

INSPECTION REPORT

BEECHFIELD SCHOOL

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117094

Headteacher: Mr Michael Lovett

Reporting inspector: Mrs E W D Gill
17766

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 November 2002

Inspection number: 247717

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary with Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Gammons Lane
Watford
Hertfordshire

Postcode: WD24 5TY

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Dr David Brooks

Date of previous inspection: 28 February, 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17766	Eira Gill	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage, science, music, English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9053	Vivienne Phillips	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?
23233	Jo-Anne Cheadle	Team inspector	English, design technology, information and communication technology, geography, Educational Inclusion, including race equality.	How well is the school led and managed?
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics, physical education, religious education and special educational needs.	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
18814	George Crowther	Team inspector	Art and design and history.	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20
PROVISION FOR PUPILS LEARNING ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Beechfield Community School educates boys and girls aged between three and eleven years. There are 211 pupils on roll and the school is broadly average in size. This represents a decline in numbers since the last inspection when 269 pupils were on roll. The percentage of pupils who have joined or left the school other than at the time of usual admission is higher than average. There are 21 children in the reception year, of whom 12 attend part-time. Twenty-three children attend the nursery part-time. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is below average. However, this does vary year on year and the attainment of the present group of children in the reception class is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average compared to national statistics, although the numbers in each year group vary considerably. The range of needs covers mostly moderate learning difficulties as well as behavioural difficulties, complex speech problems and hearing impairment. More than half of the pupils on roll are from ethnic minority backgrounds and a similar number are learning English as an additional language with a high proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English. The most common language is Urdu. This is a high percentage compared with the national picture. The inspection team has been asked specifically to report on the provision the school makes for pupils with English as an additional language. The school has had a considerable turnover of teachers during the past two years and there are still difficulties appointing permanent staff. This has affected the quality of teaching and learning in a minority of classes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Beechfield is an improving school and provides a sound quality of education for the pupils. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and good subject management of English and information and communication technology has resulted in an improvement in standards. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. However, in a small minority of lessons in Years 3 – 6, teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. Standards of attainment have improved in English in the end of Year 2 and Year 6 national tests but not in mathematics and science. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science, which represents an improvement on the 2002 test results. Many pupils start school with considerable weaknesses in their knowledge and skills, particularly in English, but most pupils achieve in line with their abilities and well in English. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and pupils from different ethnic minorities well. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and are highly committed to the school. The sense of community and racial harmony in the school is strong. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Provision for English, including literacy, is good and pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- Very good provision in the nursery and reception unit gives the children a good start to their education.
- Good provision for pupils learning English as an additional language and for those pupils with special educational needs results in good progress.
- A high quality of care is provided for all pupils and ensures good relationships.
- Very good assessment of end of year tests leads to identification of strengths and weaknesses and good progress is made by specific groups of pupils.
- Good links with most parents are having an impact on the progress of their children.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in mathematics and science are too low.
- A few aspects of teaching in Years 3 to 6 are affecting standards of attainment.
- The range of opportunities offered to pupils in art and design, design and technology, history, music and drama is narrow and results in pupils having few creative experiences.
- Attendance is poor and is affecting the progress of pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February, 2000 when it was judged to be underachieving. Since then, the school has improved satisfactorily and has the capacity to improve further. The key issues for action identified by that inspection have been tackled effectively with the exception of raising standards in science. The weaknesses identified in the teaching of science in the last inspection have not been addressed until this term. Standards have improved in information and communication technology. Regular monitoring of teaching and subject development now takes place and has resulted in a better quality of teaching. The governors have become more effective. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is now good.

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	D	D	B
Mathematics	E*	E	E	E
Science	E	E	E*	E

Key	
highest 5% nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
lowest 5% nationally	E*

The school's performance in English has improved and is now above average compared to similar schools. In science, results were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. The school was successful in reaching the target it had set itself for test results in English but not in mathematics although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics improved. Boys outperformed girls in all three subjects but no significant difference was observed in the work of the current Year 6 pupils. The attainment of the pupils with English as an additional language has improved significantly over previous years. The school has set itself very challenging targets for test results in English and mathematics next year. Over the past four years, results have improved overall at a similar rate to the national trend.

In the nursery and reception unit, children achieve well, but very few will reach the expected standard by the time they join Year 1, except in their personal, social and emotional development and physical skills. In Years 1 to 2, pupils' achievement is good in English, satisfactory in mathematics and unsatisfactory in science. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 last term show that pupils had improved in their writing but standards were still well below average in reading and mathematics. Inspection findings are that standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 are below average in English and mathematics and well below in science. In the national tests, girls outperformed boys in reading

and mathematics but, during the inspection, no significant difference was observed in the work of the current Year 2 pupils.

Standards of attainment in the current Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. However, the achievement of pupils is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and science. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is good when their low prior attainment is considered. Pupils who have joined the school other than at the usual time of admission achieve in line with their abilities. In ICT, geography and religious education, standards of attainment are satisfactory and the achievement of pupils is good because the curriculum is well structured in those subjects. In all other subjects attainment and achievement are satisfactory, except for design and technology, where not enough time is given to teaching the subject in some classes.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils are happy to come to school. They work hard in most lessons. When teaching is weak, pupils are restless and do not pay attention.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Pupils behave well around the school and most behave well in lessons. A few pupils have difficulties in concentrating and this occasionally disrupts their learning and that of others. There have been no exclusions of pupils during the previous school year.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Personal development is satisfactory and relationships are good. The school community is happy and harmonious with a lack of racism and bullying.
Attendance	Poor. There is a higher incidence of illness than is usual and too many avoidable absences affect the progress of individual pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall due, in part, to the accumulative problems the school has experienced in recruitment. However, the teaching seen in lessons has improved significantly since the last inspection and was judged to be good or better in three out of four lessons. There were weaknesses in Years 4 and 5 where teaching in a small minority of lessons was unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning for the children in the nursery and reception unit are very good and a wide range of well-chosen activities helps the children to grow in confidence and make very good progress. In Years 1 – 6, the teaching of English, including literacy, is good and has improved since the last inspection. The teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is satisfactory overall. Most teachers prepare lessons very carefully and have good skills in managing pupils' behaviour, which can be challenging. As a result, in many lessons, the pupils enjoy their work and make good gains in learning. A good feature of teaching is the fast pace and this results in pupils working productively. In addition, the very good use of additional specialised teachers and support staff results in pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language making

good progress. Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils and are striving to ensure that good learning takes place in lessons. Where teaching was weak, poor planning resulted in pupils not knowing what they were supposed to be learning and explanations at the beginning of lessons were either too brief or very confusing due to the teachers' unsatisfactory subject knowledge.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Effective strategies are in place for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the school offers a culturally diverse curriculum to all pupils. The range of opportunities planned in creative subjects, such as art and design and design and technology, and in history, is narrow and uneven throughout the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The effective support by the special needs teacher and assistants ensures that the pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are supported well and make good progress so that their attainment is in line with that of other pupils by the end of Year 6.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good in social, moral and cultural development, but the curriculum in art and design, music, drama and dance does not contribute as consistently as is usual in most schools.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The care given to the pupils is of high quality with very good steps taken to ensure pupils' health and safety and well-being. Child protection procedures are very good.
How well does the school use the information from assessment	Assessment is good overall. Very good use is made of the analysis of end of year tests that identifies strengths and weaknesses of all pupils, but also those of different groups of pupils.
How effective is the partnership with parents	The school works well in partnership with parents. Good links have been established with most parents but some parents could do more to support their children's education by ensuring that they attend regularly.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. Standards of attainment and other aspects of the school have improved under the leadership of the headteacher. The headteacher has suitable skills and competencies to manage the school, but he does not always employ them rigorously enough. He is supported well by an effective deputy as well as his senior management team and other co-ordinators. All staff are committed to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are knowledgeable and skilled. They provide clear strategic direction for the school and provide effective support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is now good. Arrangements for performance appraisal are satisfactory overall.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Specific grants are used effectively, for example, to pay for extra specialist staff.
Accommodation and facilities	Accommodation is good and there are satisfactory learning resources.
Staffing	The school has had significant difficulties recruiting suitably trained class teachers and this has affected the quality of teaching.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and they make good progress.• The teaching is good; teachers have high expectations and help their children to be mature and responsible.• The behaviour of pupils is good and their children are given the right amount of homework.• They are well informed about progress and feel comfortable to approach the school with problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the pre-inspection meeting for parents, a very small minority expressed strong feelings that the school is not meeting the needs of children with special educational needs.

The inspection team broadly agrees with the parents' positive views but disagrees with the negative views expressed. Inspectors judged that the school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

(Pupils' attainment is what they know, understand and can do at a particular point in time, for example at the end of Year 2. Pupils' achievements are the progress they make in relation to their initial attainment. Therefore a child starting school with low attainment may achieve well but still not reach the nationally expected standard of attainment.)

1. The attainment of the children when they start school is below average although this varies from year to year and the attainment of the children in the current reception group is well below average. Currently, about half of the children in the nursery are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Very good teaching in the nursery and reception unit ensures that children achieve well in all areas of learning. However, despite this, very few are likely to attain the early learning goals in their communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Most of the children should reach the expected standard in their personal, emotional and social development and physical skills. Overall, therefore, when they join Year 1, pupils' attainment remains below average.
2. In the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, results were well below average in reading and mathematics and below in writing. However, compared to similar schools the pupils' results were in line in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. There is no national test in science in Year 2, but based on teachers' assessments, attainment in science was well below average. These results have improved since the time of the last inspection. The comparison with national trends shows that results are improving better than the national average at the end of Year 2. Girls have outperformed boys in reading and mathematics recent test results but, during the inspection, no significant difference was observed in the work of the current Year 2 pupils.
3. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment in the current Year 2 are below average in English and mathematics and well below in science. Overall, pupils begin Year 1 with skills that are below average compared with what is expected nationally. In addition, there has been a significant turnover of teachers in Years 1 and 2 and this has affected the progress the pupils have made but, despite this, the current pupils are attaining better in English and mathematics than indicated by last year's test results. The achievement of all pupils is good in English. In mathematics, achievement is satisfactory but the achievement of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is good due to the effective support they receive.
4. In science, the achievement of all pupils is unsatisfactory because not enough time is given to teaching science in Years 1 and 2. Standards of attainment are average in information and communication technology (ICT), geography and religious education and achievement is good for pupils of all abilities in these subjects because they are enthusiastic in lessons to answer questions and work well. In design and technology and physical education, standards of attainment are average and achievement satisfactory. In art and history, standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory. No judgement could be made about music as only one lesson was observed in Year 1. Overall, attainment is about the same as at the last inspection,

but pupils' achievement has improved in ICT as a result of the new ICT suite together with improvement in the quality of teaching.

5. Results of the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 were below average in English, well below in mathematics and, in science, they were among the lowest 5 per cent in the country. However, the school's performance improved in English and is better than the national trend. Improvement in mathematics is in line with the national trend. The school reached its target in English but did not reach the more ambitious target in mathematics. Attainment in English and mathematics has improved since the national tests in 2000. However, in science, attainment has declined. A weakness identified in the last report was that not enough time was allocated to the teaching of science until the pupils moved into Year 6. This significant weakness continued until a new co-ordinator was appointed at the end of last term and she has ensured that the time allocation is now good and has also introduced a new organisation of teaching to the mixed year group. This is already having an impact on standards in the current work seen in the inspection. The data produced for the end of Year 6 tests in 2002 shows that the boys outperformed girls in mathematics and science. However, no significant difference was observed in lessons or the work scrutiny of the current Year 6 pupils.
6. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards of attainment in the current Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. This shows improvement on the results of the 2002 national tests in mathematics and science. In English, achievement during Years 3 – 6 for pupils of all abilities is good. In mathematics, achievement is satisfactory for all pupils although the achievement of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is good because of the good support they receive. In science, achievement is satisfactory for all pupils while achievement for pupils who are learning English is good as a direct result of the good support they are given by the specialist teachers and classroom assistants.
7. Good improvement in the quality of teaching is ensuring good progress in most lessons. Pupils attain average standards and their achievement is good in ICT, geography and physical education because the curriculum is well structured in these subjects. In religious education, attainment matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus because the school values and celebrates the religious diversity within its community and pupils are very interested in the subject. Attainment in Year 6 is below average in design and technology, history and art and design. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn in all aspects of these subjects throughout the school. Overall, except for a decline in design and technology, attainment is about the same as reported in the last inspection and pupils now make better progress in ICT.
8. Most of the time, in English, pupils of all abilities achieve well and parents are pleased with their children's rate of progress. Where work is matched well to their needs, such as in literacy and numeracy, or where they receive targeted support from teachers and assistants, pupils with special educational needs make good gains in learning towards the targets set for them. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those from different ethnic backgrounds make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Year 6 test results in 2002 shows that the majority of these pupils have caught up with all pupils and have made good progress through Years 3 – 6. Pupils who have joined the school other than at the usual time of admission achieve in line with their abilities. The rate of improvement has been satisfactory overall in standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development were described in a very positive way in the last inspection report. Most pupils behave well most of the time but attitudes and behaviour are more inconsistent than they appeared to be in the past. This is because within each class a few children find it harder than others to behave as expected and to concentrate on their learning. They are at an earlier stage in their social development, or have particular difficulties that affect their responses to the school's considerable efforts to encourage good conduct. In a challenging context, the school remains an orderly and friendly place because of the hard work done by staff to encourage good behaviour. This represents satisfactory improvement.
10. In the nursery and reception class, most of the children sit quietly and listen when in whole-class sessions. However, the younger children in the nursery find it more difficult not to call out inappropriately. The behaviour of all the children is usually good and, in the reception group, most of the children have an awareness of the expectations set by the teacher and assistants. When they work together in groups, they co-operate well. All pupils join in with an activity provided with enthusiasm and a few in the reception group persist for a reasonable period of time at an activity. The independence of the reception children is developing well through the lists organised up by the teacher when the children are expected to find out what they will be doing in an English lesson, for example.
11. Overall, throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language have good attitudes to most class, group and individual activities. They clearly enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their learning. However, when teaching is weak, the pupils' attention span is short and they lack concentration. Occasionally, the younger pupils in the school who are at an early stage of learning English have difficulty concentrating and listening to the teacher even with the support of their classroom assistant and when teaching is good. The teachers of these younger pupils have to work very hard to motivate them and keep them on task.
12. Pupils of all ages like school, as parents indicated. They enjoy making friends and taking part in different activities in and out of the classroom. When lessons are lively and tasks are matched very carefully to individual strengths and weaknesses with a sharp focus on what pupils need to learn, pupils work hard and with enthusiasm. Overall, pupils show less natural curiosity for exploring objects and ideas than usual, unless stimulated by high quality teaching. This was seen in imaginative role-play with Year 2, where the teacher pretended to be about to use electrical equipment in an unsafe way but was stopped by her assistant posing as the 'electrical safety officer' to help pupils explore the dangers of electricity. Adults have to do more than is usually the case with pupils to encourage and coax them to have a go and to work independently. As a result, their attitudes to learning are satisfactory, but not as well developed as their general enjoyment of school life.
13. Overall, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and most parents indicated that they are satisfied with behaviour in the school. Most behave well in and out of lessons and are polite and friendly. Incidents of bullying are rare and discouraged well. There have been no exclusions during the previous school year. In a few isolated instances, unruly behaviour in lessons has an impact on pupils' learning. Several of the younger pupils find it very hard to settle and to concentrate on a task for more than a short time. The experience of a few pupils of what is expected in different places and at different times is quite limited. They do not always understand the importance of listening to others and trying to follow instructions. The school recognises that this affects achievement. It is working on improvements in behaviour and co-operation, with some success evident in better lessons.

14. Pupils' personal development and relationships are satisfactory overall. When children join the school, their experiences of the world and of playing together vary considerably. For many, school is their first opportunity to spend time regularly with a range of other children. It takes time for them to develop skills such as sharing, taking turns and accepting that not everyone can win a game. A few children have particular difficulty in seeing that what they do affects others. For instance, in lessons where one or two pupils were noisy and uncooperative, they did not always recognise that this was making it hard for others to do their best even when teachers pointed it out. By the age of 10 or 11, most pupils show good levels of respect for different views and beliefs. Racial harmony and a sense of community within the school are strong and this is exemplified in the playground when pupils from different backgrounds play happily together. Relationships among pupils and between adults and children are good and this is the result of the good provision for social and cultural development. As one or two parents commented, this harmony among pupils of different backgrounds is a particular strength in the pupils' personal development.
15. Attendance has declined since the last inspection. It is poor in comparison with the national average, mainly for reasons beyond the school's control. A few pupils are absent more often than usual because of chronic ill health. The incidence of other genuine illness is high, for demographic reasons explained by the education welfare service. Nevertheless, the school recognises that it needs to do all it can to ensure that pupils attend regularly and punctually so that they have every chance to achieve the standards of which they are capable. The number of families that take extended term time holidays is falling as parents begin to recognise that such absences affect their children's progress. The school works very well with the education welfare officer to explain to parents that missed lessons in literacy and numeracy in particular, make it hard for children to keep up and to learn enough. A few families allow children to be absent without good reason on too many odd days throughout term. This slows their progress because they miss too much work over the course of a year and in their time at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and, in the lessons seen, has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The response from parents showed that the majority believe that teaching is good. The quality of teaching and learning was at least satisfactory in 92 per cent of lessons. It was good or better in three out of four lessons and very good in one out of three lessons. A very small proportion of teaching was excellent. In Years 3 – 6, the quality of teaching and learning in a small minority of lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory.
17. The quality and teaching for children in the nursery and reception unit is very good in all areas of learning. The teacher and assistants know the children very well as individuals and have developed warm relationships with them. Very effective assessment is made of the children's progress and, as a result, children learn very well. Staff manage children very well and all staff provide caring support and guidance. They listen to what the children have to say and, when working with them, demonstrate good skills in helping the children to develop their language skills.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. Many strategies and teaching programmes are used to ensure that the pupils make good progress when they are withdrawn from the class to receive more specific help. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are well supported by the part-time special educational needs teacher and effective teaching assistants. There are good liaison procedures between the teachers and assistants and this ensures that they provide good support for pupils. Work is modified to meet their needs and classroom assistants

keep pupils focused on their work and aware of the specific targets in their individual education plans. Information and communication technology is particularly effective in motivating pupils, who show confidence and independence when using computers. In most classes, good behaviour management minimises the effect of the behavioural difficulties of a few pupils on the learning of other pupils. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils learning English as an additional language is also good.

19. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported by the three specialist Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy (EMAS) teachers and bi-lingual assistants and the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The three part-time teachers work closely together and with the class teachers to ensure that pupils are well supported throughout Years 1 – 6. During most lessons pupils are given support either by the class teachers, the EMAS teachers or by the bi-lingual and other assistants. All adults work well together and, on a few occasions, the EMAS teachers shared teaching with the class teachers. This proved to be very effective and the pupils made very good progress in those lessons. Groups of pupils are withdrawn by the teachers or assistants for short, focused lessons that help the pupils make good progress in aspects of English, mathematics or science, for example, learning to spell words they are going to use in science. This helps the pupils make better progress in their lessons when they rejoin the class.
20. Over time, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 because the standards pupils have attained in the national tests in mathematics and science, in particular, do not match a picture of good teaching. The cumulative impact of frequent changes of teachers has affected the quality of teaching overall, as has the lower than usual allocation of time given to teaching science. Several strengths in the quality of teaching and learning were observed throughout the school during the inspection but there are weaknesses in Years 4 and 5. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were judged to be good throughout Years 1 – 6 in English, mathematics, ICT and religious education. In science, teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 – 6. In history and physical education, teaching is satisfactory. No judgements were made in design and technology, geography, art and design and music where either no lessons or too few were observed to make an overall judgement. In most lessons observed, planning was good and identified the learning objectives.
21. In good and very good lessons, the teachers returned to the objective at the end of the lesson to check out that the pupils were aware of what they were learning. This served as good informal assessment. High expectations ensured that the pupils worked hard and produced work of an appropriate standard for their abilities. In several of the opening sessions of lessons, the teachers inspired the pupils by their lively, thoughtful introductions and explanations. The class teachers' management and control of the pupils in most lessons are good and several teachers use their high quality questioning skills to keep pupils alert. In science, there was a very good pace in lessons where team teaching has begun this term and this resulted in pupils concentrating well on their tasks. Most parents indicated in their response to the questionnaire that they are pleased that the teachers consistently provide their children with homework.
22. Where the quality of teaching and learning was less than satisfactory, several factors were in evidence. For example, in all lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teachers' weak subject knowledge resulted in very brief planning and a lack of focus on what the pupils should be learning. As a result, the pupils' learning was unsatisfactory, and achievement as well as attainment was low. In an art and design lesson, there was no demonstration of what was expected from the pupils and there were very few resources to stimulate them. As a result, their drawings lacked quality and imagination. In a physical education lesson, where the teacher's subject knowledge was weak, the pupils were expected to wait for an unacceptable length of time to practise their skills and became very restless and noisy. The explanations given by the teacher in a mathematics lesson of how to use a particular method of calculation were confusing. Pupils did not learn enough in this lesson.

23. The teachers' use of information and communication technology (ICT) is good in English, mathematics and with pupils who have special educational needs who use specific programs to help them learn. Use of ICT is satisfactory in geography and music. However, not enough use if made of ICT in other subjects. The school has an ICT suite that is a good size and each classroom has sufficient computers. Most teachers are confident in their ability to teach the subject well.
24. The teaching of literacy is good in most lessons. Most teachers manage the literacy hour with confidence and show that they have good subject knowledge. They teach the basic skills of grammar and punctuation effectively. Many teachers are particularly adept at structuring learning in small steps so that pupils gain confidence from success. A daily session of guided reading helps pupils to build their skills steadily. A number of good literacy lessons were seen, in which letter sounds, spelling and punctuation were taught well. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory over time although the quality of teaching in lessons seen during the inspection was usually good and the use of mathematical vocabulary is effective. Counting and calculating skills are taught effectively and the teachers often vary the activities so that the same facts are being constantly reinforced while pupils are still engaged by the tasks. The quality of marking is invariably good in both literacy and numeracy and teachers make sure that the pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.

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

25. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for all pupils that includes religious education and all the required subjects of the National Curriculum. The school has worked hard and has succeeded in being able to offer a culturally diverse curriculum that is relevant to all its pupils. The quality of the curriculum has been maintained since the last inspection. Nevertheless, in subjects such as art and design, design and technology, and in history, a narrower range of work is offered to the pupils than is expected. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is planned well to ensure that the children gain a very broad range of experiences. It covers all the areas of learning required and the planning makes very good use of the indoor and outdoor facilities.
26. The national strategies for the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy are firmly in place and have ensured continuity in pupils' learning despite several staff changes. Most effective teachers ensure that literacy skills are developed in other subjects such as science and religious education, where recording takes different forms such as writing up the results of investigations, interviews, diaries and composing poetry. In addition, the speaking and listening skills of all pupils are developed well where the quality of teaching is good in lessons. In most lessons observed during the inspection, literacy and numeracy skills were taught effectively and reinforced frequently. Good emphasis is being given to numeracy in science where planning includes time to develop effectively the pupils' skills in drawing tables and graphs to record the results of their experiments.
27. There is evidence that the curriculum has improved in English, information and communication technology, geography and religious education. There is very good provision for the teaching of 'strings' in music for all the pupils in Years 3 and 4 since the last inspection and all the pupils in those year groups are given the free loan of an instrument. However, the weaknesses identified in the science curriculum identified in the last inspection have only recently been tackled. The curriculum is being well developed in subjects where the school is fortunate to have experienced and long-serving teachers. However, difficulties with recruitment have resulted in the

management of some subjects becoming less than satisfactory. This is the case in art, history, music and physical education.

28. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education including sex education and the awareness of misuse of drugs. The programme is delivered through other subjects and effective use is made of *Circle Time*, when pupils gather in a circle to discuss their thoughts about moral and social issues.
29. The curriculum is extended appropriately through educational visits and visitors to school who work with the pupils. For example, children in the reception group visited each other's homes, walked along nearby streets to look at different styles of architecture and also looked closely at the mosque where they enjoyed drawing the green dome. Visitors have included charity workers who have given the pupils information about educational programmes in Africa, educational theatre groups and musicians. There is a range of clubs for pupils, including football, library, dance and drama and one of the teachers runs a 'Clever Club' for pupils who want to stay in at lunchtime to catch up on their homework or read. These extra activities help to support pupils' personal development and give them opportunities to extend skills learned in lessons.
30. The aims of the school and their implementation show a good commitment to equality of opportunity. This is reflected in all aspects of school life. The school pays appropriate attention to ensuring that the curriculum is accessible to every pupil. It has looked carefully at the results achieved by pupils in national tests, identified any discrepancies between various groups and is taking action to address weaknesses. An example is that it was evident that pupils who are learning English as an additional language were not making as much progress in science due to a lack of support in learning the technical language. Provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those pupils from different ethnic backgrounds is now good. The large proportion of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English are making good progress because of the good support they are given by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy teachers and the bi-lingual assistants. This is an improvement from the last inspection when several weaknesses were identified.
31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and, as a result, these pupils make good progress. The curriculum is adapted effectively to meet their needs, including special lessons and extra support. Most of the pupils have good individual educational plans that have clear targets. These specify the next steps in each pupil's learning and identify the specific actions that the school will take to help the pupils meet their targets. They include the views of parents and pupils. In addition, the school uses pastoral support plans to improve the behaviour of some pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is ensuring that the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, 2002, is meeting the needs of the pupils on the additional educational needs register and is ensuring equal access to the curriculum.
32. The school has made steady improvement to its provision for pupils' personal development since the last inspection when this aspect of its work was judged to be good overall. The school gives good attention to pupils' personal development and is well aware of the need to add to pupils' experiences within and beyond the subjects of the curriculum. Parents are pleased that the school is helping their children to be mature and responsible. The school's stated aims include developing pupils' self discipline, self-respect, and respect for other cultures, religions and environments. In practice, the school makes particular efforts to help pupils to develop tolerance, to care for each other and to help others in more difficult circumstances than their own. Although the school is in the early stages of formal preparation to teach pupils about citizenship, it is clear that it is already doing relevant valuable work, linked to the priority it gives to the pupils' moral and social development.

33. The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Within religious education lessons, teachers plan well for opportunities to inspire pupils, for instance, with a visitor's special account of the meaning of Ramadan. Similarly, in the best science lessons, teachers plan for moments when pupils can experience and express amazement, as when some Year 5 pupils realised that the perfume they could smell was the result of a liquid evaporating to become a gas moving freely through the air. In planning for other lessons such as art, music, history and geography, teachers overlook opportunities to trigger a 'magic moment' or invite pupils to share their personal experiences and feelings. Displays do not show enough of pupils' own feelings and responses and there is a lack of a rich range of written and illustrated work, such as large-scale artwork and hand-made books all round the school. The beautifully presented Year 6 leavers' book that records their special memories of their primary school years is a good first step to valuing pupils' experiences and ideas more publicly. The school celebrates pupils' work and effort in achievement assemblies. These are valuable when staff make careful choices of what to praise, so children learn to recognise genuine effort and achievement. Assemblies vary in quality. Better assemblies have an atmosphere that allows children to be peaceful and reflect thoughtfully, free from fussing about trivial misbehaviour. Others lack a real sense of occasion without a focus such as a candle or special object, or carefully chosen, audible music.
34. The school has made great efforts to teach pupils the difference between acceptable and unacceptable conduct and to create a climate free from intimidation. It has recognised that pupils find it hard to work co-operatively so individual teachers try to develop the necessary skills through group and paired work. The newly marked playground with space for football and other games has improved the quality of play. As a result, the school has the chance to teach more pupils a wider range of traditional playground games that require the skills of sharing, fair play and self-control that it seeks to develop. The school has an active school council with a real voice that offers genuine opportunities for initiative and service to others. Pupils, particularly those in Year 6, appreciate chances to take responsibility. They enjoy library club where they work with younger children, who relish the attention. The range of trips and visits, including the biennial residential trip for older pupils, is particularly valuable for pupils' personal and social development, with so many different role models and new experiences.
35. The school fosters cultural development well. It has sought ways to improve this aspect of its work in recent years, to promote racial harmony and teach pupils to appreciate traditions different from their own. Visits from workers with charitable organisations, such as Vision Africa and the Watford New Hope Trust, offer valuable insights into the challenges faced by others. Strong links with the local business community, such as Watford Football Club and Pizza Express provide additional learning experiences and greater awareness of the world beyond school. Pupils have good opportunities to visit various places of worship, museums that show diverse influences on cultural heritage, and theatres. The school has made excellent use of opportunities to provide instrumental tuition for everyone in Years 3 and 4. Pupils enjoy visiting theatre groups and musicians plus the chance to take part in their own school productions. However, opportunities are missed in art, music and drama for these subjects to contribute to pupils' cultural development. The inspection week took place during Ramadan and it was very evident that the special feature of fasting was well respected by the school. In addition, the bi-lingual assistant from the nursery and reception unit had been invited to explain the significance of Ramadan to the Year 2 pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. At the last inspection, the quality of care provided by the school was judged to be good. Improvement has been good because everyday procedures are now focused more clearly on trying to make a difference to pupils' achievements. The benefits do not show in national test results yet because there has not been enough time to raise aspirations and confidence throughout the school community, as a prelude to higher standards.
37. The school takes very careful steps to ensure that children are happy, safe and ready to learn. Its arrangements for child protection are very good because not only do different groups of staff know what to look for, but all are up to date with procedures and vigilant in checking on the well being of children in their care. The experience of key staff and positive links with outside agencies, enhance the school's arrangements. The school has a policy for Internet use by pupils and staff, and parents are required to give their permission before pupils can access the Internet. The Internet service provider used by the school has appropriate safeguards in place.
38. Everyday welfare procedures are equally effective because the staff value all pupils equally as individuals, whatever their needs, and work hard to make sure they get the best from their time at school. All the adults in the school know what to do and take great care to safeguard the health and safety of children at work and play. Most staff know pupils very well and are fully aware of their individual academic, emotional and physical needs. Teachers make good use of notes about anything that might affect a pupil's progress, so that anyone offering support is well aware of specific needs or concerns. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and, from their questionnaire responses, most parents are appreciative of the care given to their children.
39. Children in the reception class are very well cared for and it is evident that they feel at ease. Assessment and record-keeping procedures are good. Assessment is carried out when the children enter the nursery and reception unit and results of this assessment are used to keep track of the progress that individual children make.
40. The arrangements for the assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs are good and are being implemented in accordance with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, 2002. Teachers and learning assistants know their pupils well. Records are up-to-date and this helps teachers to monitor progress and plan future work. Individual education plans contain specific and measurable targets and the monitoring and support for pupils with a statement of special educational needs are very good. The pupils' records of their annual reviews show good progress and outline future targets. Liaison with outside agencies and external support staff is good.
41. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school recognises that it could do more to involve children in agreeing their own class codes and to ensure that adults model positive approaches consistently, without the over use of negative criticism and missing chances to praise and bring out the best in pupils. The school is working hard on specific weaknesses that it has identified in the behaviour of some children, such as their ability to work together effectively. The school takes bullying very seriously. Parents and pupils confirm that it deals with incidents swiftly as it does with less serious misbehaviour.
42. In general, the school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. It meets requirements for recording and reporting attendance data. The school has good systems for monitoring attendance, but these have not been wholly effective in reducing absence. Although the incidence of ill health is outside the school's control, the school spends too much

time on verifying data and not enough on developing imaginative and innovative strategies to deal with avoidable absences.

43. The previous inspection identified assessment and recording of pupils' academic attainment and progress as a weakness. This aspect of the school is now good and represents a significant improvement. The assessment of the pupils' attainment in the end of Year 2 and Year 6 national tests is very good and includes the identification not only of the strengths and weaknesses of all pupils, but also those of different groups of pupils, such as the attainment of boys and girls and the attainment of pupils with special educational needs. The identification of specific weaknesses has resulted in teachers ensuring that their planning targets those weaknesses and also gives the classroom assistants more direction on how to support the pupils. As a result, teaching has improved as well the attainment of the pupils who speak English as an additional language.
44. Detailed records are kept of the attainment on entry and the levels that pupils attain in their end of year tests. Class teachers and the assessment manager keep track of pupils' progress effectively both on record sheets for individual pupils and on class records. Good use is made of this information in grouping the pupils in lessons so that they are given appropriate work to meet their needs as well as support, if that is necessary. Each pupil has a 'Record of Achievement' folder and samples of work and personal achievements are recorded consistently. This shows the progress pupils make as they move through the school although it would be more helpful if the work was given a national curriculum level to show pupils' attainment. Teachers keep individual mark books to track the progress pupils make in areas such as reading and mental mathematics assessments. Records are also kept of pupils' pastoral needs and these are used to identify the support pupils during lessons.
45. The arrangements for the assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Most teachers know their pupils very well. The monitoring and support for pupils with a statement of special educational need is good. Pupils' reviews show good progress and outline future targets. The support given by the learning support assistants and the part-time special needs teacher for pupils with statements is good and leads to the pupils' good progress. Liaison with outside agencies and external support staff is good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school's partnership with parents has improved well since the last inspection because of the efforts made to communicate with families more effectively and to include parents more actively in helping their children with work at home.
47. Parents think that the school is doing a good job in terms of their children's education and they have confidence in it. They believe that their children like school, are expected to work hard, are well taught and make good progress in a school where they are helped to become mature and responsible.
48. Links between school and home are effective, largely because the school has recognised the need to work hard with specific groups and individuals to build confidence so that families feel able to support their children's education in practical ways. For example, the excellent work done within family numeracy workshops to develop a range of skills with parents whose children speak English as an additional language is having a significant impact on the quality of support they can give with work at home. The school is making great strides in creating a climate where academic success is valued and children want to learn through such work with parents and the

community. It is also beginning to have an effect on families' understanding of the importance of regular, punctual attendance because the number of avoidable extended holiday absences is beginning to fall.

49. Written reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory overall. They give parents the information required and offer the chance for children and parents to comment. Reports generally give useful information about what children know, understand and can do, but sometimes this gets lost in the detail about what the class has learned or covered within the curriculum. Staff do not use different fonts to separate key points about the individual's progress from more general detail. Targets for improvement are not consistently clear and specific, but the best written examples are easy for parents to understand so that they can check on progress. Most parents are pleased with the information they are given about their children's progress.
50. The school has made good efforts to improve communication with all parents through regular newsletters, letters home about issues such as attendance, a school website and higher quality formal documents, including the prospectus. The school has consulted parents about its work. The home-school agreement is clear and designed to help parents understand their role in supporting their children. Parents come to meetings about their children's progress and are in regular contact when a problem arises. Many parents help on trips and with fund-raising. As a result, parental involvement with the school is good, in general. A few parents, including parent governors and support staff make a significant contribution to the work of the school. However, a small minority of parents finds it difficult to respond to the school's efforts to encourage them to support their children's education, for instance, in simple ways such as getting them to school regularly and on time with the appropriate equipment. Overall, the contribution of parents to children's learning is satisfactory.
51. Liaison with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. All parents are invited to attend termly review meetings when they discuss the targets on their children's individual education plans with the teachers and co-ordinator. Pupils are also consulted to comment and contribute to their own individual education plans. They know their targets and work hard to achieve them. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational need are kept fully informed and are given good opportunities to be involved in reviewing the targets set for their children. The school sent all parents a questionnaire to complete indicating their views of the provision for their children and the school has acted upon any weaknesses that were identified by parents. The school has good systems for communicating with parents of pupils who are being supported by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy. It uses the local education authority's translation and interpretation service in order to ensure that parents are fully informed about their children's progress and school events. The specialist teachers also attend meetings with parents to discuss their children's progress. The school sends letters home with translations to aid communication with parents.
52. Induction procedures for children who are starting school are good. Two members of staff visit each home before the children start school when parents can ask questions about the nursery and reception unit procedures. Parents and children are then invited into school to meet some of the children who already attend. The bi-lingual staff are always on hand to help with translating for parents who do not speak English. They give invaluable help and one assistant, in particular, has very good links with the large number of Pakistani families in the area. All parents are given a very helpful book that outlines all the systems set up to ensure that the children will be happy and make appropriate progress. The home/school contact book has a translation into Urdu. This is the major language of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Once the children begin school, parents bring their children into the unit in the mornings and also come in at the end

of the day to collect them and help them with their coats and bags. This gives the parents opportunities to talk to a member of staff if they are having problems or if they wish to tell the staff about something special that has happened in their family. There is a parents' notice board just inside the entrance with a variety of helpful information.

PROVISION FOR PUPILS LEARNING ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

53. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection when weaknesses were identified. The school has worked hard to improve the attainment of pupils and this has been successful largely due to the additional funds allocated to the budget by the governing body to improve the number of Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy (EMAS) teachers and bi-lingual assistants. Pupils learning English as an additional language generally attain standards at the end of Year 6 very similar to those of all pupils and their achievement is good in English and mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Several pupils who enter the school at an early stage of learning English make good progress throughout the school due to the effective support they receive. The pupils who have difficulties with written English have generally joined the school at times other than at the usual time of admission or are lower attaining pupils in their mother tongue. For example, during the week before the inspection three pupils joined the school with no English. Other pupils may not have attended school for one or two years in their home country because of strife and war.
54. The pupils are well supported by the three specialist EMAS teachers and the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The three part-time teachers work closely together and with the class teachers to ensure that pupils are well supported throughout Years 1 – 6. In an example of very good teaching in English in Year 6, the bi-lingual teacher worked with a group of pupils to focus on the use of metaphor and simile. The pupils learning English as an additional language made very good progress because of the effective support given to them and, in addition, good support was given to the pupils with special educational needs by another skilled assistant. The three adults worked effectively together and relationships with the children were very good.
55. The EMAS teachers take pupils out of lessons to give them focused support, particularly in English in reading and writing. This support ranges from excellent to good. In an example of excellent teaching in Year 6, when the teacher withdrew pupils, she had very high expectations of the pupils when working on a piece of informational text. As a result, the pupils made very good learning gains. They explained why the title was printed in darker printing ink, they could explain what a sub-title is for, as well as being confident enough to tell the teacher which words in the text they did not understand. The teacher's methods and explanations were excellent and she quickly worked through the vocabulary the pupils found difficult. There are occasions when the teachers withdraw pupils at the very beginning of lessons when, in fact, the pupils would make more progress by remaining with their class teacher who is very good at making sure that all pupils are involved in her explanations. The quick fire questioning in these sessions, the response of the pupils of all abilities and the evident enjoyment of all pupils contributes well to learning and this is sometimes missing in a very small group.
56. During most lessons, the pupils are given support either by the class teachers, the EMAS teachers or by the bi-lingual and other assistants. In the room designated for learning support, small groups of pupils or individual pupils are taught spelling skills or how to improve their reading and writing. Pupils at a very early stage of learning English are taught individually and are engaged in a variety of activities, for example, being taught how to place picture cards in sequential order when the bi-lingual assistant uses this activity to develop spoken English. All

assistants from Years 1 – 6 are very supportive of the pupils and ensure that they understand what is expected, for example, by quietly repeating the instructions of the teacher or by discussing the work orally.

57. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are satisfactory in Years 1 to 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 sometimes find it difficult to sustain their interest in some activities, for example, in music and science. The proportion of EAL pupils is very high in Year 1 and they show a lack of understanding and interest in some lessons. The teacher has to work very hard to motivate the pupils. When the teacher was explaining how she wanted the pupils to use their untuned percussion instruments to represent rain or sunshine, the pupils were not listening well and needed constant reminding of their role in the 'orchestra'. Their behaviour was satisfactory overall although at times they were restless. In Years 3 – 6, pupils are more attentive and interested in all the lessons and activities presented to them. Their behaviour is mostly good. This is because their understanding of what is expected of them has improved as a result of the good teaching and support they experience throughout the school.
58. The school has good systems for communicating with parents of pupils who are being supported by EMAS. It uses the local education authority's translation and interpretation service in order to ensure that parents are fully informed about their children's progress and school events. The specialist teachers also attend meetings with parents to discuss their children's progress. The school sends letters home with translations to aid communication with parents.
59. The management of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. The co-ordinator was appointed at the beginning of this term and is the first co-ordinator for this aspect of the school. There is no precedence for specific procedures of management and, for example, there is no budget allocated for the purchase of resources that may be needed. Although the three teachers meet with all the class teachers informally to discuss planning, there is no arrangement as yet for the co-ordinator to have meetings with the assistants. Assessment of the progress made by pupils with English as an additional language is very good. The pupils are assessed on entry to the school and the teachers identify targets. These are mainly in English although mathematical and scientific vocabulary is also targeted. The school's assessment manager has carried out a very detailed analysis of pupils' progress from their point of entry into the school until they leave at the end of Year 6. This is very helpful to all staff and weaknesses have been identified and acted upon. For example, in science, the technical vocabulary is practised in the mother tongue if this is appropriate. For some pupils, this is the first time they will have been presented with scientific vocabulary in any language. Resources are satisfactory.
60. There are many examples in the school of the pupils' background being celebrated. In particular, in the entrance, a very large world map has a pin to represent each pupil's country of origin. During the inspection week, a teacher was using the display to talk to two pupils from Portugal and Sri Lanka. Both pupils have very limited English but they could point to their own countries and showed their happiness by smiling and nodding. This good practice improves pupils' learning of spoken English and also raises their self-esteem.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. A criticism of the last inspection was that the school did not buzz with life and excitement and there was no evidence of fun and joy in learning. These factors in learning have improved and the inspectors observed many lessons where they were very apparent. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has initiated a number of changes and developments that have had a direct impact on the standards that pupils attain. He has also addressed all the key issues of the last inspection well

with the exception of standards in science, which have declined further in the national tests. He has a very clear view of what has and has not been achieved and why. The most notable of the changes and improvements has been to organise weekly literacy and numeracy workshops during school time for parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). During the inspection week, 15 parents attended the workshop with a few who spoke no English at all. This excellent initiative has impacted on improving several aspects of the school. For example, links with parents and the community have improved and the attainment of pupils learning English as an additional language has improved significantly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. During some of these sessions, pupils are brought from their classrooms to work with their parents on a mathematics program that is specifically chosen to raise both parents' and their children's attainment in English and mathematics. The local education authority has been very helpful in providing bi-lingual teachers and leaders for these workshops from the community.

62. The headteacher's vision for school development is strongly focused on improving pupils' achievement and raising standards of attainment. He understands clearly the need to encourage and facilitate parental support and understanding, so that parents can work together with the school to help their children make good progress. The initiatives taken to help parents develop their own skills, and in turn to support their children more effectively, are fundamental to the improvement the school has made. The school's aims are well reflected in its work, but the headteacher's very appropriate vision reflected in the evaluation documents supplied to the inspection team is not always shared verbally with staff and governors clearly enough. The headteacher has been effective in creating a sense of racial harmony in the school. He has ensured that all groups in the school; for example, boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, those pupils with English as an additional language and those pupils from different ethnic minority backgrounds, are given equal access to resources and extra-curricular activities. This characteristic of the school contributes to the good ethos that is the result of the good provision for spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
63. The headteacher values the skills of his team and he is good at enabling them to carry out their roles efficiently and effectively. The effective deputy headteacher now has a much clearer role in the school and is valued by staff and parents for her expertise and experience. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching have been implemented well since the last inspection. All senior managers have supported the headteacher in carrying out this work and have had an effective impact on standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. All long-serving staff are committed to improving the school and raising standards. The systems for managing the performance targets of the headteacher and teachers are satisfactory although the cycle of appraisal is slower than usual. As a manager, the headteacher has suitable skills and competencies, but he does not always employ them rigorously enough. For example, his organisation of prioritising management tasks sometimes falls short of what is expected and this can have a knock on effect on the completion of tasks that involve other members of staff or governors.
64. The special educational needs co-ordinator is efficient and knowledgeable and management of this aspect of the school is good. The co-ordinator meets regularly with the classroom assistants to ensure that pupils are fully supported. In addition, she has arranged professional development for the class teachers on two occasions this term. All learning support staff are well qualified and have attended a wide range of courses covering most aspects of their work. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is assessed effectively with the rest of the pupils in the classes. This data is used to track their progress and identify weaknesses that are then

- addressed in the planning documents. The co-ordinator has a clear budget plan and uses the money well. Relevant resources are purchased and well organised. There are good systems to support statement reviews that take place at appropriate times during the school year.
65. The management of provision for children in the nursery and reception unit is very good. There is a generous provision of staffing. The organisation of planning for both groups of children is excellent and all staff know exactly what is expected of them during all the different activities that take place throughout the day.
66. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are highly committed to the school, very well organised, knowledgeable and offer great support. The governors are active and keep themselves very well informed about what is going on in the school through the effective work of the link governors who report back to the main governing body meetings. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection when several weaknesses were identified. Governors have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and are very aware of the challenges the school faces with, for example, recruitment problems. Very occasionally, governors perceive apparent weaknesses that are, in actual fact, strengths. For example, inspection findings judged the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs to be good whereas one or two governors expressed some concerns.
67. School finances are managed satisfactorily. Specific grants are used wisely for their designated purposes. A very good example is the decision taken by the governing body to approve extra finance being used to pay for extra staffing to meet the needs of the pupils learning English as an additional language. This has proved to be very effective and therefore very good value for money. Financial decisions are taken after careful consideration of how spending will improve standards attained by pupils. Staff and governors satisfactorily employ the principles of best value when making these decisions. The office makes satisfactory use of new technology with computerised administrative and financial records and appropriate Internet connections. The administrative officer and caretaker ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
68. Overall, there is a satisfactory match of teachers to the curriculum and a good match of classroom assistants to the pupils' needs. However, despite making every effort and spending a considerable amount of money on advertisements, the school has had significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining new staff, largely due to the high cost of accommodation in the area and its close proximity to central London, where salaries are higher. It is fortunate that a good number of teachers have been at the school for some time, providing the stability needed to ensure pupils' satisfactory achievement. Senior managers provide valuable support for new staff, but the need to continually support new colleagues, working at the school for short periods of time, reduces the time available to them to carry out their management responsibilities, to secure improvements in standards.
69. The school has good accommodation overall and the building is clean, bright and welcoming. Classrooms are a reasonable size although visitors have to walk through one classroom to reach another and this is distracting for the pupils. There are several extra working areas available. There is a separate dining room that most schools would envy and, as a result, there is no disruption to activities that take place in the hall. The nursery and reception children are housed in two separate buildings with an excellent outside environment for learning. Overall, their accommodation is very good. The information and communication technology suite is a good learning environment but the library is in a walk-through working space and does not invite browsers. Resources are satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to improve the quality of education provided by the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Improve standards, particularly in mathematics and science by:
 - increasing the time allocated to science in Years 1 – 2;
 - ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to carry out their own experiments in science;
 - developing the confidence and teaching skills of all staff in both subjects;
 - planning for more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in information and communication technology in all subjects.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 27, 84, 85, 87, 90, 91, 92, 98, 99, 100, 103, 105, 112, 131)
 - (2) Raise the standards of teaching in classes where there are weaknesses by:
 - ensuring that teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding;
 - ensuring that the tasks given to pupils are interesting and well matched to their needs;
 - improving the quality of short-term planning so that the learning objectives of each lesson are very clear to both teachers and pupils;
 - enabling teachers to observe and learn from the existing good practice.

(Paragraphs 16, 20, 22, 87, 102, 105, 111, 120, 121, 127)
 - (3) Improve the range of opportunities offered to pupils in art and design, design and technology and history by:
 - widening the curriculum in these subjects to include opportunities for pupils to improve their creative and spiritual development;
 - adapting the national guidance more effectively to ensure that pupils learn the necessary skills progressively to improve standards;
 - review the use of the commercial scheme of work in music in order to improve the pupils' attitudes to singing, in particular, and to ensure that composition is covered more appropriately.

(Paragraphs 7, 26, 33, 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 110, 112, 118, 120, 121, 122)
 - (4) Improve attendance in the school by continuing to strive to reduce the levels of occasional inappropriate absences that hinder the progress of individual pupils.

(Paragraphs 15, 42, 48)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	16	21	9	4	0	0
Percentage	4	31	40	17	8	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	200
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	111

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

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	17	12	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	12	13
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	21	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (68)	83 (68)	86 (76)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	13	12
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	25	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (70)	86 (70)	76 (84)
	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	21	19	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	16
	Girls	13	7	9
	Total	28	20	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (66)	50 (54)	63 (63)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	15	12
	Girls	6	8	8
	Total	17	23	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (57)	58 (63)	50 (60)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	93	0	0
White – Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	59	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	332

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	686,857
Total expenditure	665,562
Expenditure per pupil	2590
Balance brought forward from previous year	66,361
Balance carried forward to next year	87,656

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5
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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	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

213

Number of questionnaires returned

127

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	27	2	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	61	29	4	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	32	5	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	32	6	2	5
The teaching is good.	66	28	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	29	6	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	22	6	8	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	25	2	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	53	32	7	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	50	31	8	6	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	36	5	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	25	11	4	9

Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to rounding

Other Issues raised by parents

A small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

68. The school has one teaching unit for nursery and reception age children where they are all taught by the same staff. The nursery group has twenty-three part-time children who attend in the afternoons. The time the children spend in the nursery varies from one to five terms. The older children born between September and February attend full time in the reception group and the younger children attend part-time in the mornings only. There are twenty-two children in the reception group with twelve attending part-time. When the children transfer to the reception group their attainment is below average overall although this varies from year to year. This year's intake is well below average with a very high number of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English and still need the help of bi-lingual and classroom assistants to support their understanding. There are also a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. It is likely that, by the end of the foundation stage, most of the children in the current reception year will attain standards below those expected for their age in most areas of learning. However, they should attain the expected standards in their personal, social and emotional development as well as their physical development. The teacher is very well supported by two nursery nurses and three assistants. Two of the assistants are bi-lingual.
69. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception unit is very good in all areas of learning. This is a strength of the school and has been maintained since the last inspection, which gives the children a very good start to their education. A very wide range of well-planned activities for both groups of children engages their attention and imagination and provides many opportunities to enrich their experience. As a result of the very good teaching, the children achieve well for their abilities. All adults enjoy very good relationships with the children, provide them with very effective support and are fully involved with them throughout the day.
70. The two separate buildings provide very good accommodation with an excellent outside teaching environment that provides the children with varied areas for different activities. The unit is very well resourced and equipped and provision is well managed.

Personal, social and emotional development

71. Staff place considerable emphasis on this area of learning and, from a low starting point in the nursery, most children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. In the nursery, the children settle relatively quickly when their parents leave and understand the routines. A few children in the nursery are able to make independent choices of activities and play well together. The children in the reception group are expected to be able to look at their task boards and know which activity they should be involved with. Many persevere with activities and, in particular, enjoy being in the role-play area that, during the inspection, was a clothes shop. A few of the reception children concentrate for a long time drawing pictures or building with the construction toys. If the children begin to lose their concentration or find difficulty completing a task, the assistants quickly help them or suggest another activity. Several children in the nursery group do not play naturally without prompting when the whole group is working together. At the end of the day during discussion time, the younger children tend to call out a lot but, in the reception group, most children have learned to wait their turn and not to shout out.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Many of the children in the nursery are at the early stages of language development. Some have a very small vocabulary and do not readily communicate with each other or the staff. However, the quality of teaching is very good and all adults talk with the children constantly and encourage their response. The bi-lingual assistants often read short stories to the children in English, Urdu, Punjabi and Pahan to the children learning English as an additional language. This good practice is helping the children to develop their English vocabulary as well as extending their vocabulary in their mother tongue. The children enjoy rhyming songs, listening to stories and looking at the illustrations. During one session with reception children when teaching was very good, the two nursery nurses worked with small groups (one with a bi-lingual assistant to translate) encouraging the children to talk about individual toy animals. The organisation of the lesson was very effective with all adults working with small groups using excellent resources. By asking questions, the adults encouraged the children to describe the animals and to talk about their colours and their behaviours. Several children found this difficult, appeared to be very shy and reluctant to talk and needed plenty of input from the adults. A few children are beginning to recognise the beginning sounds of words. Although most can sing the *Alphabet Song* few pupils can recite the sounds the letters make. The few higher attaining children are beginning to recognise some familiar words and the words in stories that they have heard repeated several times. The teacher has made some books with very large print and illustrations and the children read along with the teacher as they know the story so well. A very few children are able to write recognisable words with initial sounds correctly identified. Very little evidence was observed of pupils beginning to view themselves as 'emergent writers' having a go at making marks and putting together letter strings to represent words.

Mathematical development

73. Many opportunities are taken with both nursery and reception children to reinforce children's understanding of number. A few of the nursery children show curiosity about numbers and can use some number names. They enjoy joining in with number rhymes and songs. The reception children sing number songs, count the number of children in their group and play games. However, while the very few higher attaining pupils count reliably beyond ten, most of the children can recite numbers but do not count accurately. The staff have worked hard to reinforce the children's understanding of number and most children can order numbers to five. Teaching was very good in this area of learning when the reception children and all the staff sat in a circle on the carpet for an adapted numeracy lesson. The teacher dropped stones in a tin for the children to count. Most were able to do this although there was a very high ratio of adults to children for support. When the teacher spread the stones out in a different arrangement few children could count them and some thought there would be fewer stones. However, the teacher persisted with this activity and most pupils made good progress in this lesson with their understanding of the number of objects remaining the same whatever the arrangement. Good use was made of the outside environment in this lesson when the children collected, in trays, nine leaves, twigs and little stones.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. The children enter the school with a low level of general knowledge. Several do not recognise colours and do not know the names of animals. In the nursery, children explore sand and water as well as a wide range of other materials. They enjoy making models from construction equipment, building with the big blocks and playing with the wooden train. The staff have supported the children to begin to use mouse to create pictures on the computer screen. The

very good teaching has ensured that the reception children have made very good progress in this area of learning. During the inspection on a very windy day, the whole group went outside on the playground with bubbles and a large supply of very light metallic tape. With the help of the staff, the children were delighted to see their streams of bubbles floating away on the wind and ran around the playground allowing their metallic tapes to flutter and float. The children began to understand the power of the wind during this session. Good planning has led to a wide range of experiences in this area of learning and the children's understanding of their local area has developed well. For example, the children have walked along nearby roads looking at the different types of houses and flats, visited each other's homes, had a good look at the mosque and its green dome and collected leaves and conkers. The children are beginning to develop their skills of information and communication technology. With the help of an adult, they can have a go at using the infill tool and make patterns on the computer screen. Both nursery and reception children have moved forward in their painting and making skills by making divas for the Diwali celebrations while the role-play area is a clothes shop where all the children enjoy dressing up and doing their shopping. First hand experience in the shop is helping the children to develop their understanding of the skills of shopping. They have all had the opportunity of cooking currant buns with good hands-on experience of weighing and stirring the ingredients.

Physical development

75. Both nursery and reception children use the large outdoor area frequently, weather permitting, and enjoy climbing, balancing, running, throwing and catching. There is a good variety of wheeled toys as well as a large supply of small games resources, such as balls and hoops. Children use a wide range of small equipment such as scissors, glue spreaders, crayons and paint brushes, which helps to develop their fine co-ordination skills. The nursery children joined in with the reception children in a dance lesson in the hall and showed that they are beginning to be able to listen and follow instructions. At first a few children did not join in with the activities but became more involved as the lesson progressed. In a physical education lesson for the reception group only, the children understood the importance of warming up before they moved around in a variety of ways. They were very sensible and careful collecting their individual mats and returning them to the pile at the end of the lesson. The children can walk sideways, backwards, they can skip and hop and are beginning to develop their thinking skills about different ways of moving. They show that they are aware of space and the need to be careful when running. Most of the nursery children enter the unit with below average skills in their physical development and it is likely that the reception children will meet the expected standards in this area of learning by the end of the reception year with very good achievement.

Creative development

76. The environment for both nursery and reception children supports their creative development effectively, providing many opportunities for them to engage in a variety of activities. For example, they paint with brushes, sponges and their fingers. They have used objects to print pictures and made Rangoli patterns with rice as well as making Diwali pictures using shiny reflective paper. The children have made 'splatter' paintings of Bonfire Night. They enjoy using their imagination in the role-play area while they do their 'shopping', paying for the clothes they have bought and chatting with the other shoppers and making sure they receive their change. 'Give me money please.' Teaching and planning is very good in this area of learning and the assistants intervene very well to develop the children's language and social skills, particularly of those learning English as an additional language. Once a week, a very skilled governor/parent helps the nursery and reception children to develop their music skills. As a result of her input,

the reception children are beginning to recognise the first phrase of several nursery rhymes, they can play the untuned percussion instruments as part of a band and their singing has improved.

ENGLISH

77. Standards in English have improved. In 2002, results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading and below average in writing. However, compared to similar schools results were average and show that pupils' achievement was satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when results in the national tests were judged to be well below average in both reading and writing. The comparison with national trends shows that results are improving better than the national average at the end of Year 2. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment are below average overall. Boys outperformed girls in the end of Year 2 tests but no significant difference was observed in the work of the current Year 2 pupils. Results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 have improved steadily, and better than the national trend, from well below average at the time of the last inspection to below average. When compared to similar schools, results are above average. Inspection findings show that at the end of Year 6, standards are below average but the achievement of all pupils in English, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language is good. This is because the school has placed a heavy emphasis on the teaching of English and has organised extra lessons in reading every day in each class.
78. Many pupils at the school speak English as an additional language. When the pupils begin school, a high proportion needs support to learn to speak English. This support is well provided by the school, and by the end of Year 6, the analysis of the test data shows that a relatively high number of pupils are now attaining better standards than in previous years. This is because the school has funded extra specialist teachers and assistants to increase the support for the pupils.
79. Teaching in English is good overall. In half of the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was very good. Lessons have clear learning objectives that are, without exception, shared with pupils and reinforced during lessons. In an example of very good teaching in Year 3, when the lesson was based on *Rita the Rescuer*, the teacher frequently asked the pupils to explain what they were learning and gave them opportunities to test their understanding in a practical way. Pupils wrote dialogue to portray a situation where Rita showed her super-heroine skills. Good picture resources to stimulate discussion and plenty of opportunity for pupils to talk about their ideas resulted in pupils being very enthusiastic about their work. Lower attaining pupils were just as keen to record their dialogues and read them out aloud as all others. Teachers' good relationships with pupils throughout the school ensure that learning in English is fun and that pupils build confidence and self-esteem. This was very evident when talking to pupils in Year 6, who spoke openly about the way they had struggled with reading but knew they were making progress. In this way, the provision for English supports pupils' social and personal development successfully.
80. Standards in writing are below average overall, but pupils' work is neatly presented and many pupils use good cursive script. This is a continuing strength from the last inspection. Pupils are taught to form flicks on their letters in Year 1 and teachers encourage them to try their hardest with presentation from an early age. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills through a range of writing experiences, ranging from simple stories and factual writing in Years 1 and 2, to more complex stories showing characters and plot, newspaper reports, poetry and play-scripts in Years 5 and 6. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well, and basic skills of grammar and punctuation are taught effectively. The structured approach of the

strategy is being used successfully to plan for and monitor the progressive development of language techniques and devices for pupils to use in their writing. This includes good phonic teaching, often involving the very valuable work of classroom assistants. The work of the average attaining pupils shows that they are reaching an appropriate level in spelling and the skills of the few higher attaining pupils are good. Pupils learn new words because teachers make very good use of specific vocabulary. Following the teacher's examples, pupils in Year 4 were able to say that instructional writing included imperative verbs and that bullet points in instructions helped the reader to see the chronological order of the text. Pupils' achievements in writing are good.

81. The school makes good use of assessment information in English to ensure that learning is well planned and successfully meets the needs of the pupils. Reading is now a priority focus, as the school has identified that some pupils are not achieving as well in this aspect as they could. Standards in reading are below average by the end of Year 6, and overall rates of achievement are satisfactory. Pupils begin to think about expression in reading from Year 1. They know why expression makes story telling more interesting. Good attention has been given to making reading resources more suitable for older pupils. Specific work to develop comprehension skills is carried out in one lesson each week, in all classes. Teachers make good use of questions, both written and oral, during "Big Book" sessions. Teaching and learning was very good in Year 6 when the teacher used resource materials about the sinking of the Titanic to further pupils' reading skills. Pupils were challenged to make their answers as full as possible to show their real understanding of the text. Even though some pupils struggled, they tried hard, concentrated well and kept on task. At the end of this lesson, a good number of pupils were keen to answer questions as if they were Titanic survivors. During this part of the lesson, the range of questions asked by all pupils clearly demonstrated that they are growing in confidence with their speaking and listening skills also. By the end of Year 6, where pupils are more reluctant to contribute in discussions, standards in speaking are below average overall. Listening skills are broadly average, and the high expectations that teachers have for how pupils will listen in lessons and to each other is fundamental in ensuring good progress in this aspect. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening.
82. There is evidence of the skills of literacy being applied appropriately in other subjects. Where the quality of teaching and learning is good, most teachers ensure that literacy skills are developed in other subjects such as geography, history, science and religious education. Here, recording takes different forms such as writing up the results of investigations, recording conclusions of science experiments, interviews, diaries and composing poetry. In addition, the speaking and listening skills of all pupils are developed well in most lessons where teaching is good. This was very evident in a few physical education lessons as well as music.
83. The English co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She has collated very clear evidence to show the progress of individual pupils as they move through the school as well as monitoring the development of the subject in lessons. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Through careful data analysis, she is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Planned action to develop highlighted weaknesses is effective. Her subject knowledge is very good and she is able to offer good support to colleagues. Information and communication technology is used well in English to write stories and to create multi-media presentations. The school library has been relocated to accommodate the new ICT suite. While there is an adequate number of books and they are well organised, the position of the library, in a main thoroughfare, is not ideal. It is not a particularly stimulating area where a love of reading can be fostered. Pupils cannot work as a whole class there to develop library skills. In addition, chairs and table are too small for older pupils to sit comfortably to read.

MATHEMATICS

84. In 2002, results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average and, when compared with similar schools, below average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when results in the national tests were among the lowest 5 per cent in the country. Results have risen since the last inspection at a higher rate than the national trend. At least half of the pupils in Year 2 show good understanding of the work covered in the current year and are achieving well. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment are below average overall and achievement is satisfactory when the pupils' prior attainment is considered. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language is good.
85. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have risen steadily since the last inspection when they were, again, among the lowest 5 per cent in the country. Improvement is in line with the national trend. In 2002, standards were well below average in the national tests compared to all schools. Inspection evidence from observing lessons and scrutinising the pupils' work shows that standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are below average and achievement is satisfactory. However, pupils with special educational needs are achieving well when their low attainment on entry to the school is considered. In addition, pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well due to the good support given individually or in groups when specialist staff ensure that the pupils have a good grasp of mathematical vocabulary. Analysis of the 2002 tests shows that these groups of pupils have made good progress through Years 3 – 6. Boys outperformed girls significantly in the end of Year 6 tests in 2002 but no discernible difference was evident in lessons or in the work scrutiny.
86. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards below those expected for their age. Although they can add two numbers many have problems with recording figures. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average, and better than those attained in the most recent national tests. Pupils have secure knowledge of number, count in 2s, 5s and 10s and add two-digit numbers accurately. They understand that multiplication is repeated addition and can solve simple problems involving numbers and money. By Year 6, pupils have covered all aspects recommended by the Numeracy Strategy. They have learned good strategies for mental calculation, which they apply to everyday problems. The pupils' work is well presented and books in all classes are neat and well organised.
87. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics observed in lessons was good overall. However, over time, teaching and learning can only be judged as satisfactory due to the cumulative impact of frequent changes of teachers that has led to underachievement in mathematics in the national tests. Only one example of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In this lesson, subject knowledge was weak, planning was too brief, the learning objective not clear and explanations confusing. In addition, too many new skills were covered in the lessons. Usually, pupils are well motivated through good mental oral starters to mathematics lessons. Planning includes what the pupils are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. This is written on the board and shared with the pupils effectively. It takes into account pupils' different prior knowledge and capabilities and suitable work is set for different groups. Teachers give clear explanations and emphasise mathematical language. For example, in one lesson, the overhead projector was used to illustrate arrays, showing how multiplication could be done in any order. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and, consequently, pupils concentrate well and become increasingly confident when asking or answering questions. Teachers vary activities in order to repeat facts and still maintain the interest of the pupils. They build up from what the

pupils know and understand to introduce more challenging work. Teachers are aware of pupils' needs and vary the pace of the lesson accordingly. In one class, after the pupils had been concentrating for some time, the teacher introduced a physical exercise where they stood up and counted forward and back quickly so they were ready to refocus their attention on the next part of the lesson. Most lessons end with a plenary session, which reinforces what has been taught and evaluates what has been learnt during the lesson.

88. Classroom assistants share the teachers' planning and are fully involved in supporting pupils who need their help at all stages of the lessons. They are effective in supporting pupils in the classroom. They encourage the more reluctant pupils to join in with the discussion and answer questions. They explain the work to the less able pupils and make sure they remain focused on their work. Most pupils make good progress in lessons because they are keen to learn and work hard. Marking is good and pupils are given guidance on how they can improve their work. Mistakes are corrected and praise used appropriately. Where numeracy skills are used in other subjects, such as geography and science, it makes a good contribution to learning. The use of information and communication technology in mathematics lessons is particularly effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs. They work with confidence and independence on programs to practise basic skills in mathematics.
89. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues effectively. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly, as are teachers' plans and samples of pupils' work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school makes effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to provide a consistent framework for teaching. Assessment is thorough and pupils' progress is tracked well as they move up the school. Pupils who need extra help are identified and suitable units of work have been put in place to raise standards.

SCIENCE

90. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 are about the same as at the time of last inspection. In 2002 results were well below average compared with all schools nationally. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have declined since the last inspection and are now very low compared with the national average, being among the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. They were well below average compared with similar schools. Within an overall picture of low attainment, boys outperformed girls by a small margin.
91. Improvement in science has been unsatisfactory mainly because of the allocation of time to the subject. In Years 1 – 2, the allocation of time to the subject is lower than average when compared with most schools. In addition, the way the teaching of the subject is arranged, with long gaps between each unit, limits pupils' understanding of the subject as an important means of enquiry about the world they live in and also limits the progressive development of the pupils' scientific skills. In Years 3 – 5, although science has always been taught weekly, the allocation of time has only been increased this term to an acceptable level and this has yet to have an impact on test results. Although the time allocation in Year 6 has always been appropriate, the teacher has had a difficult challenge to compensate for the lack of progress the pupils have made in science throughout Years 1 – 5 in previous years.
92. Inspection evidence showed that standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 are well below average and achievement of all pupils is unsatisfactory. Pupils' recorded work showed that too little work had been recorded and very few higher attaining pupils are reaching the expected level. For example, pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of the differences between

animals and can compare their own body details with those of their friends. A scrutiny of last year's work showed that the pupils had been able to sort materials into different types and had carried out an investigation into the strength of different types of paper where they had discovered that wrapping paper withstood '115 rubs' and was definitely the strongest. However, although several pupils had written reasonable conclusions for their age, these had not been followed up due to lack of time.

93. By the end of Year 6, inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment are below average but have improved since the previous inspection and the national tests in 2002. Achievement for all pupils is satisfactory although the achievement of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is now good and has improved over the last two years. The reason for the good achievement of this group of pupils is due to the good staffing ratio in the Year 6 classroom as well as a difference in emphasis given to the teaching of science throughout the school by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy (EMAS) teachers. Much effort has been made to ensure that the pupils understand scientific vocabulary and teachers and assistants take every opportunity to translate the technical terms into the pupils' mother tongue. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make similar progress to their peers.
94. In Year 6, pupils' recorded work and their work in lessons showed that most pupils carry out experiments, such as making an electrical circuit and relating the length of the wires used to the brightness of the bulb. Most pupils know that parts of experiments have to be kept the same so that they are fair. Observational skills have improved considerably since Year 2, such as when pupils made careful note of how their pulse rate increased after exercise. In addition, most pupils are able to draw tables and graphs showing the results of their experiments as well as recording their conclusions and giving scientific reasons why their pulse rate had increased. The higher attaining pupils were able to plot a graph of their results successfully. This is an improvement from the last inspection when these aspects of pupils' skills in science were identified as weaknesses.
95. The quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons throughout the school was good. However, over time, teaching and learning is satisfactory due to the cumulative impact of not enough science being taught throughout the school. This has resulted in a decline in standards. In an example of good teaching in Year 2, the effective methods of introducing electricity to the pupils ensured that their attention was captured immediately. No time was wasted and the pupils quickly began to explore how a torch works. Good learning took place in this lesson by all pupils, as the activities were well planned with higher attaining pupils being challenged to give clear explanations. Effective planning for the pupils who learn English as an additional language ensured that most pupils were beginning to learn the technical terms and key vocabulary. The bilingual assistant gave explanations in English and Urdu and helped the pupils by sounding out difficult words they needed in their writing. Very focused questions and help from the teacher and assistant during the group work ensured that most pupils worked steadily and this was much needed as many pupils lacked the attention skills to stay on task. It was evident by the end of the lesson that the pupils' knowledge and understanding of this aspect of science is ahead of their written work due to weaker skills of reading and writing. It is also due to the pupils not being given enough opportunity to practise writing up their scientific experiments.
96. Pupils learning English as an additional language and with special educational needs are well supported in science throughout the school. Good allocation of time is now given to the teaching of science to pupils in Years 3 – 6 and it is evident that most pupils in these year groups are now making good progress in lessons and moving forward in their scientific thinking.
97. In an effective lesson in Year 4, a brisk initial delivery with effective explanations given to the pupils gained their attention. Scientific vocabulary was very well used and emphasised and, during the activity session, the pupils wrote what they predicted would happen as well as recording what parts of the experiment would stay the same and which would change so that it would be fair. It was evident that at least one-third of the pupils in this group had difficulty in

thinking scientifically and several did not contribute orally. In an example of good teaching and learning in Year 6, pupils carried out an experiment to discover what would happen to a shadow when an object was moved away from the source of light. A few pupils were initially confused but, with good support from the adults, most pupils made good progress because of the effective methods used by the teacher and the very good pace. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language were well supported by an EMAS teacher and a classroom assistant who helped the pupils to phrase their thoughts and write down their results.

98. The management of science is now very good. Although the co-ordinator has only taken over this subject at the beginning of term, she has been very active in changing the organisation of teaching and the time allocation. The system introduced this term by the co-ordinator to ensure the most efficient use of teachers is working very effectively with the Year 4 and Year 5 pupils forming two large groups with two teachers each. However, the school has been slow in addressing the weaknesses in science identified in the last inspection and standards last year were very poor. The co-ordinator has been given a generous amount of non-contact time this term and has monitored the teaching and learning of science in most classrooms. She has fed back to the teachers any strengths and weaknesses she has identified and will be re-visiting the classes again to discover if there has been any improvement. The nationally recommended scheme of work is used well with some adaptations made by the teachers to meet the needs of the pupils.
99. Assessment of the end of Year 2 and Year 6 national tests is carried out very effectively with weaknesses identified. As a result of this analysis, the teaching of science to the pupils who speak English as an additional language is more effective with a keen focus on technical vocabulary. This is having an impact on their attainment, which has improved considerably. Assessment takes place at the end of units of work and this informs future planning. Resources for science are good but not enough use is made of information and communication technology. The lessons in science contribute to the spiritual and social development of the pupils with a definite 'wow' factor observed in lessons when experiments prove to be exciting, such as when the Year 3 pupils used metal as a conductor of electricity and their bulbs lit. Pupils work together frequently on their experiments and, usually, they work together harmoniously. Pupils from Year 3 were pleased to talk about their work on electricity in the achievement assembly and this contributed to their personal development.

ART AND DESIGN

100. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory but, as at the last inspection, in a narrower range of work than expected by the National Curriculum. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment overall is below national expectations because there is a significant proportion of less able pupils. There are some examples of work that exceed national expectations, such as the striking batik of Australian animals inspired by Aboriginal art made by pupils in Years 4 and 5, but these are few. Most of the work seen was drawing and painting and, throughout the school, there is much less work with fabrics, collage, printing and in three-dimensions.
101. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have looked at portraits by artists such as Picasso and thought about the ways in which faces can be portrayed. They have experimented with close-up drawings of various facial features. Using a mirror, they have drawn self-portraits, and those portraits by Year 1 in pencil, crayon and wax crayon are of sound quality. Year 2 pupils' self-portraits in charcoal are a good introduction to a challenging medium. Year 3 pupils have also considered portraits, looking at the work of Klimt and the ways in which he used colour and tone. Their pencil sketching, completing the other half of a face cut from a magazine, shows

sound observation skills and a pleasing visual result. Planning for this year group shows weaving and printing activities last term, inspired by African art. In Years 4 and 5, portraits in oil pastel are of sound quality. The current work of designing and decorating a chair was preceded by considering the work of artists and crafts people. The masks being made in Year 5 are the best example of three-dimensional work, with pupils making the base using papier mâché and researching a range of mask designs from around the world. In Year 6, past work shows a small proportion of the pupils who draw and paint with the expected skill, but much of the work is typical of younger pupils. The water colour paintings of autumn leaves by the current Year 6 shows sound skills in colour mixing. There was no collection of examples of pupils' past work, which would have been useful to exemplify standards.

102. In the one lesson seen the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. The teacher did not have a firm enough grasp of the skills the pupils needed to learn, and these were not identified in the planning. There was no demonstration of what was expected and few resources to provide pupils with the visual stimuli they needed. As a result, their drawings lacked quality and imagination. Whilst pupils' work throughout the school indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory, as at the last inspection, there are weaknesses in some teachers' expertise and confidence, which are reflected in the narrow range of work and an emphasis on the content of lessons rather than systematically developing pupils' skills.
103. The curriculum lacks breadth, and improvement in this area has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection. Planning of lessons largely relies on nationally recommended guidance, but teachers do not always have the expertise to use this effectively. Satisfactory use is made of art to support work in other subjects, such as the paintings of ancient Greek myths and legends in Year 6. Pupils' sketchbooks are rarely used to explore ideas, and the small size of paper in the sketchbooks do not facilitate better use. The amount of artwork on display, particularly in communal areas, is much less than in most schools, which does not help to motivate pupils. However, the school reports that an art week was organised at the end of the summer term when pupils throughout the school were able to explore the different strands of the art and design curriculum. Pupils are introduced to the work of a variety of artists, which makes a sound contribution to their cultural development. Organisation of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and supports teachers in their planning, but she has had little opportunity to gather information about strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, so there are no clear plans to tackle areas needing development. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because most of the weaknesses identified then still remain.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards of attainment in design and technology are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and below national expectations by the end of Year 6 and this is a decline from the last inspection. The older pupils do not achieve well enough, because they do not have enough opportunities to learn in all aspects of the subject throughout the school. There were examples of good work in some year groups, such as the chairs designed by pupils in Year 3. This work was linked effectively to work in art and Van Gogh's painting "*The Chair*". However, such examples were the exception rather than the rule.
105. Two design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection, with Year 4 and 5 pupils. In one lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was good and in the other, unsatisfactory. This inconsistency exemplifies the need for stronger leadership and management

in the subject to provide a direction for work and it also reflects the problems the school has experienced in recruitment. Currently the co-ordinator works to maintain suitable supplies of consumable resources, but little has been done to develop the curriculum or teaching and learning. Where lessons are taught well, or where there are examples of good work, teachers have independently used national guidance to plan lessons. While this may result in good progress in a particular class, it does not ensure that pupils progressively learn the skills necessary to attain better standards. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Standards of attainment in geography are in line with national expectations by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and have been maintained since the last inspection. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but samples and displays of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 provided evidence for these judgements. Achievement is good overall. With the recent appointment of a permanent co-ordinator, who has already made a good start to developing the subject, there is good capacity for improvements in standards.
107. In the lesson seen, Year 3 pupils were very enthused by their learning about recyclable materials. They understood the need to sustain resources and could think of many ways to reuse waste products. Opportunities for them to discuss their ideas and listen to others supported the development of skills in literacy. Encouraging responsible attitudes towards our environment helped pupils to think about issues of citizenship. Higher attaining pupils used the Internet to send e-mails to Watford Council about recycling issues. All pupils were challenged to attain at a level appropriate to their starting point. Teaching and learning in this session were good.
108. The co-ordinator knows where developments need to take place to ensure good level provision. She has looked carefully at resources and is aware that these need to be supplemented to keep them up to date and relevant to pupils' needs. Recent monitoring of teachers' planning has provided evidence that the requirements of the curriculum are fully taught.

HISTORY

109. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory because most teachers have good expertise, the curriculum is carefully planned, and it includes a number of first-hand experiences that bring the subject to life and motivate the pupils. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, however, pupils' attainment is below national expectations, because a significant proportion has weak skills in explaining and recording their work. These are similar findings to the last inspection.
110. No lessons were seen in Year 2 because the subject is taught in alternate half terms. Work completed by Year 2 pupils earlier in the term shows a good range of topics, including exploring the life of Florence Nightingale, and using a variety of artefacts to find out about life in the past. For example, pupils discovered that a brass dustpan and brush were used for cleaning out a coal fire. Such use of artefacts as historical evidence is good practice. In Years 3 – 6, all the classes are currently studying *Invaders and Settlers* and particularly the Roman invasion of Britain. All the work seen has a strong factual basis, and discussions with pupils in Year 6 showed that most of them understood why the Romans chose to invade, and the differences between the cultures of the Romans and the Celts. Understanding of chronology is developed soundly through the use of time lines. In most classes, pupils are encouraged to pose their own historical questions, and then to seek evidence to prove or disprove their ideas. By Year 6, although most of the pupils have a sound factual understanding of the topics covered, only the higher attainers are able to

discuss the reasons for and consequences of historical events, or how historical evidence might be conflicting, for example about the character of Boudicca.

111. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. However, indications are from the scrutiny of work and planning documents that the quality of teaching and learning in history throughout the school is at least satisfactory. In the lesson where teaching was good, clear planning, a brisk style and high expectations of pupils' work rate all enabled the pupils to make good progress. Following a good review of past work, the pupils drew information from a range of good resources to write an account about how the Celts lived. The task was well matched to pupils' existing writing skills, and demanding for the higher attainers. Where the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory, the teacher showed good knowledge of the subject and led a lively discussion about varying viewpoints of the Celts, as barbaric warriors or a civilized race. However, the lack of clear learning objectives and a rather mundane follow-up task for the pupils reduced the effectiveness of the lesson. In both lessons, teachers developed pupils' literacy skills well through their historical work. Pupils enjoyed these lessons and showed a good level of interest.
112. The curriculum is carefully planned, with a programme of topics that takes good account of mixed-age classes. In Years 3 - 6, however, where all pupils study the same topic, it is not clear how the skills of history are being built from year to year, and some of the tasks are very similar regardless of the pupils' ages. The co-ordinator has identified this weakness and intends to discuss how to ensure that pupils make better progress throughout the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to visit places of historical interest. For example, the Year 6 pupils will visit Verulamium to support their work about the Romans. The factual aspects of the subject make a sound contribution to pupils' awareness of past cultures. Management of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory and reflects the problems experienced by the school in recruiting staff and having consistent managers of subjects. The co-ordinator has monitored teachers' planning and looked at pupils' recorded work in the juniors, but has had no opportunity to observe lessons. As a result, she has only a partial grasp of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and there are no plans for development. The school has accumulated some good resources. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection and pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has successfully tackled the issues raised in the previous inspection report and as a result pupils now achieve well.
114. Learning opportunities cover the full ICT curriculum and this means that pupils understand the many different ways that technology is used to communicate information. In lessons in Year 1 and 2, pupils made good use of tape recorders to save information. In Year 1, they were taught how to work the machine with clear directions for the function of buttons. Pupils practised by recording simple musical performances. In addition, pupils were challenged to listen to the results and try to improve them. Their listening skills were also developed through this activity. In Year 2, pupils used the tape recorder to listen to instructions for playing a game. They finished the session by recording their own choral instruction. Having listened to the first attempt, they practised and improved their work and re-recorded it. Pupils developed their speaking and listening skills through this activity.
115. In a Year 6 lesson, where the teaching and learning was very good, pupils were in the final stages of creating a multi-media presentation. Pupils had used word processing skills, taken photographs with a digital camera, saved the photographs in an appropriate format for editing,

and, during the lesson, were using an editing program to make their photographs more interesting. The majority of pupils were very confident with opening and closing files and folders, saving documents, using the various tools and techniques of the editing program and understood the process of creating a hyperlink. The teacher's subject knowledge and use of specific vocabulary were very good and pupils were given clear instructions and understood the lesson objectives. Their enjoyment of the task was very evident. They worked quietly with very good levels of concentration. Pupils' behaviour, including those with statements to support their behavioural needs, was very good. The teacher provided the necessary support for two pupils who had been absent from school for an extended period, to ensure that all pupils gained as much as possible from the learning experience. A higher attaining boy carefully explained how to use a specific tool from the editing program to two less able pupils. This was good evidence of pupils developing social and collaborative working skills.

116. The subject is well led and managed by a confident and competent co-ordinator. She is supported well by the governor who is responsible for the subject. This support includes consistent monitoring that has helped to improve standards. Some very careful analysis of pupils' work has been carried out to track progress and highlight strengths and areas for development in standards of work. Staff have all benefited from recent training and now the vast majority are confident in their ability to teach the subject well. The computer suite is of a good size and used well. Resources overall are satisfactory. The school recognises the need to continually replace hardware to ensure that pupils have the best opportunities for making progress. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support the pupils with special educational needs, English, mathematics, geography and music but ICT is not used enough in other subjects.

MUSIC

117. There was insufficient evidence to judge pupils' attainment and achievements in music, or the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. It is not therefore possible to evaluate improvements since the last inspection.
118. Two class lessons and one singing assembly were observed. During assemblies, pupils' singing was broadly in line with the standards expected for their age except for the pupils in Year 6 who, with a few exceptions, appeared to be reluctant to sing at all. In addition, the school's use of a recorded accompaniment made it difficult for the teacher leading the singing assembly to encourage and develop the singing skills of the pupils. The singing lacked variety in expression and dynamics and a significant number of pupils found it difficult to sing in tune.
119. In the lesson observed in Year 1, the pupils made good progress in improving their knowledge and skills of how to present a performance. They learned how to play their untuned percussion instruments to represent different weather conditions. A story board with drawings represented a whole day beginning with sunshine that changed when clouds obscured the sun and rain began to fall. These very young pupils, more than half with English as an additional language, had problems to begin with and had difficulty understanding what the task was but, with the effective support of the teacher and assistant, most pupils made good progress and finally managed to beat, rattle or pluck their instruments at the correct moment. Both adults in this class had to do more than is usually the case with pupils of similar ages to encourage and motivate the pupils to listen and pay attention.
120. The management of this subject is unsatisfactory. However, the co-ordinator has only taken over responsibility this term, works for two days per week in the school and is not a music specialist. Not all teachers depend upon the commercial scheme and this was exemplified in the

good lesson observed in Year 1 when the teacher used her own knowledge and understanding of music to plan the lesson. In Year 1 also, good provision is made for the pupils to choose a musical free choice activity with the instruments on a table with very well written labels and instructions of what to do with each beater, scraper or other instrument.

121. Music is played in assemblies and the name of the composer and title of the piece is written on a display behind the CD player. However, the pupils' attention was not drawn to the music by the teachers leading the assemblies and the music was almost inaudible. This was a weakness identified in the last inspection. There was little evidence of the development of composing skills for Year 6 pupils and very few opportunities for them to develop an awareness of the power of music and so develop the spiritual aspect of their learning. The school does use information and communication technology for teaching pupils composing skills and for pupils to listen to their compositions using tape-recorders. Their listening skills are also developed through these activities.
122. Provision for music has been considerably improved since the last inspection by 'strings' tuition for every pupil in Year 3. Each pupil is provided with an instrument and, on Fridays, two visiting instrumental teachers from the local authority visit the school for the morning and teach groups of pupils. This year, the scheme has been extended to Year 4 pupils. This provision is helping to improve the pupils' standards of attainment and their enjoyment of music. There are two visiting instrumental teachers who teach woodwind and brass instruments. However, only two pupils are having lessons at the moment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. By the end of Year 6, standards of attainment are close to those expected for the age of the pupils and achievement is satisfactory for all pupils. All pupils in Years 3 – 6 have swimming lessons and by the age of eleven, all can swim 25 metres. However, standards are not as high as suggested in the last inspection report. Only one dance lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection and no judgement can be made on standards of attainment or the quality of teaching and learning by the end of Year 2.
124. The dance lesson in Year 1 was prepared well by the teacher who used a puppet to demonstrate how she wanted the pupils to walk and dance like puppets. Only after an effective demonstration by the teacher were the pupils able to attempt to make up a dance and work in pairs. More than half of the pupils in this age group are in the early stages of learning English and, even with the support of the bi-lingual assistant, they found it difficult to respond, to move in time with the music and were slow to respond to instructions. This group of pupils is difficult to motivate and the teacher needed all her energy and evident ability to rephrase her instructions to ensure pupils learned. It was evident that their understanding of English improved in this lesson with the help of the classroom assistant.
125. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 – 6 is satisfactory overall although it was very good in two lessons. In one lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory. Most lessons observed included appropriate activities for a warm up at the beginning of the lesson and a cool down at the end. Usually, teachers made good use of pupils' demonstrations to illustrate good practice and performance. The classroom assistants with each group gave good support to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English were involved appropriately in all lessons. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher had difficulty gaining control of the pupils who did not respond well initially to her instructions. In an example of unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Year 5, subject knowledge was insufficient to teach the content of the gymnastic lesson and pupils were expected to wait a long time to practise their

jumps over obstacles. They became restless, noisy and some made impolite comments. Insufficient progress was made in this lesson.

126. In the Year 4/5 and Year 3 lessons, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. The pupils in Year 3 were asked to create a dance about machines and worked hard to meet the teacher's high expectations. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds worked hard to improve their performance and succeeded well. They were able to evaluate their own creative dances and very good progress was made in this lesson. The Year 4/5 pupils showed imagination and poise and due to the teacher's very high expectations, the pupils were able to build up a routine from three different balances. There were good links with literacy in both these lessons with pupils listening well and most were able to explain their evaluations clearly.
127. The teacher who managed this subject has now left the school and there is no co-ordinator at present. Planning is based on a good framework, but this is not consistently used throughout the school. There is insufficient monitoring of the subject to identify ways in which a few teachers could improve the quality of teaching and learning. Similarly, there are inconsistencies in the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. Extra-curricular activities give the pupils an opportunity to extend their physical education skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. Provision for religious education is good and standards of attainment are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. As part of the provision, pupils visit local places of worship and learn how their beliefs impact on their own lives. Their books show a good coverage of the scheme of work but, from the lessons observed, it is evident that the pupils show a deeper understanding and spiritual awareness in oral work and discussions.
129. It was not possible to observe religious education being taught in many classes but it is clear from the three lessons that were observed, pupils' work, displays and assemblies that pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 – 6 is good overall. Teachers prepare their lessons carefully. They are very sensitive to pupils' backgrounds and beliefs and they make good use of the pupils' own religious observance and knowledge to develop further understanding. Teachers also make very good use of other adults already working in the school who are willing to talk to pupils about their own religious beliefs and experiences. In lessons, pupils are being encouraged to think about personal beliefs and about relationships at a level appropriate to their age and understanding. They are learning to understand, respect and value other people's views, although several pupils do not always find it easy to listen to others.
130. The pupils in Year 2 listened intently and with growing interest to a visitor explaining the traditions and symbols of Islam. Pupils were fascinated as she read from the *Q'ran* and asked very pertinent questions that indicated their interest and respect. The teacher ensured that the pupils in the class who are also Muslims were very involved in this lesson and informed the other pupils of how they were following the expectations of Ramadan. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher's very clear focus, good reference to previous learning and astute questioning gave pupils a good understanding of Hindu worship and the features of a Mandir. These very effective discussions are making a good contribution to the pupils' understanding of the importance of beliefs and customs and also help to develop pupils' literacy. Good links with the community, the local mosque, gurdwara and churches further enhance the teaching and learning.
131. The management of the subject is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a clear action plan for the subject, has worked well to develop the schemes of

work and has built up artefacts and other resources. The displays around the school celebrating different religions are used well to reinforce the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Religious education enriches the curriculum and learning opportunities for all of the pupils. The subject contributes very well to the spiritual development of the pupils as their understanding of the beliefs of other religions grows. However, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology.