of their expectations and the schools' rules, which are displayed in classrooms and corridors. Pupils look at the rules of major faiths in religious education. Stories with moral aspects in assemblies reinforce the importance of establishing codes of conduct and this is

explored further in personal and social education. Pupils show suitable respect for the views and beliefs of others during assemblies, in discussions and when responding to questions. Older pupils show integrity when carrying out specific responsibilities and in their dealings with other pupils. Pupils care about their environment and have clear views on how it might be improved. All contribute to keeping it clean and tidy.

Social development

64. Provision for social development is also good. It reflects the school's aims and values and the strong emphasis on recognising and valuing 'all the children's communities' and enabling them 'to develop respect for their peers and themselves'. The developing success of this can be seen in the way in which pupils, even younger ones, work together in groups or pairs helping and supporting one another in completing the task or activity. Older pupils complete tasks around the school preparing the hall for assembly, managing equipment at breaktimes and carrying messages. All pupils develop personal initiative as they undertake housekeeping tasks such as setting out and clearing away in lessons. Visits to places of educational interest, sporting events, after school clubs, performances and community events all provide good opportunities for pupils to socialise and work together. The recently introduced class councils allow pupils to experience being more fully involved in the school community and contribute ideas to improve it. Initiatives like the Ellington Thought Tree and the Ellington tapestry allow all to contribute ideas and to be involved in a whole school project. The planned introduction of a school council will broaden and consolidate this and give pupils opportunities for greater responsibility. Charitable events are also used to encourage pupils to develop an understanding of their responsibilities in the wider world.

Cultural development

65. Overall provision for pupils' cultural development is outstanding. The pupils have excellent opportunities to explore and celebrate not only the national culture and their own heritage but also the rich diversity of cultures found in the wider world. They learn about different faiths and beliefs in religious education and different countries and beliefs in geography. Visitors from all the major faiths, a range of backgrounds and representing a range of cultural experiences extend this exceptionally well as they share information and bring different perspectives. This fully inclusive approach to all cultures pervades the whole curriculum. Pupils experience English texts including North American Indian creation stories and Greek myths. They emulate aboriginal and impressionist styles in art, and in music listen to and consider African drumming and European composers. This process is extended further through visits to museums, places of interest and historic venues. Recent notable examples arising from these include architectural drawings of St Joseph's church and the local mosque and dioramas of the sumptuous interior of Windsor Castle.
66. Pupils are developing an excellent understanding and knowledge of other cultures and the high quality displays throughout the school are shining examples of the depth of the school's balanced multicultural approach and testimony to how importantly it views this area of its work. Excellent examples of this are textiles from Pakistan, Thailand and Britain displayed alongside the Ellington tapestry and an impressive display of Chinese artefacts next to the hall opposite a colourful display of pupils' work on the Romans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Health, Safety and Care of all pupils

67. The school has very good policies and procedures for the health, safety and care of all of its pupils. This is an area of significant strength. The staff know the pupils' strengths and needs very well and they share this information with their colleagues. At staff meetings the staff discuss individual pupils' difficulties and prepare strategies to support them. Excellent use is made of additional support including the SPAL resource, English as an additional language (EAL) and Ethnic Minorities Achievement Group (EMAG) provision and community liaison initiatives. Ellington is a very inclusive school.
68. Health and safety requirements are met fully with regular, thorough checks of the premises and grounds by the governors and staff representatives. These are supplemented by regular local authority inspections of the site. There are very good procedures in place to handle any accidents. Staff are vigilant throughout the school day. This includes the arrangements for the supervision of the pupils who arrive early for the SPAL resource and the pre-school breakfast club.

Child Protection

69. All members of staff are familiar with the comprehensive child protection policy and procedures. These are discussed with all new members of staff when they join the school. The procedures are used well.

Measures to promote good behaviour and prevent oppressive behaviour

70. In response to the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of some of the pupils when the headteacher was appointed two years ago the staff have put considerable energy into improving and maintaining good behaviour. The headteacher has been very active in analysing and monitoring behaviour and introducing new systems and procedures. Very effective use has been made of external agencies, including the behaviour support team and research groups, for example, from Reading University. There has been substantial monitoring, interviewing and staff discussion to establish procedures, incentives and a consistency of approach and application. These initiatives have been very successful. Pupils are set manageable targets and those on report see the headteacher each day. There is emphasis on positive reinforcement of behaviour, rather than simply punishment. The headteacher is active in monitoring breaktimes and lunchtimes, checking pupils' behaviour record cards and dealing with any referrals from lessons.
71. The staff investigate and report quickly on any incidents between pupils. The pupils concerned are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions by completing incident reports and discussing strategies to overcome problems to avoid any repetition in the future. Assemblies and class discussions are used well to bring into the open issues such as bullying, working together and tolerance.

Measures to promote good attendance

72. There have been substantial initiatives over the past two years to monitor and improve attendance. Parents are frequently reminded of the importance of regular attendance and the avoidance of excessive holidays in term-time. The many activities which are designed to build the partnership with parents are opening up further opportunities to get these messages across. The school makes very good use of the multi-lingual staff and specialists based on the site to ensure that there are no language barriers. There is stringent monitoring of attendance and absence patterns. Staff telephone parents during the morning if there is no

explanation for an absence. Very good use is made of the services of the Education Welfare Officer to work with parents and children with attendance problems. Accurate records are kept of authorised and unauthorised absences and term-time holidays are monitored closely. Positive incentives have been introduced including rewards for the class with the best attendance in a week. These are clearly popular with the pupils. These many initiatives are having a positive impact on attendance.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage

73. Teachers, trained nursery nurses and bilingual assistants meet the needs of young children very well. They are caring, welcoming and cheerful. They make very good use of home visits and visits to the school to help parents feel that staff are approachable and to help children settle quickly and without trauma in their first experience of being left away from home. Staff make very good use of information from meetings with parents to assess children's personal, social, emotional and communication abilities on entry. Almost all children in the Foundation Stage are learning English as an additional language. All but a few are at a very early stage. They receive very good additional language support from bilingual assistants. The use of the Foundation Stage assessment profile, introduced this year, is sharpening staff assessment skills. Both in nursery and reception, it now provides a tool for gathering observational assessments made by all staff and helping staff know how to move children on in all areas of learning. Very good systems are in place for early identification of children with special educational needs and careful targets are set to address their additional requirements.

Assessment in English and mathematics

74. Assessment procedures are very good. In English and mathematics throughout the school the information from assessment is used extremely well to track pupils' progress and set targets for their learning. In several other subjects, notably science, teachers are using recently introduced assessment procedures well at the start and end of units of work, but their use is not yet routine across the school. The procedures for monitoring the pupils' progress in English and mathematics are excellent. All class teachers have a copy of the English and mathematics National Curriculum levels achieved by pupils in their class and the targets set to be attained by the end of the school year. This picture shows considerable improvement since the last inspection, when assessment was good in the main school and satisfactory in the nursery. It shows excellent progress since the appointment of the new headteacher two years ago, when, after a difficult period, the school had no agreed assessment procedures in place.
75. The local education authority (LEA) assessment data provide excellent support for the headteacher and assessment co-ordinator. The data give clearly accessible comparative statistics to help senior staff analyse the school's performance and gauge expectations for pupils at age seven. Using these, the school has set realistic, but challenging targets for each year group in Key Stage 2 to reach in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Tracking progress

76. The headteacher's introduction of a consistent tracking system for all pupils through the use of optional and statutory national test results annually has been highly effective in raising pupils', parents' and teachers' expectations and in improving pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics. Alongside the headteacher the class teachers use the results at the start of each school year to agree National Curriculum levels to be reached by each pupil by the end of the year. These targets are challenging and are used as an integral element of teachers' annual performance management. They are shared with pupils and parents and progress towards them is reviewed mid-year by class teachers with the headteacher, and by parents with the class teacher. The EMA team also keep extremely thorough records of the progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This information is used alongside the tracking and target setting information to decide on levels of support required by each class and each pupil. EMA staff then focus on developing pupils' oracy and literacy skills, working alongside teachers and withdrawing groups of pupils in a variety of subject contexts. The introduction of a computerised assessment package this year has facilitated the monitoring of boys' and girls' performance, but the school is still working with the LEA on accessing information on the achievement of developing bilingual pupils.
77. Teachers at Key Stage 1 and the assessment co-ordinator in Year 6 make excellent use of reading tests to analyse pupils' reading skills and address areas where they require support. The special needs co-ordinator has also acquired the skills for administering a thorough test and the aim is to introduce it throughout the school. Pupils know the areas they need to work on in writing, as these are pasted into the front of their literacy books, so that class teachers and pupils can focus together and discuss progress towards them. The school has introduced an annual timetable for assessment in different subjects and some staff training exercises have involved sharpening teachers' assessment skills by sharing pupils' work and grading it at National Curriculum levels.

Assessment of pupils with special educational needs

78. There is good use of assessment procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs. Outcomes from assessment inform teachers' planning to ensure that next steps for pupils are clearly identified. The introduction of the '*P scales*' for pupils working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum will take this a step further. Pupils are increasingly being involved in their own learning through target setting in individual education plans. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) monitors the progress of all children on the special educational needs register. The special needs department helps pupils, in small withdrawal groups, to learn how to behave appropriately in class. Pupils learn to listen to each other and to follow instructions. They learn basic literacy skills so that they can take part in the mainstream curriculum. This helps pupils to gain confidence and to increase their self esteem. The school makes good use of external agencies, such as the LEA support services and the educational psychology service.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

79. The school's partnership with parents is a considerable strength.

Parents' views of the school

80. In the questionnaires prior to the inspection parents were very positive about all key aspects of school life. There was a relatively high return and no significant dissatisfaction in any of the areas discussed. These very positive views were confirmed at the parents' meeting. Almost all parents feel that their children like school; the school expects their children to work hard; the children are making good progress; they would feel comfortable approaching the school; teaching is good and the school is well managed; the school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed. The inspectors strongly agree with these views, as do recent reviews by Reading University and the local authority. A few parents feel that there could be more homework in preparation for secondary school but most parents are satisfied with the amount of work set.

The information provided by the school

81. The information provided by the school is of a very high standard. The school prospectus is well presented and gives good coverage of key aspects of the school, including curricular and pastoral information. The very regular newsletters are liked by parents. These are friendly and informative and cover a wide range of activities throughout the year, including information on the curriculum. Staff are very approachable and always respond very well to parents' suggestions and concerns. Suggestions are acted upon and fed into the school's development planning when appropriate. For example, strategies to enhance pupils' social awareness outside the environment of the school. Parents are able to talk to staff at any time and translation is always arranged if required. The home-school liaison officers attached to the school are able to speak and translate documents into Urdu, Hindi and Gujarati. They also attend induction meetings and do home visits.
82. For new children there are home visits by the headteacher, nursery teacher, home-school liaison officer and community worker to explain procedures and documentation. The school holds very informative meetings each year to explain national testing to parents. The annual pupil reports improved considerably last year. They are of a very high standard. Attitudes and behaviour and detailed aspects of all subjects are graded on a five point scale which is explained clearly. These are accompanied by statements of strengths and weaknesses and targets for improvement. In the core subjects the staff give the current levels of the pupils in relation to national standards. There is a further section on language support, with clear statements about activities and progress. There are also useful comments about homework performance.

Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs

83. The links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. The school responds quickly and flexibly to any issues raised by parents and this is greatly appreciated. Attendance at annual reviews is good and the school is looking for ways to involve parents further in individual education plans. The speech and language resource works very well with parents. At a recent open evening, there was 100% attendance. Videos of pupils are sent home to parents in order that they can view their child's progress.

Links with parents of pupils learning English as an additional language

84. The school takes excellent steps to develop close links with parents of pupils learning English as an additional language and to inform them about their children's progress. The headteacher's own bilingualism and cultural background is a major factor in winning the trust of parents, many of whom themselves have

little experience of formal education. The school has information sheets translated into Urdu and ensures that bilingual staff are available as interpreters at meetings. The school shares information on pupils' progress and their learning targets at regular parent-teacher review meetings during the year. As a result, parents have a very positive regard for the school, the headteacher and the staff. Few are yet in a position to make a positive contribution to the work of the school and many lack the confidence to contribute to their children's learning by listening to them reading or talking about books for instance. The school is fully behind community projects that set out to involve parents in developing their skills. It sets up a crèche for toddlers so that parents can participate in a range of learning activities organised in the local community.

Parents' support

85. The school has been very active in introducing many initiatives to involve parents more in school activities. Parents are encouraged to attend community activities with and without younger children with sessions on topics such as computing and reading with children. A crèche is available in the school for parents to facilitate attendance. All staff, including home-liaison, Ethnic Minority Achievement Group (EMAG), Speech and Language resource (SPAL) and English as an additional language (EAL) support staff build very good relationships with parents, encouraging them into school. They are available before and after school for parents. There are plans for regular coffee mornings for parents. All of these initiatives are proving successful in helping to overcome language barriers and involving more parents in the life of the school. Five parents help regularly in classes. There is good parental support for the fund-raising activities organised by the staff.

86. There is a high turnout at parents' meetings and regular meetings for children in the SPAL Resource involve parents fully in discussing progress and targets for action. The sensible, straightforward home-school agreement is translated into Urdu. Staff ensure that all parents sign the agreement during the induction sessions, discussing the content in detail if requested. Year 1 parents work with their own children in class. Parents of children in the SPAL Resource are particularly active and supportive.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

A period of change

87. The leadership of the school has changed considerably since the last inspection. After a series of acting headteachers, a permanent headteacher was eventually appointed to take up her post in April 2001. During the last two years the headteacher has had to cope with significant recruitment and retention difficulties, especially in her first year. Difficult behaviour and poor attitudes shown by the majority of pupils was another priority the headteacher faced when she arrived at the school. In some classes teaching was weak, standards declined and the school's reputation in the local community was very low. Parents were disillusioned and many, particularly those with potentially more able children, removed their children from the school. Despite the scale of these challenges she faced, the headteacher resolutely set about creating a calmer atmosphere and an environment in which pupils could learn. She worked alongside weaker teachers although several left as they realised they could not cope with the higher expectations placed on them.

88. The headteacher, working with the governors, then sought to appoint experienced staff from overseas in order to establish more stability for the pupils. Plans were instigated to remove old and unsuitable furniture and resources whilst the headteacher negotiated with the probationary service to recruit working parties to redecorate the entire school in bright colours to provide a better environment for both staff and pupils. Communication with parents improved significantly as the headteacher was able to communicate in their first language and also understood their culture and needs. By the end of her first year in post, a great deal had been achieved and, with experienced teachers in post, the headteacher has continued to focus on raising standards although she recognises that there is still a great deal to achieve before pupils reach the levels they are capable of.

Headteacher's vision and excellent leadership

89. 'Achieving more together' is the mission statement proudly displayed outside the headteacher's office and her excellent leadership ensures that all who work in the school aspire to the same ideals. The personal commitment of the headteacher to the needs of the pupils is exemplary. Equally, the competence and skill of the headteacher cannot be underestimated and staff and governors are greatly influenced by her highly effective leadership and enthusiasm to succeed and improve the school further.
90. The headteacher's excellent leadership gives the school an extremely clear educational direction and purpose. Education is for all and the school is about raising the expectations and achievements of every child. The headteacher has won the admiration and respect of parents, governors, staff and pupils. She involves everyone associated with the school in looking at strengths and weaknesses before deciding on priorities for the school improvement plan. Once a course of action is required, the school takes swift, decisive and effective action. The shared commitment to improvement within the school is very good and the leadership team and the governors give the headteacher very effective support. The headteacher's written self-evaluation of the school shows a comprehensive grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses in all aspects of its work.
91. The school's warm and inclusive ethos meets all who enter. Displays celebrate pupils' cultures and a range of faiths whilst also celebrating the work the pupils have completed. The headteacher is a visible presence around the school and she instils confidence among pupils, staff, parents and governors. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and there is a clear mutual respect evident throughout the school.

Management structure

92. The deputy head has been in post for two years and she has developed a very good relationship with the headteacher. She has good inter-personal skills and will often boost staff morale at difficult times. The deputy head takes overall responsibility for assessment and she has worked alongside staff to ensure that procedures are in place and useful for determining individual needs. She also takes the lead in Key Stage 2 whilst another senior teacher has management responsibility for Key Stage 1. Together with the teacher in charge of early years, the special needs co-ordinator and the teachers in charge of the speech and language resource, she forms the leadership team of the school. All are fully committed to the aims of the school and they are equally supportive of the headteacher as they are of one another. The leadership team continues to work hard to change the pupils' attitudes in order to raise their achievement. With the headteacher, they have created a very purposeful, yet stimulating environment

where pupils are expected to work hard, but do so in an atmosphere which respects and celebrates their cultures.

93. The headteacher, deputy and Key Stage 1 co-ordinator monitor teaching effectively in all classes, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school also makes very good use of the local educational authority link inspector to monitor teaching and learning. This supports teachers effectively in their further professional development and assists the senior management team in their monitoring of standards.

Role of subject leaders

94. Subject leaders have clearly defined areas of responsibility. Many have only been in post for a year and, consequently, are still at the early stages of developing their roles. Most have made a very positive start and they have a clear picture of planning within their subject, and of the quality and quantity of resources. The subject leader for English has tremendous expertise and experience of literacy and she shows particularly good leadership of the subject. She monitors and evaluates teaching and learning in lessons as well as scrutinising planning and pupils' work. The whole school focus on oracy this year has resulted in substantial improvement in pupils' speaking and listening skills and the subject leader is able to identify which aspects of teaching ensured the greatest success. This very good subject leadership provides an exemplar for other subject leaders who all aspire to improve their skills and effectiveness.

Strategic planning

95. Weaknesses in the quality of the school improvement plan, identified at the time of the last inspection, have been fully addressed. The school improvement plan is based upon an analysis of strengths and weaknesses. In addition to the overall plan, each curriculum area has its own individual action plan and this means that there are a huge number of priorities at any one time. Whilst it is clear that there is still much to achieve in the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should consider identifying the most crucial aspects of their work that would raise standards and concentrate on improving these initially instead of being faced with the prospect of such a daunting number of tasks all at once.

Leadership of early years

96. The Foundation Stage leader gives a very good lead and both teachers provide very good models for early years teaching. Classroom displays are lively and stimulating. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the Foundation Stage curriculum, but the introduction of more modern, flexible storage facilities would help make resources more accessible to children and encourage their independence. The enclosed outdoor nursery and reception play areas are of good size. The nursery area is well resourced and reception children have access to them. Photographs show the considerable effort made to improve this aspect of provision over the past fifteen months.

Leadership and management of work with pupils who have special educational needs

97. The provision for special educational needs is well managed. The school meets the statutory requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice and has recently completed a self audit on access in line with the special educational needs Disability Discrimination Act (2001). There is a register of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are well written and contain targets that are clear and practical. These give clear direction to teachers' planning and ensure that their work matches the prior attainment of pupils.

Progress towards these targets is carefully monitored. There is good communication between the governors responsible for special educational needs and staff in the school.

Leadership and management of work with pupils learning English as an additional language

98. The leadership and management of the school's provision for pupils learning English as an additional language are excellent. The headteacher has an extremely clear vision of where the school is heading and what is needed to inspire and stimulate the pupils. Through thoughtful staffing appointments and efficient deployment of EMA staff and resources she has created within two years a situation where every class teacher knows how well every pupil in the class has achieved and what are the challenging targets for each pupil for the year ahead. The school is already one of the most successful in the borough in terms of its effectiveness at helping pupils progress through National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics. The EMA teachers share their assessment records with the headteacher and the class teachers. The headteacher therefore allocates well-considered staffing support to pupils in the light of agreed needs that are understood by all the staff concerned. The school has won the confidence of the parents of pupils learning English as an additional language through its outstanding efforts to communicate with them in their own language about how well their children have done, how they behave and what they need to do to improve.

The promotion of equal opportunities

99. The school is strongly committed to providing equality of opportunity for its pupils, parents and staff, not only within the school but also in relation to other schools and the wider community. This is very clearly stated in its mission statement and in its aims and is demonstrated in all aspects of school life. *'Equal Access for All'* lies at the heart of the Ellington Community Project that has been successful in promoting the school as a place of learning for all. It also drives the flourishing partnerships that now exist with neighbouring schools and with the business community that are having such a positive influence on the rich learning environment that is being created in the school. It is clearly evident in the caring and sensitive attitudes of all staff and in the highly inclusive approach seen in all classrooms.

Very effective governing body

100. The governors are knowledgeable and experienced and very committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. Many have been governors at the school for several years and have seen the impact of the insecure years following the last inspection particularly in respect of leadership and the decline of standards. Formal and very effective monitoring procedures ensure that governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and senior staff. The governors visit the school and receive regular reports from senior staff. The headteacher prepares thorough reports to be presented at governors' meetings and very clear position statements keep governors fully informed. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have considerable confidence in the headteacher whom they support very well. The governors play an active role in monitoring standards within the school. For example, they discuss pupils' annual performance in the national tests of attainment in English and mathematics with appropriate members of staff. There is effective governor involvement in the strategic management of the school. Most governors are in a very good position to make strategic decisions because they know and talk about relevant issues with confidence and very good understanding.

Financial planning and control

101. Financial planning is very good with the annual budgets taking full account of priorities in the school improvement plan. A three-year rolling financial plan enables the staff and governors to look ahead to anticipate future developments. The pupil roll has fallen in recent years and this has resulted in some claw-back at the end of the financial year. This has reduced the current reserve to a modest 2 per cent of the annual expenditure. The current evidence indicates that the roll is now stabilising. Staff and governors recognise the need to publicise the school's strengths and successes more widely. Governors are active in financial planning, budget setting and monitoring expenditure during the year. Each subject leader submits a bid for resources from the annual budget and takes responsibility for the expenditure on the subject. Under-resourcing for some years has now been addressed. There have been recent improvements in the playground, the creation of an ICT suite, the purchase of reading materials, decoration of the corridors, furniture replacement and resources for literacy, numeracy and the Foundation Stage. The school receives significant income from letting the surplus accommodation and community use of resources.
102. The administrator and bursar give excellent support to the staff, pupils, parents and governors. There are very good routines and records in place to ensure that the school runs very smoothly. The financial systems and records are in excellent order and this was confirmed by the most recent auditor's report in September 2002. No issues were raised in the report. There are very clear, separate records for all specific grants and these are all used for their intended purposes. The staff make very good use of new technology to help with the planning and running of the school.

Principles of best value

103. In their expenditure decisions the staff and governors make excellent use of the principles of best value. There is wide consultation between staff and governors. The school rises well to the challenges it faces and constantly seeks ways to improve provision and increase income. The headteacher, in particular, is very active in exploring different sources of income and ways of combining these effectively. Additional space is used efficiently for long-term lettings to a variety of local agencies. This brings in valuable income and excellent use is made of the services offered by the different groups to help school development. This has been particularly significant in stimulating greater parental and wider community involvement in the school through the EMAG and Community Liaison groups. Other significant contributions have been the additional reading support through the Business Partnership, the crèche supported by the European Social Fund and the use of community volunteers for redecoration.
104. Full competitive tendering is achieved through the local authority buildings contract. Service contracts are reviewed annually and renegotiated if desirable to help to ensure value for money. The school employs its own site controller and cleaners to maintain a better service.

Value for money

105. Overall the attainment of the pupils on entry to the school and the socio-economic circumstances of their families are much lower than average and the unit cost is relatively high. Taking these factors together with the good teaching, good personal development and progress of the pupils and the excellent Speech and

Language Resource and EAL provision the inspectors conclude that the school is giving good value for money.

Staffing

106. The school has a very good number of appropriately qualified teachers who between them cover the age and ability range of the pupils suitably, meet the demands of the curriculum and promote effective learning. This is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection. The good ratio of teachers to pupils mean that classes are small and all have an attached learning support assistant for much, if not all, of each day. One class is covered by a job share arrangement. Four additional part time teachers without full time class responsibility provide good support for pupils in the language and special needs units and those pupils for whom English is an additional language. They form a hard working team committed to the education and welfare of their pupils. There have been a considerable number of staff changes in the past two years at all levels of responsibility. Good recruitment procedures have ensured that vacancies were filled quickly and several temporary arrangements have now been made permanent. The school recognises fully the need to ensure stable staffing and has an initiative in the current school improvement plan aimed at the recruitment and retention of staff.
107. Teachers at all levels new to the school, including newly qualified teachers and those from abroad, are well supported by a programme of meetings and training and are quickly assimilated into its culture. Performance management has been introduced successfully and is being used well to monitor progress and set objectives that support school improvement. It is also linked to priorities in the school improvement plan for raising achievement and identifies areas for professional development. Teachers attend a good range of local authority and school based courses in support of this.
108. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, especially those who have special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language, both individually and in small groups. Well briefed, they work closely with class teachers and provide valuable guidance to pupils in the ICT suite, and during practical sessions, such as in design technology. They are included fully in the life of the school and have opportunities for professional development.
109. The efficient and effective administrative and caretaking staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. Lunchtime supervisors, kitchen staff and cleaners all work hard to provide and maintain a pleasant working environment.

Accommodation

110. The school's very spacious premises are maintained well and now provide a very good range of facilities to support learning and the delivery of the curriculum. The last inspection found that the school had good spacious accommodation that was attractive and well organised. Since then, during a number of changes of leadership, matters lapsed. It is only since the appointment of the current headteacher that routine redecoration and the review, updating and improvement of facilities has been seen as a priority.
111. Within the large single storey building very good use is now being made of all available space. In addition to the classrooms and teaching bases there is a large

hall that is used for physical education and assemblies and a separate dining hall. An ICT suite, library, music room, food and technology room and art room are all being developed and equipped and their use is already augmenting and supporting pupils' learning. Recent improvements include redecoration and carpeting of corridors and replacement of furniture. Bright attractive displays throughout the school celebrate pupils' work and raise the profile of learning. Additional space now provides offices for local authority teams. The income from this has helped fund the recent redecoration of classrooms and the dining room, the refurbishment of toilets, the library and the ICT suite. There is now a rolling programme of improvements that includes further development of specialist teaching areas and redecoration and refurbishment of the remaining toilets.

112. The large central hard play area has been improved and brightened by areas of planting, refurbishment of the adventure play area and the purchase of picnic benches and umbrellas for lunch use. The extensive and well maintained grounds, shaded by mature trees and attractively planted, provide large grassed areas for sport and a hard court for netball. The overgrown nature reserve is being cleared and will provide a good resource for teaching. A heated outdoor swimming pool and changing rooms provide good support for the physical education curriculum and two very good sized secure outside play areas support learning for children in both the nursery and reception class very well.

Learning resources

113. Resources are satisfactory overall which is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection. In the intervening years additions were made but they were not always systematic or part of a considered overview. Consequently it is only recently that they have been developed and improved in targeted areas. Those for literacy are now good with a wide range of texts and books recently purchased and the same is true of resources, such as dual texts, for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for those who have special needs. The recent development of the ICT suite, together with computers in all classrooms and the new interactive whiteboard and digital projector mean the school is now well placed to move forward with its teaching in this subject. Storage for mathematics has been improved and the library developed and restocked. However, there are still gaps in its coverage and it does not yet provide the bright and attractive facility at the centre of pupils' learning that it could. In all other areas of the curriculum there are sufficient materials, books, equipment and learning resources for current use.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to build on the strengths and weaknesses of the school the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

Continue to improve standards in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 by:

- ensuring that pupils record and present all their written work carefully;
- developing investigative and research skills;
- allowing pupils greater opportunities to plan, organise and critically appraise their own work;
- offering regular opportunities for pupils to work independently.

(Reference paragraphs: 34, 35, 38, 148, 155, 156, 158, 165, 167, 193)

Improve the provision in information and communication technology and raise standards by:

- developing a scheme of work which covers all aspects of the subject;
- improving the quality of teaching and planning through increasing teachers' expertise and confidence to ensure that all pupils are taught all the skills and knowledge they require;
- ensuring that the subject is used effectively to support learning in all subjects and particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons.

(Reference paragraphs: 35, 36, 38, 151, 155, 169, 175, 199, 201, 219)

Minor issues:

The headteacher, staff and governors might consider including the following in its action plan:

Improve the provision for class music throughout the school by:

- timetabling class music on a weekly basis;
- providing training to improve teachers' subject knowledge and confidence;
- improving resources.

(Reference paragraphs: 203, 204, 207)

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE RESOURCE

114. The Speech and Language Resource (SPAL) provides very high quality support for pupils with speech and language needs. The resource is very well led and is a strength of the school. Pupils are placed in the resource because they require intensive support. They make very good progress.
115. The resource has been open for a number of years. It provides speech and language facilities for 10 full time equivalent pupils although at present there are 12 pupils on roll. Pupils who attend the resource come from all over the East Berkshire area and are transported to the school by taxi. The school receives additional funding from the LEA to fund the resource.
116. All pupils in the resource have Statements of Special Educational Need. Pupils attend the resource because they have significant and complex speech and language difficulties. Many pupils have additional needs such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, specific learning difficulties and dyspraxia. Pupils receive a minimum of three contacts a week with a speech and language therapist. This can involve working on a one to one basis or in a small group. Speech and language therapists work closely with other staff in the resource. There are weekly team meetings as well as a great deal of more informal discussion. All the resource staff are involved in training and provide practical guidance to support staff and class teachers. Their advice informs IEP targets and they are fully involved in reviews of pupil progress.
117. The quality of teaching is very good with teachers, speech therapists and teaching assistants working closely together. Teaching is characterised by a good mix of support and challenge. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson on homographs and words sounding the same but having different meanings, pupils tried hard to understand the difference between such words as 'nose' and 'knows'. In the same lesson, pupils were keen to share and understand jokes. Teachers ensure that pupils are aware of their individual education plan targets and constantly

praise pupils with such phrases as *'You should be really proud of your book'* and *'You should be very proud of yourself'*.

118. Given their capabilities, the pupils achieve very well and occasionally pupils make sufficient progress to move out of the resource. Three pupils in the resource are working below Level 1 of the National Curriculum. For these pupils, targets have been set using the *'P scales'*. Progress is very good because even in small groups, work is clearly differentiated and lessons are broken down into manageable parts. To enable pupils to succeed, clear signals are given, such as *'Good sitting, good looking and good listening'*.
119. A particular strength of the resource is its relationship with the school as a whole. At times, after discussion, pupils from the main school are included in resource activities. For example, a child with autism joined in a Social Use of Language Programme (SULP). Such a programme helps to improve awareness of basic feelings such as happy, sad and angry using clues of facial expression, body posture and tone of voice. Similarly, pupils with EAL have joined in vocabulary groups where appropriate. Staff development is an important feature of the resource and staff have recently delivered training in Makaton, autism and in using visual strategies in teaching to staff in the main school. Support staff in the resource make a valuable contribution to pupils' education. Staff in the resource also work closely with outside agencies, such as, the school's educational psychologist and the LEA support services.
120. Teachers' planning is very good. Pupils in the resource follow the same curriculum as other pupils in the school although activities are differentiated to meet individual needs. Individual education plans focus on clear outcomes and involve speech and language targets, national curriculum targets and targets linked to class based activities such as listening and paying attention. Pupils' work is planned jointly with class teachers and, where possible, pupils are included in mainstream lessons. When a pupil attends the resource, this is usually done at a time when other pupils in the class are following a similar activity. For example, pupils are taught literacy within the resource during the literacy hour.
121. The resource has very good links with parents and is committed to involving them and keeping them fully informed. Many families live some distance from the school and the resource has a direct telephone line so that parents can communicate easily. At a recent open evening for parents there was 100% attendance. When appropriate, parents are invited in to observe speech and language sessions. Parents are involved in reviews of individual education plans and are regularly up-dated on progress against targets as well as on any new targets set. Videos of pupils are sent home to enable parents to see their child's progress.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	17	7	0	0	0
Percentage	5	32	45	18	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	116
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	118

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.4

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	10	7	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	6	7	6
	Total	12	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (53)	76 (42)	76 (84)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	7	7	5
	Total	14	14	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (47)	82 (84)	76 (63)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	5	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	11	13
	Girls	3	3	5
	Total	9	14	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (42)	74 (27)	95 (58)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	11	12
	Girls	2	2	5
	Total	6	13	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	35 (42)	68 (35)	89 (38)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	85
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	24
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	206

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	483964
Total expenditure	495588
Expenditure per pupil	3565
Balance brought forward from previous year	17695
Balance carried forward to next year	6071

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	158
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	1	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	47	46	2	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	39	8	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	45	10	0	6
The teaching is good.	66	29	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	36	5	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	17	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	20	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	63	30	6	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	40	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	36	2	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	29	5	1	8

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

122. There are currently 50 children attending the nursery part-time, 24 in the mornings and 26 in the afternoon sessions. The school has 12 children attending full time in the reception year. Children come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The majority are from families whose origins are in Pakistan. Very few have any playgroup experience. Children enter reception in the term before they are five. Current arrangements mean that children with birthdays in spring have two terms in reception, those in summer have one term and those in autumn move straight from nursery to Year 1. The nursery serves an area with several schools. Most of the children from the nursery move on to the reception class at Ellington.

Personal, social and emotional development

123. Teaching in this area of learning is very good in both nursery and reception settings. Children achieve very well, but several do not achieve the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. This is because it takes time for them to adapt to the change of spoken language and to the social culture of an English nursery and reception setting from a Punjabi-speaking Muslim home. It is also because children do not have a long enough experience in the reception class setting to provide them with the grounding to meet the early learning goals before tackling the National Curriculum. This finding applies to every one of the six areas of learning.
124. The nursery provides children with a very welcoming environment and regular routines. This gives them security and sets a positive tone for their personal, social and emotional development. Teacher, nursery nurse and assistants make very good contributions to this aspect of children's learning. They are sensitive to individual needs and make sure all have opportunities to be the focus of attention. Every day a special person is chosen as leader and this helps build self-esteem. Staff give constant reassurance and praise, setting clear expectations for good behaviour and modelling how to talk rather than make noises for example, as when one child is annoyed by another taking his play dough.
125. Several children who have recently started nursery are quite passive and show little curiosity. Staff work hard at stimulating their interest, by taking small groups out on 'bug hunts' for example, or by sitting alongside children one at a time at the computer and providing commentary and questions as they match colours and shapes. A few children who have spent longer in the nursery show more confidence in choosing activities and explaining what they are doing. They understand the adults' expectations and set a good example to the others, clearing away when the music starts for instance. All children have opportunities each session to wash their hands and go to the toilet under supervision and to eat a healthy snack, learning to take turns. Displays of children and of their families help build children's awareness of themselves and of their individual family settings.
126. The reception setting helps children develop further independence, as for example when having lunch, sharing playtime with older pupils and getting changed for physical education and swimming lessons. A few children meet the early learning goals in their personal and social development, but with almost all taking time to adapt to the first setting outside their home and family experience, most children

are still working towards the goals when they enter Year 1. Children in the reception class adapt to class routines well, but they have too short a time in this setting. The need for the teacher to balance the National Curriculum demands for Year 1 pupils with the needs of reception children still some way from reaching the early learning goals is an exceptionally difficult organisational challenge. The additional involvement of pupils with speech and language difficulties and additional behavioural difficulties in the reception/Year 1 class afternoon sessions promotes inclusion very successfully for these pupils but provides added challenges for the teaching of reception children.

Communication, language and literacy

127. Children make very good progress in this area of learning as a result of very good teaching in both nursery and reception. Provision for developing children's speaking and listening skills in English is given a high priority, alongside the teaching of early reading and writing skills. One session observed in the reception room was excellent. By the time children enter Year 1, most are still working towards the Early Learning Goals. A small number have achieved them.

128. All staff use questioning, praise and commentary to extend children's vocabulary and to create a warm, receptive atmosphere in which children will open up and share their thoughts. Most children who have been in the nursery a short time speak only in one-word answers, some only to imitate the answer given by the adult. In early mathematical activities, when looking at snails and butterflies or when sharing books, the staff's focus is on language and communication skills. The staff set up a variety of independent role-play activities to promote conversation. Children bring pets to the vet for treatment and step into the telephone kiosk to phone a friend. Photographs show ten children taking it in turns to be the king and queen for a day with a Jubilee picnic banquet. Unless an adult is alongside promoting conversation, children tend to play alongside each other with little conversation in English.

129. Teachers use a range of stories and information books to promote good listening and stimulate role play. In the reception class, the role play area is currently a castle, which the very long beanstalk on a wall display has reached. Children in the nursery learn to recognise their names, copy letter shapes and learn their letter sounds. Reception children mainly know their letter sounds by the time they reach Year 1, but are not yet writing common words independently or using phonetic spelling confidently to begin to write what they want to express. Children know the direction in which pages are turned and follow words from left to right. They know books contain enjoyable stories and illustrations. They regularly practise accurate letter formation. A few write their own names accurately from memory or by copying. In the excellent lesson observed, the teacher deployed staff extremely effectively to support children's independent work. They wrote 'Get Well' cards for Humpty Dumpty, used card puppets to recount the story, listened to 'Whatever Next' tapes, recognised words beginning with 'd' in the object box and located further objects beginning with 'd' in the sand. At the close of the lesson children successfully shared what they had learnt by talking about it to the class, including retelling in their own words what had happened to Humpty Dumpty.

Mathematical Development

130. The teaching of this area of learning is very good. Children make very good progress from the early stage at which they begin. A small number reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1. Most are still working towards them.
131. Children enjoy number rhymes and counting. They gain early understanding of coins and prices by acting as shopkeepers and customers at the fruit shop. Staff in the nursery use mathematical language alongside activities, helping children who have recently started to count objects and recognise numbers to ten. Children trace spots on ladybirds and count them, for instance. Those towards the end of their time in nursery create repeating patterns with coloured cubes and a few count accurately beyond ten. Children complete simple jigsaws, including some related to understanding counting. Staff help children recognise and name simple shapes. In response to direct questions, children sort colours and shapes and name them in one-word answers, but few yet hold conversations with staff or with each other using mathematical vocabulary, such as circle, square or triangle in the context of sentences.
132. Children in the reception year build on nursery work with number songs and rhymes and continue to use daily routines, such as registration, to develop numeracy skills incidentally, working out how many children are away for example. Staff emphasise the use of precise mathematical vocabulary during specific numeracy lessons. Children count reliably to ten and recognise the numerals. Bilingual staff write numbers in Urdu and help children count in Punjabi to support their understanding. They create sets and, with support, learn through practical activities that $5-2=3$. They use terms such as 'heavier;' and 'lighter' when weighing objects. Some manage to order numbers to 20. They also make good use of computer packages to develop early numeracy skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

133. Children experience very good teaching in this area and learn very successfully, as they develop their communication skills in the many contexts the school presents for them. By the time they start Year 1, most are still working towards the Early Learning Goals, as they have had insufficient time in the Foundation Stage to develop their communication skills alongside their increasing knowledge and understanding of the world.
134. During the inspection, children in the nursery developed early scientific knowledge and observation skills, as they watched a pupa turn into a butterfly. The nursery nurse took small groups on 'bug hunts' in the outdoor area, stimulating conversation about the way snails and spiders move. Staff set up focused role-play activities so that children learn about hospitals and vets. Amongst many experiences organised throughout the year, children have received visits from firefighters with a tender and police officers with a patrol car. They have visited Odds' Farm. They have experienced a range of school community events and religious celebrations, such as at harvest, Diwali and Hannukah. They have made porridge, in connection with their learning about oats and beans and barley at harvest time and have decorated their hands with Mendhi patterns for other festivals. They use a variety of small construction equipment and play dough to make butterflies and spiders. They use scissors, cutters and rollers, but speak very little as they work with this equipment.

135. To extend children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world, teachers make very good use of pupils' family backgrounds. Photographs of children and their families are labelled with names and brief sentences, helping encourage conversation about patterns of family life.
136. Children in reception have planted seeds in pots and helped set up experiments to begin to understand the conditions for plant growth. They have planted cress, beans, nasturtiums and sunflowers in their garden. They develop early knowledge about the human body, labelling head, arms, body and legs. They use programs on the computers, using the mouse proficiently to move the cursor and select items. An adult invariably accompanies these ICT activities, to provide continuous questioning and conversational support. Reception children also use construction equipment and play dough well to make caterpillars, spiders and various 'machines', including a helicopter.

Creative development

137. Teaching and learning in this area are very good. Few children have previous experience of creative activities before entering the nursery and so children are still working towards the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.
138. Role-play facilities in both nursery and reception indoor and outdoor areas are stimulating. The vet's and the giant's castle give children imaginative informal contexts for creative development using communication and language. Nursery children paint their own 'very hungry caterpillars' alongside the whole class large caterpillar. They recognise and match colours well. They create miniature gardens, using pebbles and soil and keep the grass growing by watering it, making a link with their early science learning. They make bubble prints and paint self-portraits. They paint flowers 'as big as us', linking with their language and mathematical understanding. They use the full range of colours to paint rainbows. Reception children have experimented with a variety of painting, printing and scraping techniques. They have created impressive bark patterns on tree trunk paintings and drawn flowers, colouring them carefully. They have used a computer program to make brightly-coloured shape pictures. Particularly impressive are paintings of Monet's water lily pond, showing very careful use of brush and colour to create white strokes for the bridge and dabs of green, yellow and a few pink and white dots on blue paper.
139. Children in both nursery and reception have regular and informal access to musical instruments and enjoy creating sounds with them. In a well managed, but rather too lengthy class music lesson, reception children learned about long and short sounds, thinking which were most appropriate to accompany 'Hickory Dickory Dock', and used simple shakers to accompany 'Row, row, row the boat'. Photographs of the school's Christmas concert show both nursery and reception children participating in drama and music, telling the story of Babushka.

Physical development

140. Teaching and learning in this area are very good. Children start at an early stage of development, however, and most are still working towards the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1.
141. Children in both nursery and reception settings experience daily a range of activities designed to give them practice in manipulative skills. They use pencils and crayons, scissors, plastic cutters, spatulas and brushes regularly. Children

in the nursery use wheeled vehicles and a see-saw in the outdoor area. They have plenty of opportunity to climb, balance, slide, crawl, throw, kick and catch.

142. Reception children have regular access to more formal physical education and swimming lessons, in addition to the daily access to outdoor apparatus. They develop their throwing and catching skills in their outdoor area, using beanbags in a small group with an assistant, for example. As in other areas, the limited time spent in the nursery and reception settings results in most children having insufficient time to meet the Early Learning Goals.

Strengths

- *teaching;*
- *leadership and management;*
- *planning, preparation and organisation;*
- *teamwork and deployment of all staff;*
- *strong collaboration between Nursery and Reception;*
- *links with parents.*

Areas for development

- *improved storage units.*

ENGLISH

143. Standards are below average in reading at the end of Year 2 and well below average in writing. This is the reverse of findings at the time of the last inspection when standards in reading were well below and standards in writing were below. Standards are rising after a decline in the years following the last inspection that resulted from the lack of permanent leadership and instability in staffing. The current Year 6 is not quite as able a group as the previous year and standards are well below average, with pupils doing better in reading than writing. This is broadly the same as it was six years ago. Throughout the school standards in speaking and listening have improved significantly since the last inspection. All pupils achieve well considering that the large majority of them start school with either very little or no experience of spoken English. Those pupils identified by the school as more able in English, are challenged well and they make good progress as a result.

Improvement since the last inspection

144. Although there has been some fluctuation in between, during the last two years most pupils have achieved well and made good progress throughout the school. There have been improvements in the way English is taught since the last inspection and these are beginning to impact on standards, especially in Years 1 and 2.

The main reasons for the improvement are:

- improved planning as a consequence of the introduction of the national literacy strategy;
- the appointment of talented staff, particularly the English co-ordinator;
- extra support for pupils learning English as an additional language and those pupils with special educational needs;
- the emphasis placed on speaking and listening;
- the introduction of specific guided reading sessions to promote reading skills;
- improved resources, most notably for reading.

Speaking and listening

145. During the last two years the school has had a major focus on oracy and all teachers regularly plan opportunities for pupils to discuss their work in groups and pairs and also with adults. As a result, pupils make good progress overall in developing speaking and listening and several are close to achieving the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6. They listen very carefully to their teachers and to other adults in the classroom, and they listen politely to other pupils during class discussions. The pupils are keen to answer questions and to participate in class discussions. The pupils who are bilingual learners make rapid progress in acquiring a useful vocabulary, which they use well to express themselves. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well and staff from the speech and language resource regularly support individual pupils in their class literacy sessions to ensure that they are included fully and can contribute their ideas. In Year 6, discussion work in literacy lessons is often animated and good humoured, as well as thoughtful and constructive. Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils practise and consolidate their speaking and listening skills. Often there are good opportunities for pupils to speak in front of a large group in the introduction to lessons, when teachers frequently engage pupils in a question and answer session. In whole school assemblies pupils regularly lead prayers or talk about different experiences. Sometimes, too, pupils are asked to work in pairs or small groups and at these times consolidate their negotiation skills. Interesting activities are planned in both literacy and other subjects, such as role play, 'hot seating' and debate and these all contribute to the progressive development of speaking and listening.

Reading

146. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in reading and achieve standards that fall only a little short of what is expected of pupils aged seven. Pupils work through a structured reading scheme and this helps them to develop skills systematically. The introduction of a guided reading session has provided effective individual support and this is beginning to have an impact on standards with previously lower attaining pupils doing better. Pupils understand that writers use plots, characters and description to get the interest of their readers. They are beginning to use evidence in the texts they read to make predications about how characters will act and how the plot will unfold. Pupils are learning how to use a simple contents page to get an idea of what a book is about, and how to use a simple index to locate specific information. For example, in a very good literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils learned how to find information about fossils from non-fiction books. Most were able to locate the information they needed by identifying in the index which pages had information about fossils on them. Many were able to read the facts in the book successfully and then use these to write details to share with the rest of the class at the end of the lesson.
147. Pupils continue to make good progress in reading in Years 3 to 6 and some reach standards expected for their age. They use their reading skills well across the curriculum. Many older pupils talk with enthusiasm about the books they read and they are beginning to form clear preferences for certain authors and types of novel. Year 6 pupils enjoy, for example, the work of Roald Dahl, Dick King Smith and J. K Rowling. The latest '*Harry Potter*' book had just been released at the start of the inspection and several pupils had already started reading it! Most of the reading experiences for the majority of pupils are in school and very few know where the local public library is. Pupils regularly take schoolbooks home to read, but few of them have extensive collections of their own books. The school library

has a reasonable range of fiction and non-fiction books but it has yet to develop as a stimulating place to read. The quality of furnishings and areas to sit and read are limited and this is something the school has recognised needs improvement. The introduction of a collection of story tapes and headphones would ensure that all pupils could enjoy visiting the library and reading or listening to texts for enjoyment.

Writing

148. Writing remains the weaker element of literacy skills. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below the expected levels and well below at the end of Year 6. The reasons for the difference in levels of attainment is that older pupils were affected by the instability and lack of consistency in teaching during the unsettled years after the last inspection and have, therefore, greater ground to make up than younger pupils. Nevertheless, they make good progress throughout the school and are beginning to write in an appropriate range of forms. Often presentation of work is poor and pupils sometimes do not take care with their written work. The school is aware of the need to improve standards of writing and has identified this as a priority in the school improvement plan. Pupils are taught spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills and most can apply these to their independent writing. In an excellent literacy lesson in Year 1, pupils enthusiastically participated in a brain-storming session with their teacher. Together they made suggestions to plan a journey for 'Baby Bear'. They thought about where he could be going, what he might take, who he could meet and how he might feel at different stages of his journey. They then made their own story planner using some of the ideas they had generated. The enthusiasm for and quality of writing produced in this lesson was excellent, particularly considering that all but one pupil was learning English as an additional language. Similarly in a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils made good progress towards becoming effective story writers. They studied the characters involved in the nursery rhyme 'Little Miss Muffet' before thinking about the setting for their story. The teacher encouraged the pupils effectively to create an atmosphere by using their senses to describe the setting. Interesting suggestions were made, for example, 'the fragrance of the roses' and 'the sound of the waves lapping'. Pupils produced good quality writing as a result.

Teaching and learning

149. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall with some excellent features and never less than good. This is why pupils are making good progress in the literacy skills. The teaching and learning have many strong features. The way teachers plan literacy lessons in order to meet the needs of all pupils, including those who are bilingual learners, is one of them. Another strong feature is the way teachers help pupils to understand their own learning by sharing what it is they should know and be able to do by the end of each lesson. Teachers use resources and displays very well. For example, teachers have prominent classroom displays of helpful reference posters to aid pupils in attaining a more effective use of language. These include posters on the different parts of speech, on punctuation and on good sentence construction, as well as guides on how to plan and write different kinds of texts. In Year 6, the teacher has made colourful 'bookmarks' for use in writing sessions. They give clear reminders to pupils about the elements of effective writing including the 'RAP SAM' strategy of *repetition, alliteration, personification, similes, adjectives and metaphors*. Pupils in the Year 6 class automatically refer to these and other teaching strategies to improve their writing successfully.

150. Teachers deploy extra classroom support well. They include the specialist teachers of English as an additional language, and the ethnic minority support workers, in their planning, and they use them effectively during lessons. Teachers meet the needs of the pupils who have special educational needs well because they make effective use of the individual education plans to provide well-matched learning tasks. These measures help to ensure that all pupils participate in lessons and benefit from the skills of their teachers. A very significant strength of teaching is the success the teachers have in establishing positive relationships with the pupils. In a very effective Year 4 and 5 literacy lesson, the teacher created a scenario where she led pupils through an '*emotional journey*' in order to encourage them to consider how they felt at each stage. Her skill in achieving an atmosphere that totally gripped the pupils' attention was outstanding and pupils made good progress in this lesson as a result.
151. Teachers could improve their provision even further by making greater use of ICT to support learning in literacy. On occasions, teachers use specific software and instruct individual pupils to use the computers in the classrooms. However, this is not a regular feature and more pupils could benefit by regularly using the computer as an aid to learning and also for independent research.

Leadership and management

152. The subject is very well managed by the experienced subject leader. She knows her subject well and offers very good support to her colleagues. As a result, the school has a very clear idea of how to meet the needs of all its pupils. This is seen in the success with which teachers have improved speaking and listening skills for pupils through the focus on oracy. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work in literacy are very good and the co-ordinator has accurately identified the areas for improvement. She has a clear action plan indicating how priorities will be addressed and how they will impact on raising standards. Assessment information is quite extensive in the subject and there is very good analysis of this information to plan for the future. The co-ordinator has worked hard to improve resources in the subject and the school now has an extensive and highly appropriate range of guided and group reading texts that are used well.

Strengths:

- *quality of leadership and expertise of subject leader;*
- *the development of speaking and listening skills;*
- *links with other subjects;*
- *support for pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs;*
- *very good teaching;*
- *progression in reading.*

Areas for development:

- *presentation, particularly within key stage two;*
- *use of ICT to support learning in the subject;*
- *furniture and resources in the library.*
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MATHEMATICS

153. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well below average. However, taking into account the very low attainment when they enter the school, pupils are achieving well. In Year 2 about three quarters of the pupils are working at the levels expected for their ages. In Year 6, teachers' records show that although only about a half of the pupils attain the expected level almost all have made good progress. A significant minority has made up a lot of lost ground to attain standards that are better than expected. They also show that this particular year group includes a higher proportion of lower attaining pupils and this helps to explain why standards appear to have fallen since 2002.
154. Teachers work hard to ensure that mathematics lessons are fully inclusive and that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to achieve their potential. As a result there are no significant variations in the standards of boys and girls or in the achievement of different groups. This includes pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils with special educational needs, those in the Speech and Language resource and higher attaining pupils. All groups of pupils are making good gains in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. The factors contributing to this good achievement include:
- careful planning by teachers;
 - teachers' good knowledge of pupils' needs based on thorough assessment procedures;
 - extra support for individuals in all classes and for groups in "booster" sessions.
155. Pupils' progress in using and applying their mathematical knowledge is slower. This is partly because the setting of work involving real-life problem solving is not a regular feature of many lessons, but also it arises from weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills. Many pupils have particular difficulties not only with solving word problems but also with explaining their strategies to deal with mental calculations and this limits more rapid progress. As part of the process of raising standards a more positive response from pupils in lessons will be needed. Although satisfactory it could be improved, for example, by encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their learning and promoting greater independence. The school has identified the need to make more use of ICT to support and extend pupils' mathematical development.
156. Much of the recent training and support has focused on the needs of individual teachers, and quite rightly has included supporting those who have been trained overseas. While this has been effective in raising teachers' awareness of the National Numeracy Strategy there are still variations in the way it is implemented in different classes. For example, thought needs to be given to the use of more motivating and stimulating tasks in the mental mathematics starter session. This would have the effect of capturing and holding pupils' attention and interest from the outset and help to promote greater enthusiasm for the subject. All teachers use the final phase of the lesson to review pupils' learning. However, it rarely includes an indication of the next steps in learning or an opportunity for pupils to become more actively involved in self-assessment.
157. Most pupils in Year 2 gain a sound knowledge of the place value of each digit in numbers to 99, add and subtract to 20 and recognise patterns such as odd and even numbers. They are introduced to centimetres, measure with reasonable accuracy and tell the time to half past. By Year 6, most understand place value to

at least 999 and begin to use decimal notation, fractions and percentages. They learn about area and perimeter and lines of symmetry. Many lack confidence with written methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Although some examples were seen of bar charts and block graphs, including computer generated graphs in Years 4 and 5, there is limited evidence of the systematic development of pupils' data-handling skills as they move through the school.

158. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall although there are variations from one class to another. Teachers plan very effectively to meet the needs of individuals and this is a particular strength that was evident in all lessons seen. Frequently this involves working closely with support teachers and teaching assistants and on each of these occasions there was very good teamwork. Teachers' plans are based on their secure knowledge of the subject and this is evident in their clear and confident explanations. This was demonstrated in Year 3 and 4, for example, and coupled with the teacher's thoughtful and systematic approach it enabled pupils to make good gains in their understanding of division as grouping or sharing. There have been no opportunities yet for teachers to formulate an agreed policy on marking pupils' work and providing written and oral feedback to help pupils improve. Similarly, there are no clear expectations about standards of presentation to encourage pupils to take pride in their work. As a result the work in their books and folders is often careless and untidy.
159. The subject leader provides good leadership. She supports her colleagues well and promotes their professional development successfully by encouraging them to take advantage of training opportunities. She observes lessons, samples pupils' work, monitors teachers' planning and provides useful feedback to improve the quality of teaching. Very good procedures for assessing pupils' progress have been introduced although they have not yet been in place long enough to have an impact on standards. The recording sheet used to track pupils' progress provides a straightforward but very effective overview of the performance of individuals and whole year groups as they move through the school. In order to refine these arrangements further, the co-ordinator has identified the need to use the information gathered in this way to set individual targets in order to help pupils improve. It would also provide a clear focus for teaching.

Strengths:

- *teachers' planning and secure subject knowledge;*
- *strong teamwork to meet individual needs;*
- *arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress;*
- *good leadership.*

Areas for development:

- *greater consistency in the use of the National Numeracy Strategy;*
- *pupils attitudes to learning, including presentation of their work;*
- *continued development of assessment to help identify the next steps in learning;*
- *opportunities to use and apply skills in mathematics and in other areas of the curriculum including ICT.*

SCIENCE

160. Pupils of all abilities throughout the school make good progress in practical activities and in the oral communication of their understanding. They achieve well because of consistently strong teaching, which includes a clear focus on investigation and the development of pupils' ability to explain orally what they are

doing. The commitment of the teaching staff has enabled the school's performance to recover from a fall in standards due to staffing upheaval after the previous inspection. Increased staffing stability and huge improvements in management, organisation and teaching of the subject have led to significant improvement in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

161. The school has made excellent improvement over the past two years after a difficult period. In 2002 standards at age eleven, following a year of stable staffing, were well above those of similar schools and in line with the national average. This followed two years when results had been very poor. The contribution of the Year 6 teaching in 2001/2 was clearly outstanding, following as it did on an extremely disrupted period for pupils amid staffing upheaval.
162. The current Year 6 is not quite as able a group as the previous year, with standards below the national average overall, but consistently strong teaching over the past year has ensured that all pupils achieve as well as they can. Standards at age seven are also below average overall, but pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language receive well-targeted support and therefore achieve well. Provision for more able pupils is well developed in Year 6, by which time higher attainers whose first language is Punjabi have developed reading and writing skills sufficient to record and communicate their scientific findings successfully. Pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with statements related to speech and language acquisition, also achieve well as a result of focused support.
163. By the end of Year 2 most pupils show knowledge and understanding at the expected level, unless they have special educational needs. Few achieve beyond this, however. Year 1 pupils' recent work shows good knowledge of the names of parts of a plant, with simple, labelled illustrations. Pupils observe what happens when cress seeds are grown in different conditions and explain the differences, but very few are able to record these independently, as their writing skills in English have not had time to be developed as far as would be expected of native English speakers. Year 2 pupils undertake practical experiments and their teacher helps them record what they observe, making good use of worksheets, when testing the effect of pushes on different surfaces for instance. Pupils show their growing understanding of what makes a fair test. With the teacher's help, they record how they make the test fair and complete a block graph to show how far the same car travels on carpet, lino sand and wood. They describe the properties of materials and how they change, such as when bread turns to toast. Pupils are developing scientific knowledge and the skills of observation well. They explain what they do and what they observe orally, but are still developing written recording skills and need a lot of staff support to achieve in this area.
164. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 continue to develop scientific knowledge well through consistent use of investigative work, a focus on scientific vocabulary and continuous support with frameworks for recording. Year 3 pupils use language like 'opaque' and 'transparent' after shining a torch on different types of paper. They measure shadows at different times of day and explain why these change position and length. They make predictions before tests and record using labelled diagrams and graphs, as when rubbing a stone on fabrics to test their strength. In Year 4, pupils are challenged to use their own headings and written responses, as well as completing prepared worksheets. They show sound understanding of the human skeleton and have carefully conducted an experiment to test what keeps

water warm longest, using a thermometer to measure precisely and both tables and graphs to record results before explaining findings. Year 5 pupils make good use of information sheets to develop their comprehension and research skills in a science context, discovering about healthy eating and about the heart and blood supply. Their recording of understanding gained through experiments is guided by helpful use of worksheets. In collaborative group work, more able pupils show good understanding and use scientific vocabulary well, remembering terms such as photosynthesis for example.

165. Pupils in Year 6 have completed a series of investigations in all areas of the science curriculum. Higher attainers record successfully, without prompts, the way they set up an investigation, what they intend to find out, what they think will happen, their results (often in tables and graphs) and their conclusions. Higher attainers include a very small number of native English speakers, but the school has also enabled a small number of pupils to become bilingual in both speech and writing within their seven years at the school. Several pupils still require support in the form of worksheet frameworks. Using these they record their understanding, but are not yet able to do so independently. A few pupils throughout the school have joined the directly on arrival from Pakistan and therefore perform at a considerably lower level in science because of their limited English communication skills. These pupils receive very well targeted support from the EMA team and are also very well supported in their understanding by their bilingual peers. Older pupils who are recent arrivals clearly have not had time to develop comprehension or writing skills in English sufficiently to show their true understanding of science concepts and therefore cannot perform to their ability in tests set in English.
166. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and includes very good teaching at both key stages. This quality is not reflected in most pupils' recorded work, except among higher attainers in Key Stage 2, whose English writing skills have had time to develop. The school's focus on oracy is having a very good impact when used in science lessons, as pupils demonstrate their understanding far better when explaining to each other in the context of practical investigations. One very good example of this was in a Year 6 lesson. Here pupils first discussed as a group what they remembered about electric circuits, then shared their recollections with another group, before collaborating to plan the design of a burglar alarm using their knowledge of switches, circuits and electrical diagrams. Pupils of all abilities were fully involved and interested in their work. The teacher ensured a brisk pace, setting time limits for each period of discussion and activity and, together with a special needs assistant, prompted pupils' use of scientific terminology by prompting questions. Another very good example of pupils' involvement in practical activity was in Year 3. Pupils here examined a variety of rooted plants using hand lenses. The teacher successfully encouraged the more able to use terms such as 'anchor' to explain the 'function' of a plant's roots.
167. Teachers throughout the school habitually share the intention of the lesson with pupils at the outset so that they understand the purpose behind the activities planned. They show good subject knowledge, planning and preparing lessons thoroughly. The focus on investigative and observational activities captures pupils' interest in the main, but pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration in situations where they are not active and where there is too much focus on listening to the teacher and recording. Where teachers ensure pupils are active and talking, learning is more successful. Only higher attainers have the ability to sit and record without support and these are too few in number to set a model for

the majority. The school has not yet devised sufficient strategies to develop pupils' independent learning skills. Pupils show considerable dependence on the teacher for stimulus and control. Where pupils sit for too long and teaching does not address pupils' inattention and occasional immature behaviour, pupils' learning is affected. Only in Year 6 did pupils act as leaders for collaborative group work and recording, ensuring participation of the group while the teacher and assistant played a supportive role. In most lessons, the time with teacher talking and pupils listening far outweighed the time for a pupil talking while teacher and pupils listen.

168. Teachers make some good use of homework to reinforce and extend work begun in lessons with older pupils. They also provide a science club, which has doubled as a booster session for Year 6 pupils and provided valuable additional time to cover the curriculum for pupils who had previous gaps in their learning.
169. The subject is very well led. The subject leader has set a clear action plan, focusing on investigative skills and beginning to share assessment of work samples. Systems for assessing pupils' work are developing. In Year 5, for example, there are several good examples of assessments being used at the start and end of units of work. The school's use of tracking and target sheets in English and mathematics is not yet as well developed in science. Marking is variable. In the best instances it gives clear praise for work well done and shows clearly what is to be done to improve. For many pupils, spoken comment from teachers is far more effective. There is not yet a common framework for planning and assessment in each year group, which would assist monitoring both provision and standards. Resources are well organised, in good condition and sufficient for current need. Plans to develop the wildlife area will increase pupils' experience of this aspect of science and enhance opportunities for developing investigative skills. The use of ICT varies between classes but is largely undeveloped.

Strengths

- *standards achieved in Year 6 last year;*
- *collaborative work involving a consistently challenging focus on scientific enquiry in Year 6;*
- *good emphasis on investigative work throughout the school;*
- *additional provision in the science club.*

Areas for development

- *consistent, agreed expectations for the presentation of written work;*
- *raising awareness of the balance of time for teacher explanation and child explanation;*
- *introduction of common planning and assessment frameworks;*
- *the use of ICT;*
- *the wildlife area, as scheduled in the co-ordinator's action plan.*

ART AND DESIGN

170. Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection. Judgements are therefore mainly based on pupils' work and teachers' planning. Several samples of work were on display and in portfolios and discussions with staff and pupils also provided valuable evidence.
171. By Year 2 pupils achieve well and attain average standards for their age. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. By Year

6, pupils also achieve well and reach average standards and this is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in Year 6 were below average. There are several examples of good quality art work produced by pupils and much value is placed upon this aspect of pupils' education.

172. The main strength in art is the development of drawing techniques particularly from first-hand experience. Displays around the school indicate how well pupils' observational skills are developing. Pupils in Year 6 produce very detailed observational sketches of their shoes and trainers. They take care to produce light and dark shading to reflect the different sections of their footwear. Painting techniques have also improved recently as a result of a focused effort by the co-ordinator to improve this aspect of pupils' learning. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 use a variety of different painting techniques to create pictures of summer flowers. They successfully use screwed up rags and newspapers to paint the background for their pictures. For the foreground, they experiment using different brush techniques and colours. The finished pictures show good attention to detail and improving styles.
173. In the Year 6 lesson observed, pupils made good links with their study of the ancient Greeks in history. They discussed different characters from ancient Greece and then considered how to make masks that would instantly be recognised as a specific character. Pupils recalled information from their history study particularly well. For example, one pupil suggested a mask for *Medusa* could '*have snakes stuck on to represent Medusa's hair*'. A good discussion enabled the pupils to decide which character they would create a mask for before they work collaboratively in small groups to design and produce the mask. Different techniques and media, chosen by the pupils, were used to good effect. Accurate recall skills were demonstrated followed by imaginative ways of completing the masks. Pupils in this lesson produced work of a good standard and successfully improved their work by making informed evaluations as they progressed with the tasks.
174. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to the school to extend the range of art experiences for the pupils. All pupils had the opportunity to work with an artist in residence as they were involved in producing the '*Ellington tapestry*'. Pupils first learned how to make the felt for the squares of the tapestry and then they made individual felt flowers to fix into the squares. The quality of learning in this activity was further extended when the pupils had opportunities to compare their tapestry with works from Pakistan, Thailand and England thus enriching their cultural appreciation of art from other countries. Similarly, pupils studied art work from Tanzania and they created their own interpretations in a similar style to the Tanzanian artists. Again, the quality of work produced shows careful observational skills and an appreciation of how colour can be used to create a specific mood.
175. The quality of teaching and learning is good and results in pupils' standards improving over the last two years. Teachers make good use of art from other cultures although there is limited evidence of three dimensional work. Sketchbooks that provide an opportunity for pupils to develop and explore ideas are underused currently although this has been identified as an area for improvement. There was little evidence to indicate the use of ICT in art although this is an area the school is hoping to develop.

176. Leadership of the subject changed hands at the beginning of the year. The new subject leader is enthusiastic about her role and has made a good start. She has reorganised the room designated for art and design including making a detailed audit of resources and purchasing a greater range of media. She has improved the quality of displays of pupils' art work around the school significantly in order to celebrate their efforts. Good links have been established with another local school and the co-ordinator has improved her own knowledge and skills through effective liaison with a colleague there and through focused in-service training.

Strengths:

- *displays of pupils' work;*
- *progression of drawing techniques;*
- *use of visits and visitors to extend experiences for pupils;*
- *cultural links;*
- *improved resources.*

Areas for development:

- *improve opportunities for three dimensional work;*
- *extend the use of ICT in art by developing suitable software and enabling pupils to research artists' work on the Internet;*
- *develop the use of sketchbooks in junior classes.*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

177. Evidence was drawn from two lessons, the teachers' planning, and discussions with them and the new subject co-ordinator. Examples of pupils' finished work were seen as well as design drawings and the school's resources provision. The scheme of work and curriculum planning are based on national guidelines and time allocations for the subject are tight. In spite of this, teachers succeed in providing pupils with practical, motivating learning opportunities. As a result, progress in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject, though variable, is generally satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are slightly below those expected for their age and the use of computer-aided design is insufficiently developed to support the subject.
178. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers create enjoyable design opportunities for pupils with some effective motivating situations, often related to familiar children's literature. A good example of this was in the Year 1 lesson where the pupils made simple sliding mechanisms to create images of '*Sleeping Beauty*' when she sleeps and as she wakes up. Pupils enjoyed their work in this lesson and produced effective designs whilst succeeding well to meet their teacher's challenge.
179. In a Year 4 and 5 class, pupils learned how to handle food safely, measure ingredients accurately and how to follow instructions. They all made good progress in their understanding about the need for care and hygiene in food preparation and why this is necessary to avoid infection. The development of food technology has been a major focus in the school and chefs from the local community have visited to enhance the work the pupils do in this area. Links with a local supermarket have also made a good contribution to the study of food technology. In addition, the school has recently established a new food technology room to enable more work to be undertaken in small groups. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have also produced nesting boxes and bird feeders as part of their work and this has helped to improve the natural environment of the school.

180. Good examples from every phase of the design process occur across the school but they do not always come together in the same topic. Thus design drawings may be of good quality, but the end products show immature making skills. Unimaginatively designed products sometimes show competent joining skills. The evaluative phase is not consistently in evidence. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to improve provision. A very good example of this was the technology day planned for older pupils who worked with a visiting professional to design and make models of birds using wire netting. Older pupils also worked with the Education Business Partnership on a Windsor Castle project. After visiting the castle, pupils rose to the challenge of recreating different rooms in the castle, for example, the *Grand Reception* room and the *Crimson Drawing* room. The end products show good detail and careful making.
181. A new subject leader has recently taken over the management of the subject. She is enthusiastic and keen to establish priorities. The need for an assessment system that tracks pupils' developing skills has been identified. The school has good provision for food technology and an adequate variety of making and joining tools and materials. These are satisfactory in quantity for present needs although the co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve these once the subject has a greater profile.

Strengths:

- *good provision for food technology;*
- *use of visits and visitors to enhance learning;*
- *links with literacy.*

Areas for development:

- *consistency in teaching all the skills necessary to produce well-designed, well-made and appropriately evaluated products;*
- *development of workable whole school assessments;*
- *raise standards.*

GEOGRAPHY

182. The standards of attainment by pupils at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 are below those expected of pupils of a similar age nationally. However, there is now evidence that pupils are making satisfactory progress in both key stages. The link between work in geography and in developing literacy skills has meant that many younger pupils, particularly those with EAL, have begun to experience success. For older pupils, whilst earlier provision failed to give them a secure foundation of knowledge and skills, recent developments in geography have helped to raise levels of achievement.
183. In Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to show an awareness of the features of the area around the school. For example, pupils investigate local issues, such as parking, and carry out small surveys. Investigations involve observational field-work and making maps and plans. Pupils identify similarities and differences between the local area and a contrasting one, such as the seaside. In one lesson, pupils listened to a poem about waves and then considered photographs of the seaside. Pupils responded well and exchanged ideas. Skilful questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to extend and open up their responses.

184. In Key Stage 2, pupils focus on topics such as the weather, water, investigating rivers and contrasting localities. Recently, interactive books on CD Rom have been purchased, enabling pupils to write reports and send postcards. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent project on rivers that involved a boat trip on the River Thames and an examination of how locks work. They also spoke about doing work on the weather in Year 5. However, in discussion, they appeared to have had little experience of geographical terms, of making comparisons and of mapping skills. The school is aware of this and one of the key tasks of the geography co-ordinator is to raise achievement in geography.
185. The teaching observed reflected effective planning, resourcing and organisation. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning, which is characterised by pupils being motivated and involved in discussions. The focus on oral work is particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Activities are differentiated into support, core and extension, facilitating the involvement of all pupils. High quality displays around the school help to bring the subject to life. Artefacts from China, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines are on display, as well as models of a mosque and a church from the local area. A display on river ecology, clearly linked to Year 6 work, whilst one on *'What can you see at the seaside?'* related to Key Stage 1 work.
186. Leadership and management are sound. The subject leader is currently introducing schemes of work in an attempt to integrate history and geography across the curriculum. There is a two year rolling programme in order to cater for mixed aged classes. Planning follows national guidelines and is monitored by the co-ordinator. ICT is beginning to be used and older pupils are starting to research websites to gain information. There are assessment records but the co-ordinator has yet to sample pupils' work in order to cross-reference.

Strengths:

- *high quality displays bring geography to life;*
- *clear link between work in geography and literacy skills;*
- *sound leadership.*

Areas for development:

- *introduce systematic sampling of pupils' work to cross-reference with assessment;*
- *extend pupils' knowledge of geographical terminology;*
- *continue to develop strategies to improve attainment.*

HISTORY

187. Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection. Based on this lesson, pupils' work, talking to teachers and looking at their planning, standards are below average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Most pupils however, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, achieve well. In the more open-ended activities, as in the lesson seen, higher attaining pupils also achieve well. On some occasions, particularly in some of the worksheet based tasks, there is not enough challenge for these pupils.
188. The school is in the process of implementing a well-balanced framework that gives teachers clear advice on what is to be taught in each class. Using guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, this ensures good coverage of the National Curriculum. It also provides for the systematic development of

knowledge and skills as pupils move through the school and therefore successfully addresses weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection.

189. Teachers promote pupils' interest in the past initially by focussing their attention on toys and other familiar objects. They encourage them to look for differences between then and now. In Year 2 their understanding of the passing of time is promoted through the use of time lines and the sequencing of episodes in the lives of people like Samuel Pepys and events such as the Great Fire of London. There is little evidence of the use of sources of information to answer questions and poor literacy skills limit the opportunities for free writing.
190. In Years 3 and 4 the good volume of pupils' earlier work shows that they have made very good gains and many of them are working at or close to expected levels. When learning about Anglo-Saxon invaders they are provided with fact sheets at an appropriate level with focused questions to research. For example where did they come from, why did they come, how did they travel, how would you feel if you were there? Questions such as these help the pupils to develop the important skills of historical enquiry.
191. In Years 4 and 5 there is more limited evidence of pupils' earlier work on the Tudors and their current study of ancient Egypt. This applies also to work on the Victorians and Ancient Greece in Year 6. This suggests that topics are not being covered in sufficient depth to enable pupils to acquire the particular study skills of history. Quite rightly the development of literacy skills has been, and continues to be, a high priority for the school. Within this context, and especially in Year 6, history has been used effectively to provide opportunities for imaginative writing, as in pupils' interesting versions of the Greek legend of Perseus.
192. Pupils' work indicates that teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. In the lesson seen the teaching was good. It was well planned and through skilful questioning the teacher involved all pupils fully in the discussion. This required careful management to ensure that the more exuberant boys did not dominate. Despite this, frequent calling out by a minority of pupils, mainly boys, was a distraction. Pupils showed good recall of facts about Greek theatre learned in earlier lessons and tackled the task of writing a play script enthusiastically.
193. The way in which pupils record and present their work is an issue that needs to be addressed by the whole school. At the moment a considerable amount of the work is worksheet based. Some of the worksheets are of good quality, but work is not always well-presented. There is more scope also for pupils to work independently.
194. The subject leader is enthusiastic and has a clear view of what has already been achieved and what needs to be done next. She is introducing an assessment sheet to check on pupils' understanding at the end of each study unit with helpful guidance on what is to be expected at each level. This could usefully be extended by developing a portfolio of samples of pupils' work to clarify this further. Resources are generally satisfactory, but the development of books, photographs and artefacts is a key area for future development. Educational visits are used effectively to support pupils' learning by bringing the past alive. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Strengths:

- *curriculum framework in place;*
- *knowledgeable subject leader;*
- *contribution to cultural development.*

Areas for development:

- *resources;*
- *pupils' organisation and presentation of work;*
- *further guidance for teachers on what is to be expected in each year;*
- *greater emphasis on the particular skills of history.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

195. Standards in ICT in Year 2 are below average and in Year 6 they are well below average. This is broadly similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. Until recently problems with equipment and limited staff expertise meant that ICT skills were not being taught systematically and developed. This is most evident with older pupils, especially those in Year 6. Pupils are only just beginning to make the necessary progress in lessons to address this. The school has sensibly chosen to focus on developing one area of skill at a time rather than giving limited coverage across the whole range. This has meant a strong focus on word processing skills. However, overall progress is still slow. Many pupils do not have access to computers out of school, so for most their relatively short sessions in the ICT suite are not yet sufficient to address the problem.
196. Recent considerable improvements in resources, teacher confidence and the adoption of national guidelines as the basis of planning in the subject mean that the school is now well placed to move forward rapidly. There is now a computer suite for whole class use as well as computers for individual use in classrooms. Internet access and the recent purchase of a laptop, interactive screen and projector have extended this capability further. Since the last inspection, national expectations in ICT have risen and the subject curriculum has become more demanding, as equipment has become more sophisticated. All the teachers have benefited from national training. Subject plans now cover all strands of the subject including control technology and modelling. They are currently being extended and supported by the introduction of a commercial scheme.
197. Throughout the school pupils have learnt to log on, select the program they need and are beginning to use the toolbar or drop down menus with growing confidence. All are developing the use of the mouse to control, select and confirm choices and older pupils are growing confident in their use of the keyboard. In the ICT suite pupils from the Year 1/ 2 class, creating pictures of the 'rainbow bird', experimented with the capabilities of a new paint program using some of the techniques they had learnt on a simpler program on their class computer. Work on display showed how they had published poems about the 'Mixed up Chameleon' with words highlighted in red for emphasis. Another group in the same class recalled how to program a floor robot to move specified distances. They had good input from the nursery nurse and devised a series of instructions, including 90 degree turns, to take it to a specific point.
198. In Year 6 pupils know how to create short passages of text in which they vary the font and correct errors. When using the Internet they know how to enter a website address, scroll through information and locate a home page. Under their teacher's direction they found out more about microbes for their work in science. Many also knew how to use a search engine and could recall researching

information about Ancient Egypt and Greece, but no other recent uses of ICT. Pupils' work on display shows how skills are being developed and an increasing level of challenge introduced. In the Year 3/ 4 class display showed how they had used Word Art to publish their sea poems reflecting the meaning or sound of the word in the style of print. In the Year 4/ 5 class pupils had used a spreadsheet to record and display data about the frequency with which letters occurred.

199. ICT is being used to support learning in other subjects and, although this is not yet a consistent feature across the school, there are some examples of good practice. It is used well to support and encourage younger pupils to sharpen their mental arithmetic skills. Older pupils use the Internet to research work for other subjects. Good use of the interactive board captured pupils' attention and interest in a Year 4/ 5 RE lesson. The same class used a composer program to experiment with sound and create their own arrangements. Examples in the corridors and classrooms show good use of ICT by teachers to label work and present information texts. However, very little use was made of the computers in most classrooms during the inspection. The headteacher made good use of ICT in assembly to show how 'Our roots are in God'. This raised the profile of the subject further.
200. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls with most pupils working individually at the computers. Pupils with special educational needs as well as those for whom English is an additional language are supported well by their teachers, teaching assistants and classmates and achieve equally well. Pupils enjoy using the computers. They work well in their lessons, sustaining concentration for extended periods and often working largely independently.
201. In the three sessions in the ICT suite teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to good with most good. However, overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although standards are improving in a significant proportion of the work seen, this is largely due to pupils experimenting with programs and developing skills incidentally, rather than systematic teaching or the use of new resources. There is a close correlation between teaching and learning with pupils making the greatest progress in lessons where teachers are confident, knowledgeable and have a clear idea how to develop pupils' understanding. A system of monitoring and assessing ICT now needs to be developed that ensures pupils progress at the expected rate and cover the planned curriculum at a level suitable for their age. The subject leader is supported well by the authority and neighbouring schools. The subject action plan notes the need to increase the use being made of ICT in other subjects and develop the use of resources, particularly the whiteboard.

Strengths

- *pupils' attitudes to the subject;*
- *resources;*
- *developing staff confidence and knowledge;*
- *subject leader's expertise.*

Areas for development

- *systematic teaching of skills;*
- *greater opportunities for pupils' to use resources;*
- *monitoring and assessment in the subject;*
- *use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.*

MUSIC

202. Little music was timetabled during the inspection, but from the evidence of a Key Stage 2 singing practice, one lesson with younger pupils, discussion with the subject leader and informal conversations with pupils, standards at age eleven are well below average. There was insufficient evidence to judge current standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils of all abilities and cultural backgrounds make insufficient progress overall.
203. Since the last inspection there has been no improvement in standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Although the subject leader has introduced support materials for teachers, several staff lack the confidence to deliver the subject. Training introduced after the last inspection and led by the subject leader, had little impact, as it occurred during a period of staff turnover. For example, at a review in-service session a year after the last inspection, the subject leader found only one member of staff still at the school. It was impossible to build on the initial session. Staffing has been stable for only the past eighteen months, during which time music has not been a priority.
204. Although teaching and learning were good in both of the sessions observed, the standards achieved show that the school has not successfully addressed the key issue from the last inspection about teaching. While plans show a structured programme of work in place, what is delivered is not successful in building on pupils' previous learning. Teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory.
205. Pupils in Year 1 understand that some percussion instruments make a long sound and some a short sound, but they are hesitant about choosing an appropriate instrument to accompany the pulse of 'Hickory Dickory Dock'. With the advantage of a high staffing ratio, two teachers and an adult volunteer ensured full inclusion of pupils with statements of educational need in the lesson. It took the consistent watchful effort of the class teacher to keep all pupils on task, however, while the teacher with subject expertise kept the lesson moving at the required pace. One pupil recognised that the ocean drum made a sound 'like the sea' and most pupils used shakers in time with the pulse of 'row, row, row the boat', as the teacher played the piano, stopping quickly as the melody stopped. Pupils achieved well in the lesson because of the clear focus and the control ensured by the class teacher's presence, but the 45-minute lesson was too long for both the reception children and Year 1 pupils.
206. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 followed the lead of two teachers to tap their heads, shoulders and thighs in time to the pulse, as they listened to 'Arrival of the Queen of Sheba'. Most pupils kept the pulse, but several in each age group found this difficult. Pupils enjoyed taking a deep breath without moving their shoulders and a few recognised and used terms like 'pianissimo' and 'forte'. One boy sang confidently to lead the school in a Native American song 'Kumala Vista'. While pupils echoed the rhythm patterns, singing was not very tuneful. Pupils also kept in time with the two teachers as they sang the 'Pizza Hut' round in two parts, but again singing was not very tuneful. In an assembly, the use of an African Welcome song showed the school's strong focus on using music from across the world. Most pupils clearly enjoyed the song selection, although the oldest did not participate so well in singing activities that involved actions.
207. Resources are satisfactory and include a good range of percussion instruments. The subject leader is part-time and has to prioritise her work with the speech and

language unit. Although her subject skills are used well in weekly singing and occasional class lessons, this cannot substitute for staff training and greater rigour in management of the music curriculum to ensure it is delivered consistently in all classes. No assessment procedures are in place and there are no additional musical activities such as choir or recorders. The school does involve pupils in extra singing on festival occasions such as at Christmas and has received visits from local education authority musicians and Indian Dancers to raise the subject's profile. The school currently provides no instrumental tuition. The stated school improvement target is similar to the key issue from the last inspection 'to raise standards in music by implementing the scheme of work'.

Strengths

- *use of songs from around the world;*
- *subject leader's expertise and knowledge.*

Areas for improvement

- *standards*
- *consistent implementation of the planned music curriculum;*
- *monitoring of music provision;*
- *raising the profile of the subject;*
- *staff confidence and expertise.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

208. In order to maximise the use of the school's outdoor pool, swimming is the only aspect of physical education taught during the second half of the summer term. Two swimming lessons were seen during the inspection. Judgements, therefore are based on the limited evidence of these lessons, discussions with staff and pupils and teachers' planning.
209. Standards in swimming are below average. No judgement was made at the last inspection so it is not possible to make comparisons. The overall provision for physical education noted at that time has been strengthened by the introduction of a wider range of extra-curricular activities. In discussion with pupils it is clear that they enjoy their lessons and take part enthusiastically in these additional activities.
210. There is a sound planning framework in place which ensures good coverage of each of the strands of physical education except outdoor and adventure activities. It is based on national guidelines and provides guidance for teachers about activities and skills development. However, there is no overview of the systematic development of skills in areas such as athletics, dance, games, gymnastics and swimming. There is currently very little monitoring of work or teaching in this area.
211. In the swimming lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. Teachers are good role models, confident and secure in their approach. Year 6 pupils made good gains in front crawl technique as a result of the teacher's close monitoring of their performance and the helpful feedback she provided to the whole group and to individuals. In Year 4 and 5 the teacher focused on groups of less confident pupils. With her calm and encouraging manner she quickly gained their trust and confidence and they persevered well to follow her instructions carefully. Despite this good teaching, standards remain below average. This is partly explained by the limited amount of time spent in the pool. For cultural reasons boys and girls swim separately. This not only reduces their time in the water but with current arrangements leads to a considerable amount of time spent waiting on the

poolside. The time could be spent, for example, on developing pupils' skills of self and peer assessment.

212. The subject leader is a recent appointment and as physical education is not a focus for development there have been few opportunities for her to develop her leadership role. However, with the support of colleagues, she helps to enhance the curriculum through her involvement in the very good range of extra-curricular activities. These include opportunities for pupils to work with visiting sports specialists as well as their teachers. This gives them the chance to work alongside their friends from other classes while following and developing their particular interests. It also introduces an element of competition when they compete against other schools meeting pupils from different cultures and backgrounds. These activities make a significant contribution to their personal development. Resources are adequate although facilities and accommodation are very good as is the potential for improvement.

Strengths include:

- *curriculum framework in place;*
- *pupils' enthusiasm;*
- *provision for extra-curricular activities;*
- *accommodation and facilities for physical education.*

Areas for development include:

- *outdoor and adventure activities;*
- *full involvement of pupils in swimming lessons;*
- *more specific learning objectives;*
- *the role of the subject leader.*
-

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

213. As at the time of the last inspection the limited examples of pupils' recorded work available means it is not possible to make secure judgements about standards in Years 2 and 6. However, teachers' planning, displays, lessons and discussions with teachers and pupils indicate that work is planned following the locally agreed syllabus and that pupils are developing sound knowledge of the world's major faiths and in relating them to their own lives and experiences. This is an improvement since the last inspection when many pupils' knowledge of different faiths was judged as limited. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive good support from their teachers and learning support assistants and achieve equally well as their classmates. Throughout the school great sensitivity is shown in the discussion and consideration of religious beliefs and a climate of mutual trust created in which pupils learn about other faiths and share their own ideas and beliefs.

214. There is a suitable emphasis on alerting pupils to aspects of the 'deeper meanings' of life that religions seek to explain. Pupils in Year 1 consider the natural changes that occur as people and plants grow and learn about the early stages of life. Close study of tadpoles and sequencing the life cycle of the frog introduces the idea of birth as the beginning of a journey. By Year 2 pupils are beginning to consider the meaning of the Parable of the Talents although they found it difficult to recall elements of the story. However, attempts to extend their understanding by expressing and recording their own ideas about items of value and what God's treasures might be were less successful.

215. By Year 6 pupils have explored and compared many of the major events in both the Christian and Muslim calendar. They have begun to draw on both their own experiences and those of others to develop an understanding of the significance of ceremonies and traditions in different faiths. For example, they interviewed a Hajj pilgrim about the festival experience and learnt that the seven circuits allowed a new beginning. They had also reflected on the significance of sacred places and thought about seeking forgiveness, refuge, meditation and worship.
216. Pupils are progressively developing an understanding of the rites of passage as, for example, in a Year 4 and 5 class they considered the diary of a Christian girl and thought about the commitment that baptism represents. Pupils are being introduced to stories from the Old and New Testament and those in a Year 3 and 4 class have recently looked at the story of Noah and the flood and learnt that the rainbow signified God's promise. They have also noted significant events from the lives of Jesus, Mohammad, Guru Nanak and Moses. Opportunities for reflection occur as Year 2 pupils join in thank you prayers and pupils in Years 3 and 4 write promises to help and be kind to others.
217. Good use is made of artefacts, visits and visitors to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a Year 3 and 4 class pupils learnt from the local vicar about his role and work in the community and gained an understanding of the significance of the cross for Christians. His explanation of the work of Christian Aid gave them a better understanding of responsibilities to others in the wider community. Observational drawings of architectural features of the local Roman Catholic Church and Mosque extended pupils' understanding of the importance of symbolism. This was extended well by a whole school assembly that included a Power Point presentation of symbols of Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity and Hinduism during which candles were lit in the manner of each religion.
218. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good. Pupils make good progress and attain well because of their teachers' thorough preparation, well focused approach and good use of questioning to develop their thinking and understanding. Teachers make good use of different techniques to capture and maintain pupils' interest as for example the interactive board to display the girl's diary in the Year 4 and 5 class and the treasure box of family photographs in the Year 1 and 2 lesson. They are also careful to compensate for pupils' often limited literacy skills through the use of worksheets. This is a common feature of work throughout the school and although teachers work hard to develop pupils' skills of speaking and listening the problems many pupils have with recording means that there is often little written work in the subject beyond sequencing of pictures from worksheets. This approach does not help with the pupils' retention of information or the development of their understanding.
219. The new subject leader is developing an overview and is involved in long term planning for the subject. Monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject is at an early stage of development and the limited amount of written work restricts opportunities for assessing and recording pupils' progress other than informally. Resources are sufficient and have recently been supplemented. The use of ICT to support learning in the subject is at an early stage.

Strengths

- *good teaching and good use of techniques to capture pupils' interest;*
- *links with local churches, mosque and representatives of major faiths;*
- *balanced coverage of elements of major faiths in atmosphere of mutual trust.*

Areas for development

- *use of ICT to support learning in the subject;*
- *pupils' written recording of work in the subject.*